ENGLISH NOES

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M.A ENGLISH NOTES

LEAD TO LEARN

LEARNING CONCEPT

LEAVE TO SERVE

The morning star of song who made,

His music heard below,

Don Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath,

Preluded those melodious bursts that fill,

The spacious times of Great Elizabeth,

With sounds that echo still

ختم نبوت ﷺ زندہ باد **عظمت صحابہ زندہ باد**

السلام علیکم ورحمۃ اللہ وبرکاتہ:

معزز ممبران: آپ کا وٹس ایپ گروپ ایڈ من "**اردو بکس**" آپ سے مخاطب ہے۔

آپ تمام ممبران سے گزارش ہے کہ:

- ❖ گروپ میں صرف PDF کتب پوسٹ کی جاتی ہیں لہذا کتب کے متعلق اپنے کمنٹس / ریویوز ضرور دیں۔ گروپ میں بغیر ایڈ من کی اجازت کے کسی بھی قسم کی (اسلامی و غیر اسلامی، اخلاقی، تحریری) پوسٹ کرنا سختی سے منع ہے۔
- ❖ گروپ میں معزز، پڑھے لکھے، سلجھے ہوئے ممبرز موجود ہیں اخلاقیات کی پابندی کریں اور گروپ رولز کو فالو کریں بصورت دیگر معزز ممبرز کی بہتری کی خاطر ریموو کر دیا جائے گا۔
- ❖ کوئی بھی ممبر کسی بھی ممبر کو انباکس میں میسیج، مس کال، کال نہیں کرے گا۔ رپورٹ پر فوری ریموو کر کے کاروائی عمل میں لائے جائے گی۔
- ❖ ہمارے کسی بھی گروپ میں سیاسی و فرقہ واریت کی بحث کی قطعاً کوئی گنجائش نہیں ہے۔
- ❖ اگر کسی کو بھی گروپ کے متعلق کسی قسم کی شکایت یا تجویز کی صورت میں ایڈ من سے رابطہ کیجئے۔
- ❖ سب سے اہم بات:

گروپ میں کسی بھی قادیانی، مرزائی، احمدی، گستاخِ رسول، گستاخِ امہات المؤمنین، گستاخِ صحابہ و خلفائے راشدین حضرت ابو بکر صدیق، حضرت عمر فاروق، حضرت عثمان غنی، حضرت علی المرتضیٰ، حضرت حسنین کریمین رضوان اللہ تعالیٰ اجمعین، گستاخ اہلبیت یا ایسے غیر مسلم جو اسلام اور پاکستان کے خلاف پراپیگنڈا میں مصروف ہیں یا ان کے روحانی و ذہنی سپورٹرز کے لئے کوئی گنجائش نہیں ہے لہذا ایسے اشخاص بالکل بھی گروپ جوائن کرنے کی زحمت نہ کریں۔ معلوم ہونے پر فوراً ریموو کر دیا جائے گا۔

- ❖ تمام کتب انٹرنیٹ سے تلاش / ڈاؤنلوڈ کر کے **فری آف کاسٹ** وٹس ایپ گروپ میں شیئر کی جاتی ہیں۔ جو کتاب نہیں ملتی اس کے لئے معذرت کر لی جاتی ہے۔ جس میں محنت بھی صَرف ہوتی ہے لیکن ہمیں آپ سے صرف دعاؤں کی درخواست ہے۔
- ❖ عمران سیریز کے شوقین کیلئے علیحدہ سے عمران سیریز گروپ موجود ہے۔
- ❖ **لیڈیز کے لئے الگ گروپ کی سہولت موجود ہے جس کے لئے ویریفکیشن ضروری ہے۔**
- ❖ اردو کتب / عمران سیریز یا سٹڈی گروپ میں ایڈ ہونے کے لئے ایڈ من سے وٹس ایپ پر بذریعہ میسیج رابطہ کریں اور جواب کا انتظار فرمائیں۔ برائے مہربانی اخلاقیات کا خیال رکھتے ہوئے موبائل پر کال یا ایم ایس کرنے کی کوشش ہر گز نہ کریں۔ ورنہ گروپس سے تو ریموو کیا ہی جائے گا بلاک بھی کیا جائے گا۔

نوٹ: ہمارے کسی گروپ کی کوئی فیس نہیں ہے۔ سب فی سبیل اللہ ہے

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اللہ تبارک تعالیٰ ہم سب کا حامی و ناصر ہو

Geoffrey Chaucer, 1340-1400

Before William Shakespeare, Geoffrey Chaucer was the pre-eminent English poet, and he remains in the top tier of the English canon. He was also the most significant poet to write in Middle English. Chaucer was born in the early 1340s to a fairly rich, well-to-do, though not aristocratic family. His father, John Chaucer, was a vintner and deputy to the king's butler. His family's financial success came from work in the wine and leather businesses, and they had considerable inherited property in London. Little information exists about Chaucer's education, but his writings demonstrate a close familiarity with a number of important books of his contemporaries and of earlier times (such as Boethius's The Consolation of Philosophy). Chaucer likely was fluent in several languages, including French, Italian, and Latin. Sons of wealthy London merchants could receive good educations at this time, and there is reason to believe that, if Chaucer did not attend one of the schools on Thames Street near his boyhood home, then he was at least well-educated at home. Certainly his work showcases a passion for reading a huge range of literature, classical and modern.

Chaucer first appears in public records in 1357 as a member of the house of Elizabeth, Countess of Ulster. This was a conventional arrangement in which sons of middle-class households were placed in royal service so that they could obtain a courtly education. Two years later, Chaucer served in the army under Edward III and was captured during an unsuccessful offensive at Reims, although he was later ransomed. Chaucer served under a number of diplomatic missions.

By 1366 Chaucer had married Philippa Pan who had been in service with the Countess of Ulster. Chaucer married well for his position, for Philippa Chaucer received pension from the queen consort of Edward III. Philippa's sister Katherine de Roet was John of Gaunt's mistress for twenty years before becoming the Duke's wife. Through this connection, John of Gaunt was Chaucer's “kinsman.” Chaucer himself secured an annuity as yeoman of the king and was listed as one of the king's esquires.

Chaucer's first published work was The Book of the Duchess, a poem of over 1,300 lines, supposed to be an elegy for Blanche, Duchess of Lancaster, addressed to her widower, the Duke. For this first of his important poems, which was published in 1370, Chaucer used the dream-vision form, a genre made popular by the highly influential 13th-century French poem of courtly love, the Roman de la Rose, which Chaucer translated into English. Throughout the following decade, Chaucer continued with his diplomatic career, traveling to Italy for negotiations to open a Genoa port to Britain as well as military negotiations with Milan. During his missions to Italy, Chaucer encountered the work of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, which were later to have profound influence upon his own writing. In 1374 Chaucer was appointed comptroller of the customs and subsidy of wool, skins, and tanned hides for the Port of London, his first position away from the British court. Chaucer's only major work during this period was House of Fame, a poem of around 2,000 lines in dream-vision form, which ends so abruptly that some scholars consider it unfinished.

In October 1385, Chaucer was appointed a justice of the peace for Kent, and in August 1386 he became knight of the shire for Kent. Around the time of his wife's death in 1387, Chaucer moved to Greenwich and later to Kent. Changing political circumstances

eventually led to Chaucer falling out of favor with the royal court and leaving Parliament, but when Richard II became King of England, Chaucer regained royal favor.

During this period Chaucer used writing primarily as an escape from public life. His works included Parlement of Foules, a poem of 699 lines. This work is a dream-vision for St. Valentine's Day that makes use of the myth that each year on that day the birds gather before the goddess Nature to choose their mates. This work was heavily influenced by Boccaccio and Dante.

Chaucer's next work was Troilus and Criseyde, which was influenced by The Consolation of Philosophy, which Chaucer himself translated into English. Chaucer took some the plot of Troilus from Boccaccio's Filostrato. This 8,000-line rime-royal poem recounts the love story of Troilus, son of the Trojan king Priam, and Criseyde, widowed daughter of the deserter priest Calkas, against the background of the Trojan War. (Compare Shakespeare's version in Troilus and Cressida.)

The Canterbury Tales secured Chaucer's literary reputation. It is his great literary accomplishment, a compendium of stories by pilgrims traveling to the shrine of Thomas a Becket in Canterbury. Chaucer introduces each of these pilgrims in vivid, brief sketches in the General Prologue and intersperses the twenty-four tales with short dramatic scenes with lively exchanges. Chaucer did not complete the full plan for the tales, and surviving manuscripts leave some doubt as to the exact order of the tales that remain. However, the work is sufficiently complete to be considered a unified book rather than a collection of unfinished fragments. The Canterbury Tales is a lively mix of a variety of genres told by travelers from all aspects of society. Among the genres included are courtly romance, fabliaux, saint's biography, allegorical tale, beast fable, and medieval sermon.

Information concerning Chaucer's descendants is not fully clear. It is likely that he and Philippa had two sons and two daughters. Thomas Chaucer died in 1400; he was a large landowner and political officeholder, and his daughter, Alice, became Duchess of Suffolk. Little is known about Lewis Chaucer, Geoffrey Chaucer's youngest son. Of Chaucer's two daughters, Elizabeth became a nun, while Agnes was a lady-in-waiting for the coronation of Henry IV in 1399. Public records indicate that Chaucer had no descendants living after the fifteenth century.

The Age of Chaucer (1340-1400)

Introduction: - For a profound and comprehensive study of an author's literary work is required, among other things, a thorough understanding of the age which produced and nurtured him. Without acquaintance with the historical context our evaluation and apprehension of literature is bound to be lop-sided, if not altogether warped and garbled. Every man is a child of his age. He is influenced by it though, if he is a great man, he may influence it also. A great writer like Shakespeare or Chaucer is generally said to be "not of an age, but of all ages." But, in spite of his universal appeal, the fact remains that even he could not have escaped "the spirit of the age” in which he lived and moved and had his being.

So, for understanding him and his works in their fullness it is imperative to familiarize ourselves with the influential currents of thought and feeling and sensibility (not to speak of the socio-politico-economic conditions) obtaining in the times in which he flourished. Probably the reverse of it is also true: we may acquire some understanding of these tendencies and currents, the ethos of the age, through the writer himself. Emphasizing this point, W. H. Hudson says: "Every man belongs to his race and age; no matter how marked his personality, the spirit of his race and age finds expression through him" The same critic expresses the relationship between history and literature. He says, "Ordinary English history is our nation's biography, its literature is its autobiography; in the one we read the story of its actions and practical achievements; in the other the story of its intellectual and moral development." Though Chaucer transcends the limits of his generation and creates something which is of interest to the future generation too, yet he represents much of what his age stands for. And therein lies his greatness.

Chaucer's Age-Both Medieval and Modern: - Chaucer's age-like most historical ages-was an age of transition. This transition implies a shift from the medieval to the modern times, the emergence of the English nation from the "dark ages" to the age of enlightenment. Though some elements associated with modernity were coming into prominence, yet mostly and essentially the age was medieval-unscientific, superstitious, chivalrous, religious-minded, and "backward" in most respects. The fourteenth century, as J. M. Manly puts it in The Cambridge History of English Literature, was "a dark epoch in the history of England". However, the silver lining of modernity did succeed in piercing, here and there, the thick darkness of ignorance and superstition. In fact, the age of Chaucer was not stagnant (stationary): it was inching its way steadily and surely to the dawn of the Renaissance and the Reformation, which were yet a couple of centuries ahead. Robert Dudely French observes: "It was an age of restlessness, amid the ferment (excitement) of new life that Chaucer lived and wrote. Old things and new appear side by side upon his pages, and in his poetry we can study the essential spirit, both of the age that was passing and of the age that was to come." What are these "old things and new:' and what made the age restless? The answer will be provided if we discuss the chief events and features of the age.

"The Hundred Years' War": - The period between 1337 and 1453 is marked by a long succession of skirmishes between France and England, which are collectively known as the "Hundred Years War". Under the able and warlike guidance of King Edward III (1327-1377) England won a number of glorious victories, particularly at Crecy, Poietiers, and Agincourt. The French might beaten and Edward was once acknowledged even the king of France. But later, after his demise and with the succession of the incompetent Richard II, the English might waned and the French were able to secure tangible gains. The war influenced the English character in the following two ways: the fostering of nationalistic sentiment; and the demolition of some social barriers between different classes of society.

It was obviously natural for the conflict to have engendered among the English a strong feeling of national solidarity and patriotic fervour. But, as Compton-Rickett reminds us, "the fight is memorable not merely for stimulating the pride of English men." It is important, too, for the second reason given above. It was not the aristocracy alone which secured the victory for England. The aristocracy was vitally supported by the lowly archers whose feats with the bow were a force to reckon with. Froissart, the French chronicler, referring to the English archers says: "They, let fly their arrows so wholly

together and so thick that it seemed snow". The recognition of the services of the humble archers brought in a note of democratisation in the country, and the age-old "iron curtain" between the nobility and the proletariat developed a few chinks. This was an advance from medievalism to modernism.

The Age of Chivalry: - Nevertheless, the dawn of the modern era was yet far away. Compton-Rickett observes: "Chaucer's England is 'Still characteristically medieval, and nowhere is the conservative feeling more strongly marked than in the persistence of chivalry. This strange amalgam of love, war, and religion so far from exhibiting any signs of decay, reached perhaps its fullest development at this time. More than two centuries were to elapse before it was finally killed-by the satirical pen of Cervantes." The Knight in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales is typical of his kind. Even the tale he narrates concerns the adventures of two true knights-Arcite and Palamon.

The Black Death, Peasants' Revolt, and Labour Unrest: - In the age of Chaucer most people were victims of poverty, uncleanliness, and filth (epidemic). Even well-educated nobles eyed soap with suspicion, and learned physicians often forbade bathing as harmful for health. That is why England was often visited by epidemics, especially plague. The severest attack of this dread epidemic came in 1348. It was called "the Black Death" because black, knotty boils appeared on the bodies of the hopeless victims. It is estimated that about a million human beings were swept away by this epidemic. That roughly makes one-third of the total population of England at that time.

One immediate consequence of this pestilence was the acute shortage of working hands. The socio-economic system of England lay hopelessly paralysed. Labourers and villains who happened to survive started demanding much higher wages. But neither their employers nor the king nor Parliament was ready to meet these demands. A number of severe regulations were passed asking workers to work at the old rates of payment. This occasioned a great deal of resentment which culminated in the Peasants' Revolt in 1381 during the reign of Richard II. The peasants groaning under the weight of injustice and undue official severity were led to London by the Kentish priest John Ball. He preached the dignity of labour and asked the nobles:

When Adam delved and Eve span
Who was then the gentleman?

The king, overawed (pressurized) by the mass of peasantry armed with such weapons as hatchets, spades, and pitchforks, promised reform but later shelved his promise. The "Peasants' Revolt" is, according to Compton-Rickett, "a dim foreshadowing of those industrial troubles that lay in the distant future." Chaucer in his Nun's Priest's Tale refers to Jack Straw who with Wat Tylar raised the banner of revolt.

R. K. Root thus sums up the significance of this uprising: "This revolt, suppressed by the courage and good judgment of the boy King, Richard II, though barren of any direct and immediate result, exerted a lasting influence on the temper of the lower classes, fostering in them a spirit of independence which made them no longer a negligible quantity in the life of the nation". This was another line of progress towards modernism.

The Church: - In the age of Chaucer, the Church became a hotbed of profligacy, corruption, and materialism. The overlord of the Church, namely, the Pope of Rome,

himself had ambitions and aptitudes other than spiritual. W. H. Hudson maintains in this connection: "Of spiritual zeal and energy very little was now left in the country. The greater prelates heaped up wealth, and lived in a godless and worldly way; the rank and file of the clergy were ignorant and careless; the mendicant friars were notorious for their greed and profligacy." John Gower, a contemporary of Chaucer, whom he calls "moral Gower" (on account of his didactic tendency) thus pictures the condition of the Church in his Prologue to Confessio Amantis:

Lo, thus ye-broke is cristes Folde:
Whereof the flock without guide
Devoured is on every side,
In lacks of hem that been urrware
In chepherdes, which her wit beware
Upon the world in other halve.

Another contemporary has to say this about the priests "Our priests are now become blind, dark and beclouded. There is neither shaven crown on their head, nor modesty in their words, nor temperance in their food, nor even chastity in their deeds." If this was the condition of the ecclesiasts, we can easily imagine that of the laity. Well does Chaucer say in the Prologue to The Canterbury Tales: "If gold rust, what iron shall do?" Chaucer himself was indifferent to any reform, but his character-sketches of the ecclesiastical figures in The Canterbury Tales leave no uncertainty regarding the corruption which had crept into the ecclesiastical rank and file. The round-bellied epicurean monk, the merry and devil-may-care friar, and the unscrupulous pardoner are fairly typical of his age.

This widespread and deep-rooted corruption had already begun to provoke the attention of some reformists the most prominent of whom was John Wyclif (13207-84) who has been called "the morning star of the Reformation." He started what is called the Lollards's Movement. His aim was to eradicate the evil and corruption which had become a part and parcel of the Church. He sent his "poor priests" to all parts of the country for spreading his message of simplicity, purity, and austerity. His self-appointed task was to take Christianity back to its original purity and spirituality. He exhorted people not to have anything to do with the corrupt ministers of the Pope and to have faith only in the Word of God as enshrined in the Bible, To make the teaching of the Bible accessible to the common masses he with the help of some of his disciples translated the Bible from Latin into the native tongue. He also wrote a number of tracts embodying his teaching. His translation of the Bible was, in the words of W. H. Hudson, "the first translation of the scriptures into any modern vernacular tongue." That Chaucer was sympathetic to the Lollards' Movement is evident from the element of idealization which characterizes his portrait of the "Poor Parson" in the Prologue to The Canterbury Tales. The movement launched by Wyclif and his followers in the age of Chaucer was an adumbration of the Reformation which was to come in the sixteenth century to wean England from the papal influence.

Literary and Intellectual Tendencies: - Latin and French were the dominant languages in fourteenth-century England. However, in the later half of the century English came to its own, thanks to the sterling work done by Chaucer and some others like Langland, Gower, and Wyclif who wrote in English and wrote well. The English language itself was in a fluid state of being, and was divided into a number of dialects.

The Universities of Cambridge and Oxford employed Latin as the medium of instruction. Latin was also the language of the fashionable who cultivated it as a social necessity. We recall here Chaucer's Summoner who "wolde speke no word but Latyn" after having drunk "well"! The contribution of Chaucer towards the standardization and popularization of the English language cannot be over-estimated. As regards his contribution to English poetry, he has well been characterised as the father of English poetry. No doubt there were other poets contemporaneous with him Langland, Gower, and a few more, but Chaucer is as head and shoulders among them as Shakespeare is among the Elizabethan dramatists. He stands like a majestic oak in a shrubbery. The English prose, too, was coming to itself. Mandeville's travelogues and Wyclif s reformative pamphlets give one a feeling that the English prose was on its way to standardization and popular acclamation.

In another way, too, the age of Chaucer stands between the medieval and the modern life. There was in this age some sort of a minor Renaissance. The dawn of the real Renaissance in England was yet about two centuries ahead, yet in the age of Chaucer there are signs of growing influence of the ancients on native literature. Chaucer1 own poetry was influenced by the Italian writer Boccaccio (1313-75) and to a lesser extent, Petrarch (1304-74). The frameworks of Boccaccio's Decameron and of Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales are almost similar. However, it is somewhat doubtful if Chaucer had read the Italian writer. It was through the work of the two above-named Italian writers that humanism made its way into-English intellectual culture. Well does Compton-Rickett observe: "Chaucer's world is medieval; but beneath his medievalism the leaven of the Renaissance is already at work."

Literary Influences on Chaucer's Poetry

It is convenient to divide Chaucer's literary output into three stages, which show three distinct influences on the development of his poetry:

The French Period: Chaucer's early poetry was directly influenced by contemporary French poetry. He composed in his wild youthful days a number of love poems, none of which have survived, but which gave him some fame as a poet. It is supposed that A B C a prayer to the Virgin, is the first of his extant poems. He translated some portions of the famous French work Roman de la Rose, an elaborate love allegory. Its translation helped Chaucer to fashion his style. He cultivated an allegorical style. He learnt from French poetry the charm of fluent simplicity, complete correspondence of words and thoughts, constant restraint in the expression of emotion and satire. Chaucer wrote in 1369 The Book of Duchessee on the death of Blanche, John of Gaunt's wife. It is an allegory in the manner of reigning French school, but Chaucer gave his elegy freshness and seeming sincerity.

The Italian Period (1372-1384): Chaucer's Italian period is characterised by variety and new technical innovations in his poetry. During his visits to Italy Chaucer saw a new world of art and literature which had reached an astonishing excellence. He read Dante's Divine Comedia, Petrarch's Sonnets and Boccaccio's Decameron. In Italy he saw the dawn of Renaissance, which, to some extent, influenced his poetry which is secular and humanistic in spirit. Moody and Lovett remark: "The unquenchable curiosity of the men of Renaissance was his, more than a century before the Renaissance really began to affect England. He, too, shared their thirst for expression. The great books he had come

to know in Italy gave hi_n no peace until he should equal or surpass them." The important works which he produced in emulation of the Italian masters are the House of Fame, The Parliament of Fowls, Troylus and Cryseyde and The Legend of Good Women.

The House of Fame (1382) is a dream allegory, which shows Dante's influence. It is remarkable for the rare combination of lofty thought and simple, homely language, and the presentation of genuine Chaucerian humour. The Legend of Good Women (1385), the unfinished work, was originally planned to contain nineteen tales of virtuous women of antiquity. But in the extant volume it consists of eight accomplished tales and the ninth only begun. It is conspicuous for its masterly narrative, particularly in the portion dealing with Cleopatra, and the skillful handling of the heroic couplet in English for the first time. Troylus and Cryseydc is founded on Boccaccio's Filostrato. It marks a significant development in Chaucer's poetic career. He uses his material very freely and with great artistic ability. In it he "reflects the ideals of his own age and society, and so gives to the whole story a dramatic force and beauty which it had never known before." The characters of Cryseyde and Pandarus reveal a new subtlety of psychological development, and reveal Chaucer's growing insight into human motives. Troylus and Cryseyde is considered as Chaucer's best narrative work. The rhyme royal stanza is used with much deftness and beauty. Chaucer also wrote the Story of Griselda (The Clerk's Tale) and The Story of Constance during this period.

The English Period (1384-1390): In this period Chaucer "becomes independent, relying upon himself entirely even for the use t which he puts his own borrowed themes." A few smaller poems which belong to this period are Former Age, Fortune, Truth, Gentilesse and The Lak of Stedfastnesse, but the crowning and monumental work of this period is The Canterbury Tales.

The Plan of 'The Canterbury Tales': The plan of the Tales was probably adopted soon after 1386, in which year Chaucer composed the Prologue to the Legend of Good Women. They are not, and cannot be looked on as a whole. Many were written independently, and they fitted into the framework of the Prologue. Many which he intended to write were never written. The whole existing body of the Tales was completed before the close of 1390. The composition of the General Prologue to the tales is commonly associated with 1387.

The manner in which Chaucer knitted the tales together was very simple, and likely to please the English people. The Canterbury Tales is a collection of twenty-four tales in verse and prose, some incomplete, told as entertainment by a group of pilgrims riding from London to the shrine of Thomas A. Beckett at Canterbury. Chaucer had probably made the pilgrimage to Canterbury in the spring of 1385 or 1387, and was led by this experience to the framework in which he set his pictures of life. For the general idea of the tales Chaucer was indebted to Boccaccio, but "in nearly every important feature the work is essentially English". To realise his purpose Chaucer grouped around the jovial host of the Tabard Inn twenty-nine pilgrims, including himself, of every class of society in England. He sat them on horseback to ride to Canterbury and home again, intending to make each of them tell tales. But the company never reaches Canterbury, and only twenty-three pilgrims get their turn. Some tales are left unfinished. There are two prose tales, Chaucer's own Tale of Melibeus and The Parson's Tale. The rest of the tales are composed in the decasyllabic or heroic couplet.

In the famous Prologue, Chaucer makes us acquainted with the various characters of his drama. The twenty-nine characters are carefully chosen types, who represent various segments of contemporary society. Endowed with creative imagination Chaucer individualised his characters. All of them are fully realized figures with an importance of their own. F. N. Robinson remarks about Chaucer's characters: "Chaucer's pilgrims are far more vivid and personal than the medieval figures with which they have been compared." William J. Long also remarks: "Chaucer is the first English writer to bring the atmosphere of romantic interest about the men and women and the daily work of one's own world, which is the aim of nearly all modern literature.

Chaucer assigned to a pilgrim a tale suited to his character and vocation. The tales are of astonishing variety and give us a true and faithful picture of differing aspects of medieval life in England. Stopford A. Brooke remarks: "The Tales themselves take in the whole range of the poetry and the life of the middle ages; the legend of the saint, the romance of the knight, the wonderful fables of the traveller, the coarse tale of common life, the love story, the allegory, the animal-fable and the satirical lay."

Chaucer emerges as the first great story-teller in verse in The Canterbury Tales. All the best tales are told easily, gracefully and sincerely. The tales are remarkable for the dramatic quality. F. N. Robinson says: "In fact the pilgrimage is a continuous and lively drama, in which the stories contribute to the action. Because of this sustained dramatic interest and the vivid reality of characters, as well as for the inclusive representation of English society, The Canterbury Tales has been called a Human comedy. The implied comparison with Balzac's great series of stories of the life of modern France is not inappropriate."

In The Canterbury Tales Chaucer made English into a true means of poetry and literature. He developed the resources of English language for literary use, and set an example which was followed by a long line of poets.

In Tales Chaucer appears as a great humorist who has a consummate knowledge of human life. His humour is rich, tolerant, profound and sane, devoid of spite and cynicism. He also had a keen sense of pathos in human life. He can bring tears into our eyes, and he can make us smile or be sad as he pleases.

The Canterbury Tales is the first finest poetic testament of England. It has coherence and imaginative drive of a great work of literature, and presents a firmly realized view of life. Of all medieval poems, The Canterbury Tales gives a modern reader the strongest sense of contact with the life and manners of fourteenth-century England.

Background to “The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales”

The Canterbury Tales is at once one of the most famous and most frustrating works of literature ever written. Since its composition in late 1300s, critics have continued to mine new riches from its complex ground, and started new arguments about the text and its interpretation. Chaucer’s richly detailed text, so Dryden said, was “God’s plenty”, and the rich variety of the Tales is partly perhaps the reason for its success. It is both one long narrative (of the pilgrims and their pilgrimage) and an encyclopedia of shorter narratives; it is both one large drama, and a compilation of most literary forms known to

medieval literature: romance, fabliau, Breton lay, moral fable, verse romance, beast fable, prayer to the Virgin… and so the list goes on. No single literary genre dominates the Tales. The tales include romantic adventures, fabliaux, saint's biographies, animal fables, religious allegories and even a sermon, and range in tone from pious, moralistic tales to lewd and vulgar sexual farces. More often than not, moreover, the specific tone of the tale is extremely difficult to firmly pin down.

This, indeed, is down to one of the key problems of interpreting the Tales themselves - voice: how do we ever know who is speaking? Because Chaucer, early in the Tales, promises to repeat the exact words and style of each speaker as best he can remember it, there is always a tension between Chaucer and the pilgrim's voice he ventriloquizes as he re-tells his tale: even the "Chaucer" who is a character on the pilgrim has a distinct and deliberately un Chaucerian voice. Is it the Merchant’s voice – and the Merchant’s opinion – or Chaucer’s? Is it Chaucer the character or Chaucer the writer? If it is Chaucer’s, are we supposed to take it at face value, or view it ironically?

No one knows for certain when Chaucer began to write the Tales – the pilgrimage is usually dated 1387, but that date is subject to much scholarly argument – but it is certain that Chaucer wrote some parts of the Tales at different times, and went back and added Tales to the melting pot. The Knight’s Tale, for example, was almost certainly written earlier than the Canterbury project as a separate work, and then adapted into the voice of the Knight; and the Second Nun’s Tale, as well as probably the Monk’s, probably have a similar compositional history.

Chaucer drew from a rich variety of literary sources to create the Tales, though his principal debt is likely to Boccaccio’s Decameron, in which ten nobles from Florence, to escape the plague, stay in a country villa and amuse each other by each telling tales. Boccaccio likely had a significant influence on Chaucer. The Knight's Tale was an English version of a tale by Boccaccio, while six of Chaucer's tales have possible sources in the Decameron: the Miller's Tale, the Reeve's, the Clerk's, the Merchant's, the Franklin's, and the Shipman's. However, Chaucer's pilgrims to Canterbury form a wider range of society compared to Boccaccio's elite storytellers, allowing for greater differences in tone and substance.

The text of the Tales itself does not survive complete, but in ten fragments Due to the fact that there are no links made between these ten fragments in most cases, it is extremely difficult to ascertain precisely in which order Chaucer wanted the tales to be read.

Prologue to the Canterbury Tales : Summary

"When April comes with his sweet, fragrant showers, which pierce the dry ground of March, and bathe every root of every plant in sweet liquid, then people desire to go on pilgrimages." Thus begins the famous opening to The Canterbury Tales. The narrator (a constructed version of Chaucer himself) is first discovered staying at the Tabard Inn in Southwark (in London), when a company of twenty-nine people descend on the inn, preparing to go on a pilgrimage to Canterbury. After talking to them, he agrees to join them on their pilgrimage.

Yet before the narrator goes any further in the tale, he describes the circumstances and the social rank of each pilgrim. He describes each one in turn, starting with the highest status individuals.

The Knight is described first, as befits a 'worthy man' of high status. The Knight has fought in the Crusades in numerous countries, and always been honored for his worthiness and courtesy. Everywhere he went, the narrator tells us, he had a 'sovereyn prys' (which could mean either an 'outstanding reputation', or a price on his head for the fighting he has done). The Knight is dressed in a 'fustian' tunic, made of coarse cloth, which is stained by the rust from his coat of chainmail.

The Knight brings with him his son, The Squire, a lover and a lusty bachelor, only twenty years old. The Squire cuts a rather effeminate figure, his clothes embroidered with red and white flowers, and he is constantly singing or playing the flute. He is the only pilgrim (other than, of course, Chaucer himself) who explicitly has literary ambitions: he 'koude songes make and wel endite' (line 95).

The Yeoman (a freeborn servant) also travels along with the Knight's entourage, and is clad in coat and hood of green. The Yeoman is excellent at caring for arrows, and travels armed with a huge amount of weaponry: arrows, a bracer (arm guard), a sword, a buckler, and a dagger as sharp as a spear. He wears an image of St. Christopher on his breast.

Having now introduced the Knight (the highest ranking pilgrim socially), the narrator now moves on to the clergy, beginning with The Prioress, called 'Madame Eglantine' (or, in modern parlance, Mrs. Sweetbriar). She could sweetly sing religious services, speaks fluent French and has excellent table manners. She is so charitable and piteous, that she would weep if she saw a mouse caught in a trap, and she has two small dogs with her. She wears a brooch with the inscription 'Amor vincit omnia' ('Love conquers all'). The Prioress brings with her her 'chapeleyne' (secretary), the Second Nun.

The Monk is next, an extremely fine and handsome man who loves to hunt, and who follows modern customs rather than old traditions. This is no bookish monk, studying in a cloister, but a man who keeps greyhounds to hunt the hare. The Monk is well-fed, fat, and his eyes are bright, gleaming like a furnace in his head.

The Friar who follows him is also wanton and merry, and he is a 'lymytour' by trade (a friar licensed to beg in certain districts). He is extremely well beloved of franklins (landowners) and worthy woman all over the town. He hears confession and gives absolution, and is an excellent beggar, able to earn himself a farthing wherever he went. His name is Huberd.

The Merchant wears a forked beard, motley clothes and sat high upon his horse. He gives his opinion very solemnly, and does excellent business as a merchant, never being in any debt. But, the narrator ominously remarks, 'I noot how men hym calle' (I don't know how men call him, or think of him).

The Clerk follows the Merchant. A student of Oxford university, he would rather have twenty books by Aristotle than rich clothes or musical instruments, and thus is dressed in a threadbare short coat. He only has a little gold, which he tends to spend on books

and learning, and takes huge care and attention of his studies. He never speaks a word more than is needed, and that is short, quick and full of sentence (the Middle-English word for 'meaningfulness' is a close relation of 'sententiousness').

The Man of Law (referred to here as 'A Sergeant of the Lawe') is a judicious and dignified man, or, at least, he seems so because of his wise words. He is a judge in the court of assizes, by letter of appointment from the king, and because of his high standing receives many grants. He can draw up a legal document, the narrator tells us, and no-one can find a flaw in his legal writings. Yet, despite all this money and social worth, the Man of Law rides only in a homely, multi-coloured coat.

A Franklin travels with the Man of Law. He has a beard as white as a daisy, and of the sanguine humour (dominated by his blood). The Franklin is a big eater, loving a piece of bread dipped in wine, and is described (though not literally!) as Epicurus' son: the Franklin lives for culinary delight. His house is always full of meat pie, fish and meat, so much so that it 'snewed in his hous of mete and drynke'. He changes his meats and drinks according to what foods are in season.

A Haberdasher and a Carpenter, a Weaver, a Dyer and a Tapycer (weaver of tapestries) are next described, all of them clothed in the same distinctive guildsman's dress. Note that none of these pilgrims, in the end, actually tell a tale.

A Cook had been brought along to boil the chicken up with marrow bones and spices, but this particular Cook knows a draught of ale very well indeed, according to the narrator. The Cook could roast and simmer and boil and fry, make stews and hashes and bake a pie well, but it was a great pity that, on his shin, he has an ulcer.

A Shipman from Dartmouth is next - tanned brown from the hot summer sun, riding upon a carthorse, and wearing a gown of coarse woolen cloth which reaches to his knees. The Shipman had, many times, drawn a secret draught of wine on board ship, while the merchant was asleep. The Shipman has weathered many storms, and knows his trade: he knows the locations of all the harbors from Gotland to Cape Finistere. His shape is called 'the Maudelayne'.

A Doctor of Medicine is the next pilgrim described, clad in red and blue, and no-one in the world can match him in speaking about medicine and surgery. He knows the cause of every illness, what humor engenders them, and how to cure them. He is a perfect practitioner of medicine, and he has apothecaries ready to send him drugs and mixtures. He is well-read in the standard medical authorities, from the Greeks right through to Chaucer's contemporary Gilbertus Anglicus. The Doctor, however, has not studied the Bible.

The Wife of Bath was 'somdel deef' (a little deaf, as her tale will later expand upon) and that was a shame. The Wife of Bath is so adept at making cloth that she surpasses even the cloth-making capitals of Chaucer's world, Ypres and Ghent, and she wears coverchiefs (linen coverings for the head) which must (the narrator assumes) have 'weyeden ten pound'. She had had five husbands through the church door, and had been at Jerusalem, Rome and Boulogne on pilgrimage. She is also described as 'Gat-tothed' (traditionally denoting lasciviousness), and as keeping good company, she knows all the

answers about love: 'for she koude of that art the olde daunce' (she knew the whole dance as far as love is concerned!).

A good religious man, A Parson of a Town, is next described, who, although poor in goods, is rich in holy thought and work. He's a learned man, who truly preaches Christ's gospel, and devoutly teaches his parishioners. He travels across his big parish to visit all of his parishioners, on his feet, carrying a staff in his hand. He is a noble example to his parishioners ('his sheep', as they are described) because he acts first, and preaches second (or, in Chaucer's phrase, 'first he wroghte, and afterward he taughte'). The narrator believes that there is no better priest to be found anywhere.

With the Parson travels a Plowman (who does not tell a tale), who has hauled many cartloads of dung in his time. He is a good, hard-working man, who lives in peace and charity, and treats his neighbor as he would be treated. He rides on a mare, and wears a tabard (a workman's loose garment).

A Miller comes next, in this final group of pilgrims (now at the bottom of the class scale!). He is big-boned and has big muscles, and always wins the prize in wrestling matches. There's not a door that he couldn't lift off its hinges, or break it by running at it head-first. He has black, wide nostrils, carries a sword and a buckler (shield) by his side, and has a mouth like a great furnace. He's good at stealing corn and taking payment for it three times. But then, Chaucer implies, there are no honest millers.

A noble Manciple (a business agent, purchaser of religious provisions) is the next pilgrim to be described, and a savvy financial operator. Though a common man, the Manciple can run rings round even a 'heep of lerned men'. The Manciple, his description ominously ends, 'sette hir aller cappe': deceived them all.

The Reeve, a slender, choleric man, long-legged and lean ("ylyk a staf"). He knows exactly how much grain he has, and is excellent at keeping his granary and his grain bin. There is no bailiff, herdsman or servant about whom the Reeve does not know something secret or treacherous; as a result, they are afraid of him 'as of the deeth'.

The Summoner is next, his face fire-red and pimpled, with narrow eyes. He has a skin disease across his black brows, and his beard (which has hair falling out of it) and he is extremely lecherous. There is, the narrator tells us, no ointment or cure, or help him to remove his pimples. He loves drinking wine which is as 'reed as blood', and eating leeks, onions and garlic. He knows how to trick someone.

Travelling with the Summoner is a noble Pardoner, his friend and his companion (in what sense Chaucer intends the word 'compeer', meaning companion, nobody knows) and the last pilgrim-teller to be described. He sings loudly 'Come hither, love to me', and has hair as yellow as wax, which hangs like flaxen from his head. He carries a wallet full of pardons in his lap, brimful of pardons come from Rome. The Pardoner is sexually ambiguous - he has a thin, boyish voice, and the narrator wonders whether he is a 'geldyng or a mare' (a eunuch or a homosexual).

The narrator writes that he has told us now of the estate (the class), the array (the clothing), and the number of pilgrims assembled in this company. He then makes an important statement of intent for what is to come: he who repeats a tale told by another

man, the narrator says, must repeat it as closely as he possibly can to the original teller - and thus, if the tellers use obscene language, it is not our narrator's fault.

The Host is the last member of the company described, a large man with bright, large eyes - and an extremely fair man. The Host welcomes everyone to the inn, and announces the pilgrimage to Canterbury, and decides that, on the way there, the company shall 'talen and pleye' (to tell stories and amuse themselves). Everyone consents to the Host's plan for the game, and he then goes on to set it out.

What the Host describes is a tale-telling game, in which each pilgrim shall tell two tales on the way to Canterbury, and two more on the way home; whoever tells the tale 'of best sentence and moost solas' shall have supper at the cost of all of the other pilgrims, back at the Inn, once the pilgrimage returns from Canterbury. The pilgrims agree to the Host's suggestion, and agree to accord to the Host's judgment as master of the tale-telling game. Everyone then goes to bed.

The next morning, the Host awakes, raises everyone up, and 'in a flok' the pilgrimage rides towards 'the Wateryng of Seint Thomas', a brook about two miles from London. The Host asks the pilgrims to draw lots to see who shall tell the first tale, the Knight being asked to 'draw cut' first and, whether by 'aventure, or sort, or cas', the Knight draws the straw to tell the first tale. The pilgrims ride forward, and the Knight begins to tell his tale.

Prologue to the Canterbury Tales : Analysis

The General Prologue was probably written early in the composition of the Canterbury Tales, and offers an interesting comparison point to many of the individual tales itself. Of course, it does not match up to the tales as we have them in a number of ways: the Nun's Priest and the Second Nun are not described, and, most significantly, the work as we have it does not reflect the Host's plan. For starters, the pilgrimage only seems to go as far as Canterbury (for the Parson's Tale) and only the narrator tells two tales on the way there, with all the other pilgrims telling only a single tale (and some who are described in the General Prologue not telling a tale at all).

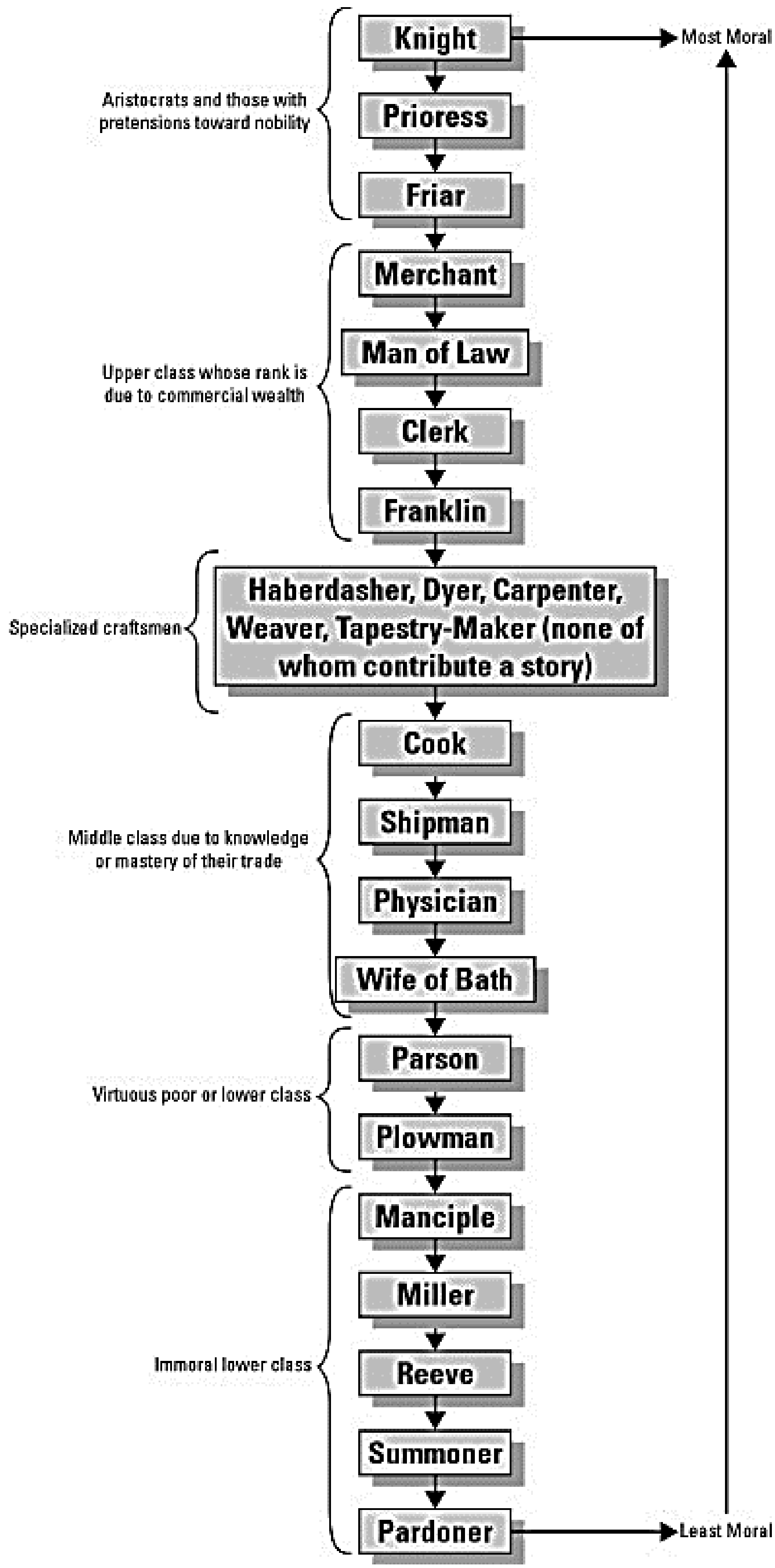
We must, therefore, view the General Prologue with some hesitation as a comparison point to the tales themselves: it offers useful or enlightening suggestions, but they are no means a complete, reliable guide to the tales and what they mean. What the General Prologue offers is a brief, often very visual description of each pilgrim, focusing on details of their background, as well as key details of their clothing, their food likes and dislikes, and their physical features. These descriptions fall within a common medieval tradition of portraits in words (which can be considered under the technical term ekphrasis), Chaucer's influence in this case most likely coming from The Romaunt de la Rose.

Immediately, our narrator insists that his pilgrims are to be described by 'degree'. By the fact that the Knight, the highest-ranking of the pilgrims, is selected as the first teller, we see the obvious social considerations of the tale. Still, all human life is here: characters of both sexes, and from walks of life from lordly knight, or godly parson down to oft-divorced wife or grimy cook.

Each pilgrim portrait within the prologue might be considered as an archetypal description. Many of the 'types' of characters featured would have been familiar stock characters to a medieval audience: the hypocritical friar, the rotund, food-loving monk, the rapacious miller are all familiar types from medieval estates satire (see Jill Mann's excellent book for more information). Larry D. Benson has pointed out the way in which the characters are paragons of their respective crafts or types - noting the number of times the words 'wel koude' and 'verray parfit' occur in describing characters.

Yet what is key about the information provided in the General Prologue about these characters, many of whom do appear to be archetypes, is that it is among the few pieces of objective information - that is, information spoken by our narrator that we are given throughout the Tales. The tales themselves (except for large passages of the prologues and epilogues) are largely told in the words of the tellers: as our narrator himself insists in the passage. The words stand for themselves: and we interpret them as if they come from the pilgrims' mouths. What this does - and this is a key thought for interpreting the tales as a whole - is to apparently strip them of writerly license, blurring the line between Chaucer and his characters.

Chaucer's voice, in re-telling the tales as accurately as he can, entirely disappears into that of his characters, and thus the Tales operates almost like a drama. Where do Chaucer's writerly and narratorial voices end, and his characters' voices begin? This self-vanishing quality is key to the Tales, and perhaps explains why there is one pilgrim who is not described at all so far, but who is certainly on the pilgrimage - and he is the most fascinating, and the most important by far: a poet and statesman by the name of Geoffrey Chaucer.


Knight
Most Moral
Aristocrats and those with pretensions toward nobility
Prioress
Friar
Merchant
Man of Law
Upper class whose rank is due to commercial wealth
Clerk
Franklin
Specialized craftsmen
Haberdasher, Dyer, Carpenter, Weaver, Tapestry-Maker (none of whom contribute a story)
Cook
Shipman
Middle class due to knowledge or mastery of their trade
Physician
Wife of Bath
Parson
Virtuous poor or lower class
Plowman
Manciple
Miller
Immoral lower class
Reeve
Summoner
Pardoner
Least Moral

Chaucer's Realism

Literature is the mirror of its age. Supreme literary artist is one who becomes a mouthpiece and provides a real picture of his age with its minute details. Chaucer is the true representative of his age. He portrayed a comprehensive picture of contemporary life. He realistically epitomizes the social, economic and religious conditions of his age. He was a keen observer of men and manners, and was endowed with the talent of imaginatively presenting contemporary society upon a great scale. He is in true sense a social chronicler of England. His poetry reflects the 14th century not in fragment but as a complete whole. He for the first time made poetry the medium for the expression of social reality. Various aspects of Chaucer's realism are elaborated below:

The Old and the New: Chaucer's age was transitional. It was medieval but beneath the medievalism—the desire for change was already at work. He saw the early rays of Renaissance. Ecclesiastical ideas and the medieval habits of mind were still the controlling elements in Chaucer's period. The K**night in the Prologue reflects the fading chivalry of the middle ages**. The old Knight was a brave warrior and was a true symbol of the fast vanishing old world of knighthood. The Knight is a fine expression of the medieval spirit.

The Squire, the Knight's son, represents **the new conception of chivalry**. He has the more luxurious and less idealistic temper of the age of the French wars. Like his father he does not dream of chivalry and war. He takes delight in the pleasures of life:

Well could he sit a horse and ride,
Make songs, joust and dance, draw and write.

The **Clerk of Oxford** represents the interest that people had started showing in **classical learning.** Chaucer was influenced by Boccaccio, Petrarch and Dante, the pioneers of Renaissance in Italy. He imbibed from them humanism which is clearly reflected in The Canterbury Tales. Chaucer was pioneer of Renaissance humanism in English literature. He was the Evening Star of the medieval day and the Morning Star of Renaissance.

Social Condition: Chaucer for the first time made poetry a powerful medium for the expression of contemporary social conditions and life. He had a wide experience of men of many ranks and conditions, and he had been storing up for years, with his keenly observant, quiet eyes, the materials for a literary presentation of contemporary society upon a great scale.

Chaucer exposes the **corruption in village life** in The Prologue. The village was a self-sufficient economic and social unit. The Reeve was mainly responsible for the organisation of village life. He used to be the elected representative of villagers. Some of the reeves were corrupt and exploited the people. The **Reeve in The Prologue took advantage of all his opportunities for cheating the lord of mansion**.

Chaucer was aware of the **rise of the new class of gentlemen farmers**. **The Franklin** who is quite well off **represents** this **new class**.

The Church and Religious Life: Chaucer does not attack like Wycliff or Lollard but he is content to expose the growing corruption, love of luxury and materialism, and laxity of discipline through his ecclesiastical figures. He realistically depicts the growing corruption of the church through his ecclesiastical characters. He draws the vivid portraits of the fat, pleasure-loving **Monk**, the merry and wanton **Friar,** the clever-rogue **Pardoner** who wanders about selling indulgences and relics, clearly show that he was alive to the shocking corruption that prevailed in the church of his times. The ecclesiastics are hangers on and caterpillars of the church. The **Friar** is intimate with hospitable franklins, inn-keepers and worthy women, and despises beggars and lazars. The Summoner is a repulsive man. Chaucer's Parson is the type of the true shepherds of the church. He is poor in this world's goods, but "rich in holy thought and work". The Parson's brother, a Plowman, travels with him. He is a **"true swinker and a good man**" who helps his poor neighbours without hire and loves them as himself.

Realistic Presentation of the Cross-Sections of Society: Chaucer realistically presented the varied sections of contemporary society. His men and women represent social realism. Chaucer's **Merchant** represents the new class of traders and merchants. The merchant is conscious of his importance. He delights in pomp and show:

A merchant was there with a forked beard,
In mottallee, and high on horse he sat.

The low classes also emerged as power group. They clamored for better conditions of life. Chaucer's carpenter, dyer, plowman etc. represent the new power these commoners were getting in those days. Each of them seemed important and their wives, too, were conscious of their growing importance in the national life. The growing prosperity of the new-rich class manifested itself in the love for display and extravagance. The, Knight, the Squire, the Wife of Bath and many other characters in The Prologue love display of pomp and show.

Chaucer's **Doctor of Physic** represents the **medieval medical profession**. He has little time to read Bible. He knows about herbal remedies and he is also well versed with astrology. Chaucer laughs at him for his fee loving propensities:

For gold in physick is a cordial
Therefore he loved gold in special.

The poor **Clerk of Oxford represents the passion of learning**. The Prioress, the Nun, and the Wife of Bath represent women of his time. Chaucer's characters represent almost the entire range of English society in the fourteenth century, with the exception of the highest aristocracy and the lowest order.

In short, Chaucer is a perfect representative of his age. He is in true sense a social chronicler of England. His poetry reflects the 14th century not in fragment but as a complete whole.

Chaucer's Art of Characterization

Characterization is the concept of creating characters in a piece of literature. It can be said without any doubt that the worth of every writer is judged from the delineation of his characters. Geoffrey Chaucer stands above head and shoulder of all other English writers in art of Characterization. His characters breathe, walk and talk as we do and their wishes and aspirations, their likes and dislikes are quite akin to men of "flesh and blood". They are so universal in nature that we meet these characters daily in every society; therefore, they do not look unreal to us at all.

Chaucer's Prologue is a **picture-gallery**. His pilgrims are like twenty-nine pictures hung on a wall. These pilgrims are from different walks of life. They are so carefully chosen that they represent the whole of the English society and fully reveal social, moral, material, commercial, romantic and chivalric trends prevailing in the society. He presents each of them with minute details about their dresses, physical features, habits, peculiarities of manner, speech etc.

Chaucer follows the methods common to all **painters.** He paints with words and not with a brush. He had the seeing-eye, the retentive memory and the judgment to select rightly. Many of his characters are drawn from his own acquaintances. For example, the host Hairy Bailey is drawn from an actual host known to Chaucer. Similarly, the Wife of Bath, and the Oxford Clerk are also drawn from individuals with whom he came in contact in his life. That is way his characters are **life-like**. They are living and breathing human beings having the force of reality. His picture-gallery is made up real men and women.

In many respects, Chaucer shows a marked preference for brilliant colours, both in **dress and appearance**. On entering his picture-gallery, one is at once impressed by the remarkable brightness of his portraits. For example, the gown of the **Squire** is embroidered,

as it were a meede
Al ful of fresshe floures, wyite and reede;

Similarly, the **Friar** is dressed all in green and the hose of the **Wife of Bath** is of fine scarlet red. The face of the **Summoner** is fiery red and the **Miller** has a reddish beard. The atmosphere of Chaucer's portrait-gallery is sunlit, bright and colourful.

In the portraits of the Prologue Chaucer excels the art of the painter. He has an advantage over the painter. He can make use of sounds which the artist with the brush cannot do. He hears the jingling of the bells of the Monk's palfrey, notes the nasal tones of the Prioress, and the lisping of the Friar.

He highlights one set of character by presenting it as **foil to another**. The refined and delicate **Prioress** is contrasted with the coarse and broad-speaking **Wife of Bath**. His ecclesiastical characters represent the degeneration of the church and the corruption that had overtaken the clergy of the times. His **Monk**, the **Friar**, the **Pardoner** and the **Summoner** have all forgotten their duties. They have grown greedy and selfish and are given to all sorts of corrupt practices. They have been **individualized by noting their personal peculiarities and oddities**. For example, the Monk has been individualized by his eyes.

His eyen stepe and rollynge in his heed,
That seemed as a forneys of a leed;

Chaucer **uses apt similes and metaphors to present his characters**. His similes are always drawn from common, familiar and homely aspects of life and nature. His pictorial imagination constantly uses such imagery. He makes his characters gleam and glow as on a canvas. For example, the merry nature of the Squire is described in a single line by, saying that **"he was as bright as is the month of May**." The brightness of the Friar's eyes is his most peculiar feature and it is emphasized through an equally apt image:

His eyen twynkled in his heed aryght,
As doon the sterres in the frosty nyght.

Chaucer portrays his characters **objectively and impartially**. He is so broadminded that he shows his equal sympathy to all the characters, the just and the unjust, the pious and the sinner.

Chaucer's characters are **types as well as individuals**: they are the symbols of some particular class, age group, or profession, but they also have their own peculiar traits, their own idiosyncrasies, their own ways of talking and doing things. Each of the twenty-nine pilgrims in the Prologue is morally and socially representative, but he is also an individual with marked peculiarities of his own. For example, his Knight is a typical Knight of his age representing the fast fading chivalry of the middle ages. But he is also an individual who, for his personal qualities, had been honoured in foreign lands above all other knights and who had been the guest of honour at many a feast. His son, the young Squire, represents the jollity of youth as well as the spirit of the rising chivalry of the times. He is not, like his father, interested so much in war and adventure as in singing and dancing and Jove-making. He is also an individual, who has a fondness for bright colours and fine apparel,

Embrouded was he,as it were a meede
Al ful of fresshe floures, wyite and reede;

Another worth mentioning about Chaucer's characterization is that he' has the gift of seeing the **universal** in the particular and he presents both these aspects of life in the picture of pilgrims. These pilgrims possess all those traits, humours and habits that characterize the men and women of all ages and nations in this world. They are not, of an age but of all ages, **"They are timeless, creations on a time determined stage."** The Squire, the Monk, the Prioress, the Franklin, the Wife of Bath etc., may have changed their names, the title by which they are known, but they are all human beings having the same passions, desires and instincts as are common to humanity. All of us feel at home in their company, for we all recognize in them an element of our own selves.

His characters are **not static**: they constantly grow and develop like real men and women. They talk to each other, narrate their own tales, and comment on the tales told by others. They reveal a hundred aspects of their natures. They are shown to us as moving, acting, talking and disputing just like men of flesh and blood. In short, it can be said that there is nothing of the dreamer about Chaucer-nothing of the stern moralist

and social reformer. Like Shakespeare, he makes it his business in The Canterbury Tales, to paint life as he sees it, and leaves other to draw the moral.

Modernity in Chaucer

Chaucer is regarded as the earliest of the great modernism. In those dark days when light of modernism was not visible on the horizon, Chaucer anticipated the modern taste and the modern mind and in his poetry, he introduced qualities of advanced age. Though Chaucer has not written a drama or a novel as we know it, yet his works contain the seed of modern drama and novel. If he had lived a few years, he would certainly have been our first dramatist and novelist, just as we know he is the first true national poet of England.

When we make a careful and critical analysis of Chaucer's poetry, we arrive at a definite conclusion that sympathy, realism, intelligence, straight forwardness, humor, irony, satire and keen observation are salient features of Chaucer's literary works. He enchants the reader by his lovely diction, his description and narrative power and the graceful movement of his verse. He is the founder. of pure pimple and musical style of writing verses, which was later on followed by Spencer, Shakespeare and Milton.

Firstly Chaucer is rightly regarded as **the father of English poetry**. He may also be described as the first modern writer in English. He Made a considerable contribution to the development of English prosody and versification, as well as to the development of various poetic forms. He is great delineator of character as well of manners and customs'. The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales is a valuable social document. Chaucer is also a great story teller, as well as a prominent houmorist. His role in the development of English Language was also a significant one. He enabled English language to replace Latin and French as the medium of ambitious literature.

Secondly, his poetry **links with the poetry of his predecessors**. Here and there we have in Chaucer's poetry words and phrases from earlier poets, as well as rhyme-tags and other items in the stock-in-trade of medieval poets. Some examples of this are words and phrases like 'rose-red', `silver'bright', 'grey as glass', 'still as a stone', 'brown as a berry', etc. However, the most characteristic part of Chaucer's poetry is that here such borrowing is the minimum. Poetry before Chaucer, and to a certain extent even after Chaucer, was alliterative in nature. Chaucer's poetry is accentual and not alliterative, though we now and then have alliterative phrases in his poetry which reflect the alliterative conception of poetry. However, in many cases, his alliterative phrases occur even in modern speech and writing, such as "fish and flesh", "busy as bees", "friend or foe", "sigh and. sob", "weary or wet". etc Chaucer also used many stock phrases, but they only help to accentuate the conversational quality of his poetry. Some 'examples of this type are "No more of this", "ride and go", "Old and .young", "more and less", "weep and cry", "as old bokes seyn" (as old books say), "deep and wide", etc.

Thirdly, Chaucer attempted the new **realistic** task of portraying men and women as they were and to describe them so that the readers could recognize them as their own acquaintances. His characters have for this reason become a permanent treasure of English literature. Beowulf and Roland are ideal heroes, essentially figures of the fancy, but the merry Host of the Tabard Inn, Madam Eglantine, the fat .Monk, the good Parson,

the kindhearted Plowman, the studious Oxford Clerk, these strike us more like personal acquaintances than characters in a story. "Chaucer is the first English writer to bring the atmosphere of romantic interest about the men and women and the daily work of one's Own world which is the aim of nearly all modern literature."

Fourthly, With Chaucer, the English language and English literature grew at a bound to **full maturity**. No Other Middle English writer has his skill, his range, his complexity, his large human outlook. Unfortunately, the English language was still in the process of rapid change, and major shifts in pronunciation and accentuation were to occur in the following century and a half. This meant that Chaucer's achievement in establishing English as a fully developed literary language could not be adequately exploited by his immediate successors. It was not long before readers were unable to scan him -properly. This fact helps to emphasizes Chancer's loneliness. His followers lack both his technical brilliance and his breadth of vision, leaving him the one undisputed master in medieval English literature. Not until Shakespeare is there an English writer with Chaucer's combination of technique and insight and his ability to put each at the service of the other, and Shakespeare's genius, which was the greater, ran in different channels.

His Trend of Borrowing Material :- Chaucer takes the material for his poems wherever he can find it. He borrows profusely form Latin, French, and Italian literature. But whatever he borrows, he makes entirely his own. His originality consists in giving an old story some present human interest, making it express the life and ideals of his own age. In this respect The Knight's Tale is noteworthy. Its names belong to an ancient civilization, but its characters are men and women of the English nobility as Chaucer knew them. This is perhaps his finest work as a narrative poet. It is heroic in subject, chivalrous in sentiment, and romantic in tone. Nominally, it is a tale of the heroic age of Greece, hut everything in it is medievalised. It may be regarded as an idealised picture of the Middle Ages. Its account of the, tournament, its presentation of the principles of knightly ethics, and its vivid portrayal of the chivalrous conception of love give it a distinctly medieval flavour.

Conclusion: - Chaucer is regarded as the first English short story teller and the first English modern poet. Popular literature till Chaucer's time had been occupied mainly with the gods and heroes of modern era. Chaucer was

The morning star of song, who made
His music heard below,
Don Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath
Preluded those melodious bursts that fill
The spacious times of great Elizabeth
With sounds that echo still.

He was the

Father of verse, who in immortal song
First taught the Muse to speak the English tongue.

Geoffrey Chaucer: A Representative of His Age

Well does Compton Rickett observe: "Chaucer symbolizes, as no other writer does, the Middle Ages. He stands in much the same relation to the life of his time as Pope does to the earlier phases to the Eighteenth century; and Tennyson to the Victorian era; and his place in English literature is even more important than theirs..."

The social groups of thirty pilgrims cover the entire range of fourteenth century English society, leaving only royalty on one hand, and the lowest on the other.

Medieval Chivalry: - Chaucer's knight is a true representative of the spirit of the medieval chivalry which was a blend of love, religion, and bravery. He has been a champion of not fewer than fifteen battles in the defense of Christianity. Being the embodiment of chivalric ideals, Chaucer's knight observes utmost courtesy. He was not only worthy in politeness but also wise in decisiveness.

We must, however, point out that the spirit of true chivalry was breathing its last in the age of Chaucer. The Knight, in fact, is a representative of an order which was losing its ground. The true representative of the new order is his young son. The Squire, who has as much a taste for revelry as for chivalry. He is a lover and a lusty bachelor.

So hoote he lovede that by nyghtertale
He slept namoore than dooth a nyghtyngale

Trade, Commerce and Art: - The Merchant is a typical representative of his class. The countrymen and merchants have always made the two most common objects of humour and satire. But Chaucer lets the Merchant go without much of satire, perhaps in recognition of the importance that his class had gained in his age.

Medicine: - The knowledge of Astronomy rather Astrology was a must for a physician as all the physical ailments were supposed to be the consequences of the peculiar configuration of the stars and planets. That is why the Doctor of Physic, too, was grounded in Astronomy. Chaucer has a sly dig at the Doctor in his reference to his gold-loving nature.

The Church: - The Church had become a hotbed of profligacy, corruption and rank materialism. The Monk is a fat, sprouting fellow averse to study and penance. The Friar is a jolly beggar who employs his tongue to carve out his living. The Prioress bothers more about modish etiquettes than austerity. The Pardoner is a despicable parasite in trading in letters of pardon with the sinners who could ensure a seat in heaven by paying hard cash. The summoner is likewise a depraved fellow.

The only exception is the poor Parson apparently a follower of Wycliffe who revolted against the corruption of the Church.

The New Learning: - The Clerk of Oxford represents the new intellectual culture. He is an austere scholar who prefers twenty books of Aristotle's philosophy to gay clothes and musical instruments. And

Of studie took he moost cure and moost heede
Noght a word spak he moore than was neede

Thus, The Prologue is a comprehensive representation of the fourteenth century society which consisted of three main classes-that of the knights representing medieval chivalry, that of the clergy representing the Church, and that of the workers. These three classes constituted the main social structure and we can reconstruct the life of the fourteenth century through it.

Chaucer's Treatment of women

Literature reflects the tendencies of the age in which it is produced and there is always a supreme literary artist who becomes the mouth piece of his age and gives expression to the hopes and aspirations, its fades, and fetishes, its tears and doubts, its prosperity and enterprise in his work. Chaucer, too, represents his age and holds mirror up to the life of his time. His poetry represents the fourteenth century and not only one limited aspect of it. For example, the unknown author of "Pearls" shows the mysticism of refined mind. Wycliff, points out the surging wave of religious reformation, Gower shows the fear produced in the wealthier class by the Peasant Rising and Langland, presents corruption in the church and the religious order. Each of these authors throws light on only one aspect of life of fourteenth century. It is Chaucer's greatness that he directs his comprehensive gaze not on one aspect of his time, but on all its wide and vanegated life. He is a wide and capacious soul and takes a fuller view of his times more than anyone else could have taken in those days. Chaucer takes into consideration the chivalry, trade, medical profession, clergymen and women of the fourteenth century.

Chaucer's attitude towards women is impartial, unprejudiced, realistic and comprehensive. According to Chaucer, a woman is neither a goddess nor necessarily an evil. She is just a companion of man and as there are gods and devils among men, so there are goddesses and witches among women. Chaucer's realistic approach towards life never allows him to go to extremes. For instance, the Franklin's opinion about women reflects the whole story. According to his tale, the real question is not of mastery, but of mutual adjustment and co-operation.

In Chaucer's age, there were two views with regard to women. According to the opinion of the church, woman in the person of Eve was the cause of fall of Adam. It was she who had brought sin and death into the world. On the other hand, quite contrary to this view the poets held positive opinion about them. According to poets, she was a goddess who descended from Heaven with pomp and majesty and filled the world with a unique glow. Women in Chaucer's England did not enjoy an enviable social position. Women of lower class of society, in particular were doomed to a life of unrelieved drudgery. They were treated as slaves or serfs. Women belonging to the upper classes, however, led a comparatively better social life and they received some education and wore the fine clothes and ornaments.

In "The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales", Chaucer tells that there are two kinds of woman in the world in all ages. He tells this by depicting two women, The Prioress and The Wife of Bath. The Prioress is the embodiment of sweetness, beauty, grace and good manners whereas The Wife of Bath is a combination of ugly features and shrewish

qualities. Both of them are present in all ages. Sometimes, The Prioress predominates and sometimes The Wife of Bath.

In Chaucer's time, a woman was regarded as inferior to man. A woman who attempted governance was very often beaten by her husband. A woman's welfare lays in accepting the mastery of her husband. We are told that fifth husband of The Wife of Bath tried to assert his male superiority over her and once struck her about her ear so violently that she became deaf. Thus, women like The Wife of Bath always manage to escape from the life, a humdrum love, gossip, finery, company of men and never like to stay at home with their husbands. Chaucer explains the nature of such women in the following lines of the Wife's portrait.

In felawshipe wel koude she laughe and carpe;
Of remedies of love she knew per chaunce,
For she koude of that art the oIde daunce.

The Prioress represents the conventional woman with all those vanities dear to feminine heart. In "The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales", her description includes her physical appearance, table manners, affected speech and tender sentimentality. Her name is "Madame Eglentyne". One wonders what this wild flower has to do in the convent. She wears fine clothes and on her brooch is inscribed the motto "Amor Vincit Omnia" (Love conquers all).

The Wife of Bath has expounded her views on women, marriage and love at a great length in the Prologue. She tells the company that she has no faith in virginity. God has given them bodies to use. Let saints be continent. God never forbade marriage, nor did He command virginity. The Clerk replies to the Wife's heresies by telling the story of Griselda. She was a retort to the Wife's heretical doctrine.

Chaucer's "Tale of Melibeus" poses the problem of mastery in domestic life and suggests that husband should accept the mastery of his wife. The Nun's Priest's tale puts the opposite view. Similarly, different pilgrims express their views in their tales. However, the Franklin's tale gives a balanced view. According to this tale, the real question is not of mastery but mutual adjustment and co-operation. The real bliss of wedded life can be enjoyed through mutual co-operation, forbearance and patience; this is the view of Chaucer himself.

Humour in the Prologue

Humour is the tendency of particular cognitive experiences to provoke laughter and provide amusement. Humour is the sympathetic appreciation of the comic and enables us to love while we laugh. Humour enables us to see the person's point of view, to distinguish between crimes and misdemeanours. There is no sting in humour, no consciousness superiority. On the contrary, it contains an element of tenderness. Satire, being destructive, not constructive, is in a class apart, but even satire may become so softened by humour as it does in Chaucer that it may lose the element of caricature and serve only to give a keener edge to wit.

Chaucer's whole point of view is that of the humorist. He is a comic poet who walks carelessly through life pausing the notice every trifle as he passes. He views the world as the unaccustomed traveller views a foreign country. He possesses the faculty of amused observation in a pre-eminent degree. Again and again he contrives to invest some perfectly trifling and commonplace incident with an air of whimsicality, and by so doing to make it at once realistic and remote.

Chaucer's humour is essentially English. It is born of a strong common-sense and a generous sympathy; and there are the qualities of the greatest English humorists like Shakespeare and Fielding.

Chaucer's humour has been acknowledged as always **sympathetic**. In the Prologue, except in his handling of the Monk and the Friar there is **no sting** in it. Chaucer does not treat with disdain those whose foolishness he has fathomed, nor does he turn away in disgust from the rascal whose tricks he has detected. If humour can be defined as "the sympathetic appreciation of the comic", i.e. the faculty which enables us to laugh—but to laugh affectionately and sympathetically, then Chaucer was indeed a great humorist. In his description of the Wife of Bath, he reminds us of Shakespeare's treatment of Sir Toby in Twelfth Night and of Falstaff in Henry IV. In fact, Chaucer makes us appreciate a character even when laughing at it. Moreover, Chaucer invariably makes more fun of the individual than of the institution to which he belongs. Mockery either discreet or uproarious never withered in him the gift of poetry.

Chaucer's humour **springs from the rich fields of character**. He derives pleasure from the "quaintness of individuality". By his keen observation and insight he detects incongruities in men and women and presents before his readers in an amusing manner. Some of the facts are quite trivial in themselves but become amusing in the way Chaucer tells them e.g. the Squire's locks which look as if they were laid in press, the hat of the Wife of Bath weighing 19 lbs., the Reeve's thin legs, the Franklin's weakness for sharp sauce, etc.

Chaucer's humour is his distinct quality. He says that in the literature of his time, when so few poets seem to have any perception of the fun in life, the humour of Chaucer is **invigorating and delightful**. There is great variety in his humour. It is kindly and **patronising** as in the case of the Clerk of Oxford, broad and **semi-farcical** as in the Wife of Bath; **pointedly satirical** as in the Pordoner and the Summoner; or **coarse**, as happens in the Tales of the Miller, the Reeve and the Pordoner. Chaucer’s humour is not a pure fun. It is seldom that the satirical intent is wholly lacking, as it is in the case of the Good Parson, but, except in rare cases, the satire is good-humoured and well-meant.

Chaucer's humour in the Prologue d**erives from the fact that he is himself one of the pilgrims**, one of the original twenty-nine. He is both actor and spectator and both he and his audience enjoy the antics which this clever arrangement enables him to perform. As pilgrim-narrator, he often discloses to his readers something about a character which none of the other pilgrims could possibly know, but which adds something important to our impression of the person concerned. For example he reveals to the delight of the readers that the Merchant was in debt and the Prioress sang the divine service intoning through the nose while she would not like to do so outside her convent.

Chaucer's humour in the Prologue is also **due to his unconventional descriptive style**. He deliberately departs from the artificial, lifeless forms of traditional portraiture and addresses himself to strikingly realistic or lifelike portrayals which by their very realism of speech and idiom make the incident or the object delightful.

Chaucer's witty comments upon the pilgrims such as "This Manciple sette his aller cappe" or his lavish praise upon some knave such as The Shipman or his pun on some word such as Philosophere in the sense of true 'philosopher' and 'alchemist' are also conducive to a good deal of humour. About the Oxford Clerk Chaucer says:

But al be that he was a philosophere,
Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre.

Not least among the manifestations of Chaucer's humour is the **quality of exaggeration**. The merry Friar with his twinkling eyes is the best beggar in his friary ; the Franklin has not his equal; in all the world there was none like the Doctor of Physic; the Shipman had no peer from 'Hulle to Cartage'; and in cloth-making the Wife of Bath excelled even the matchless weavers of Ypres and Ghent.

To conclude, Chaucer's humour is one of the greatest assets of his poetic art. As Compton-Rickett says, indeed for all his considerable power, pathos, his happy fancy, his lucid imagination, it is as a great humorist that he lingers longest in our memories, with humour, rich, profound and sane, devoid of spite and cynicism, irradiated by a genial kindliness and a consummate knowledge of human nature.

Chaucer as the Father of English Poetry

Chaucer has rightly been called "the father of English poetry". He founded English language and poetry alike. Alber calls him "the earliest of the great moderns" because he imparted modernity to English language and poetry, and "it is through him that its free secular spirit first expresses itself in our poetry". Matthew Arnold was right in asserting that "with him is born our real poetry". He was rightly recognised during the Renaissance as the Father of English poetry:

Father of verse ! who in immortal song
First taught the muse to speak the English tongue.

New Poetic Subject: As regards Chaucer's poetic material he unhesitantly took what suited him. He sometimes borrowed wholesale without change, and often adapted and reshaped his matter freely. Moody and Lovett write in this connection: "But what is more important is that Chaucer improved whatever he borrowed, and stamped it with his individuality of thought and style and structural skill. That part of his work we value most, however, such as the prologues to the Legend of Good Women and to The Canterbury Tales, was original in every sense, and some of the Tales have been so radically and vitally remodelled that they stand as genuinely original." Besides striking the note of originality, Chaucer turned his eyes to the life and people of his time. His realism reflects his modernity.

Humour and Pathos: Chaucer is the first genuine humorist in English poetry. Stopford A. Brooke writes: "Sometimes his humour is broad, sometimes shy, sometimes gay, but it is also exquisite and affectionate. His pathos does not go into the far depths of sorrow and pain, but it is always natural. He can bring tears into our eyes, and he can make us smile or be sad as he pleases."

Chaucer's Language and Versification: Chaucer is the first national poet of England, for he gave to the people a language, so reformed and reshaped, as to be a potent instrument for the expression of national life and thought. During Chaucer's time there was no standard form of English. There were four dialects — Southern, East Midland, Northumbrian and Kentish. Chaucer popularised the East Midland dialect by giving it a new form and shape. Chaucer made it the standard for future writers and the model of current modern English. He imparted to it smoothness, suppleness and simplicity and breathed into it a high poetic life. Chaucer wrote his memorable work The Canterbury Tales in the reshaped and reformed East Midland dialect. Lowes rightly remarks: "He found English a dialect and left it a language." Spenser called him "the well of English undefiled".

Chaucer imparted musical sweetness and liquidity to language. Stopford A. Brooke remarks: "His eye for colour was superb and distinctive. He had a very fine ear for the music of verse, and the tale and the verse go together like voice and music. Indeed, so softly flowing and bright are they, that to read them is like listening in a meadow full of sunshine to a clear stream riffling over its bed of pebbles."

Chaucer's style is noticeable for vigour, clarity and concreteness. His images are conspicuous for "uncomplicated naturalness". They are taken from the familiar areas of common experience; for example, the Monk's horse is "as broun as is a berie", the Friar's eyes twinkle "as doon the sterres in the frosty night", the Franklin's purse is as white as morning milk, and the threadbare Clerk's mount is "bene as is a rake". Chaucer uses'simple and direct adjectives to describe his pilgrims, for example: worthy, gay, bright, fair, fresh, perfect, sharp, wise etc. His descriptions are graphic and startling. The description of the Wife of Bath creates a graphic effect:

Booled was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe.

Albert writes: "Chaucer's best descriptions of men, manners and places, as when giving details of conventional spring mornings and flowery gardens, have a vivacity that makes his poetry unique."

Instead of using courtly and elegant style Chaucer preferred the simple and racy vocabulary of colloquial English. James Winny writes: "In its racy turn of phrase and pithy commentary, the style of the General Prologue is close to the terse, pungent manner of the proverbial sayings which are scattered plentifully through his work. ...... By using this direct and richly vernacular style Chaucer is able to secure an effect of sensational reality, in which material objects take on a heightened power, as though seen with the intensity of imaginative insight."

Chaucer is the first man to use "naked words" in English; "the first to make our composite language a thing compact and vital". Stopford A. Brooke points out that he wrote The Canterbury Tales in "almost the English of our time. Chaucer made our tongue

into a true means of poetry. He did more, he welded together the French and English elements in our language and made them into one English tool for the use of literature, and all our prose writers and poets derive their tongue from the language of The Canterbury Tales."

As a poetic artist, Chaucer is superb. In this respect he stands apart from other poets of his age. Gower wrote with a set object, and nothing can be less beautiful than the form in which he puts his tales. The author of Piers Plowman wrote with the object of reform of social and ecclesiastical affairs, and his form is harsh and uncouth. Chaucer wrote because he was full of emotion and joy in his own thoughts, and he did his best to arouse the same feelings and thoughts in the heart of his readers. He does not moralise. He does not reform. He is a pure poet. He, then, has the best right to the poet's name. He is, within his own range, the clearest of English artists.

As a versifier Chaucer is unique in contemporary poetry. He struck a modern note in versification because he discarded altogether the Old English irregular lines and alliteration—rim, ram, roff. He deftly adopted the French method of regular metre and end rimes. He introduced the heroic couplet into English verse and invented the rhyme royal.

Chaucer's Narrative Art or Chaucer as the Father of English Novel: Chaucer is a matchless narrator in verse. He is "often called the father of English poetry, it would be perhaps less flattering, but certainly true, to call him the father of English novel." His Troilus and Cressyde is the first English novel in everything except that it is written in verse. It is a love story and it contains all the elements of a modern novel. It has plot, dialogue, humour, irony, realism, conflict, dramatic element etc. In it Chaucer naturally told a story with delicacy, humour and psychological insight. The character of Cressyde is the first true psychological study of a complex woman and Pandarus is the first great comic character in English. S. D. Neil remarks: "Had Chaucer written in prose, it is possible that his Troilus and Cressyde and not Richardson's Pamela would be celebrated as the first English novel."

The Canterbury Tales is the best exposition of the spirit of novel. Almost all the tales are novels in miniature. What makes these tales novels in miniature is their realistic description of contemporary life and manners, singleness of plot, vivid characterisation with psychological insight, subtle sense of humour and dramatic element. In the words of W. J. Long, Chaucer's Tales "are stories as well as poems, and Chaucer is to be regarded as our first story-teller as well as our first modern poet."

Chaucer's method of narration is dramatic Action and dramatic vitality are the keynotes of his tales. Action, dialogue, gesture and costume are all there as in real life. Prologue "is the first act in the drama and gives us the dramatis personae of that "comedy which is not intended for the stage." F. N. Robinson comments on dramatic element in the Tales: "In fact, from one point of view, the pilgrimage is a continuous and lively drama, in which the stories themselves contribute to the action. Because of this sustained dramatic interest and the vivid reality of characters, as well as for the inclusive representation of English society, The Canterbury Tales has been called a Human Comedy. The implied comparison with Balzac's great series of stories of the life of modern France is not inappropriate."

Chaucer, as we have seen, created English language which became the future medium of English novel. Church says: "It is important to remember that from this fountainhead (Chaucer) there trickled, as a side-stream, the new medium of prose which was to become the appropriate vehicle for the novel proper." Chaucer anticipated the novel in the real sense. G. K. Chesterton humorously remarked: "If Chaucer is the father of English poetry, he is the grandfather of English fiction."

Chaucer's Contribution to English Language and Literature

Father of verse! who m immortal song
First taught the Muse to speak the English tongue

Chaucer was in many respects a pioneer, the first realist, the first humorist, the first narrative artist the first great character-painter, and the first great metrical artist in English literature. Further, he has been credited not only with the "fatherhood" of English poetry but has also been hailed as the father of English drama before the drama was born, and the father of English novel before the novel was born.. He is not only the first English poet, but a great poet in his own right.

Contribution to Language: - Chaucer found his English a dialect and left it a language. Chaucer found the English language brick and left it marble. When he started his literary career, the English speech, and still less, the English of writing was confusingly fluid and unsettled. The English language was divided into a number of dialects which were employed in different parts of the country. The four of them vastly more prominent than the others were: The Southern, The Midland, The Northern or Northumbrian and The Kentish.

Out of these four, the **Midland dialect**, which was spoken in London and its surrounding area, was the simplest in grammar and syntax. Moreover, it was the one patronised by the aristocratic and literary circles of the country. Chaucer employed in his work the East midland dialect, and by casting the enormous weight of his genius balance decided once for all which dialect was going to be the standard literary language of the whole of the country for all times to come. It is certain that if Chaucer had adopted some other dialect the emergence of the standard language of literature would have been considerably delayed. All the great writers of England succeeding Chaucer are masters of the language of which Chaucer is, before them, the great master.

Not only was Chaucer's selection of one dialect out of the four a happy one, but so was his selection of one of the three languages which were reigning supreme in England at that time-Latin, French, and English. In fact Latin and French were more fashionable than the poor "vernacular" English. Latin was considered "the universal language" and was patronised at the expense of English by the Church as well as the learned. French was the language of the court and was used for keeping the accounts of the royal household till as late as 1365. Chaucer **chose English** which was a despised language, and as the legendary king did to the beggar maid, raised her from the dust, draped her in royal robes, and conducted her coronation. That queen is ruling even now.

Contribution to Versification: - Chaucer's contribution to English versification is no less striking than to the English language. He sounded the death-knell of the Saxon alliterative measure and firmly established the modern one.

Chaucer may be designated as the father of modern English versification. In The Canterbury Tales he mostly uses lines of ten syllables each (with generally five accents); and the lines run into couplets; that is, each couple of lines has its end-syllables rhyming with each other. For example:

His eyes twinkled in his heed aright
As doon the sterres in the frosty night.

Not only this, Chaucer seems to be the first Englishman who realised and brought out the latent music of his language. "To read Chaucer's verse is like listening to a clear stream, in a meadow full of sunshine, rippling over its bed of pebbles." The following is the tribute of a worthy successor of his:

The morning star of song, who made
His music heard below,
Don Chaucer, the first -warbler, whose sweet breath
Preluded those melodious bursts thatfiU",
The spacious times of great Elizabeth
With sounds that echo still

He made English a pliant and vigorous medium of poetic utterance. His astonishingly easy mastery of the language is indeed remarkable. With one step the writings of Chaucer carry us into a new era in which the language appears endowed with ease, dignity, and copiousness of expression and clothed in the hues of the imagination.

The Content of Poetry: - Chaucer was a pioneer in the poetic field also. Not only the form of poetry, but its content, too, is highly indebted to him. He not only gave English poetry a new dress, but also a new body and a new soul. His major contribution towards the content of poetry is in his **strict adherence to realism**. His Prologue to the Canterbury Tales embodies a new effort in the history of literature, as it strictly deals with real men, manners, and life. The Prologue holds a mirror to the life of Chaucer's age and shows its manners and morals completely. He effectively replaces the shadowy delineations of the old romantic and allegorical school with the vivid and pulsating pictures of contemporary life.

Chaucer does not forget the **universal beneath the particular**, the dateless beneath the dated. The portraits of the pilgrims in the Prologue constitute not only an epitome of the society of fourteenth-century England, but the epitome of human nature in all climes and all ages. They are all with us today, though some of them have changed their names. The knight now commands a line regiment, the squire is in the guards, the shipman was a rum-runner while prohibition lasted and is active now in the black market and so on.

His Geniality, Tolerance, Humour, and Freshness: - Chaucer's tone as a poet is wonderfully instinct with geniality, tolerance, humour, and freshness. In spite of his awareness of the corruption and unrest in the society of his age Chaucer is never upset

or upsetting. No one can read Chaucer without feeling that it is good to be alive in this world however imperfect may it be in numerous respects. He is a chronic optimist. He is never harsh, rancorous, bitter, or indignant, and never falls out with his fellow men for their failings. The great English humorists like Shakespeare and Fielding share with Chaucer the same broad human sympathy which he first introduced into literature

Contribution to the Novel: - The novel is one of the latest courses in the banquet of English literature. But in his narrative skill, his gift of vivid characterization, his aptitude for plot-construction and his inventive skill Chaucer appears as a worthy precursor of the race of novelists who come centuries afterwards. His Tales are replete with intense human interest, and though he borrows his materials from numerous sundry sources, his narrative skill is all his own. His narration is lively and direct, if we make exception for the numerous digressions and philosophical and pseudo-philosophical animadversions having little to do with the tales proper, introduced after the contemporary fashion. It is difficult to find him flagging or growing dull and monotonous.

Chaucer's Prologue to The Canterbury Tales has been rightly called "the prologue to modern fiction." It has characters if not plot, and vivid characterization is one of the primary jobs of a novelist. According to Meredith "A novel should be a summary of actual life." So is, indeed, the Prologue. Several of the tales, too, are novels in miniature and hold the attention of the reader from the beginning to the end.

Contribution to the Drama: - Chaucer wrote at a time when secular drama had not been born. His works have some dramatic elements which are altogether missing in the poetry before him. His mode of characterisation in the Prologue to The Canterbury Tales is, no doubt, static or descriptive, but in the tales proper it is dynamic or dramatic. There the characters reveal themselves, without the intervention of the author, through what they say and what they do. Even the tales they narrate, in most cases, are in keeping with their respective characters, avocations, temperaments, etc. If the drama had been known in Chaucer's time as a branch of living literature, he might have attained as high an excellence in comedy as any English or Continental writer.

We can conclude the discussion with the words of David Daiches, ‘With Chaucer the English language and English literature grew at a bound to full maturity. No other Middle English writer has his skill, his range, his complexity, his large humane outlook. His followers lack both his technical brilliance and his breadth of vision, leaving him the one undisputed master in Medieval English Literature'. Well said:

The morning star of song who made,
His music heard below,
Don Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath,
Preluded those melodious bursts that fill,
The spacious times of Great Elizabeth,
With sounds that echo still

Ecclesiastical Characters in the Prologue

In spite of the fact that in Chaucer’s age, religion had a control over the personalities and soul of the individuals, yet lamentably, its impact was degenerate. The cloisters

were advertising debasement, misusing the blameless people and were gaining cash under the cover of religion. Moralities and morals were blurring. The ministers had gotten famous for their covetousness, defilement and deceitfulness. They had overlooked their consecrated obligations and had gotten declined.

Of the thirty-one pilgrims of the Canterbury Tales, twelve were attached to religion in some way or other, and the manner in which Chaucer depicts them gives us some idea of the slack condition of many Church officials at the time and the poor opinion which the average man of education had of them. The bishops of the day were mainly shrewd men of business, quite respectable and hardworking; all of them English, owing their position to the joint efforts of King and Pope, but their energies were often devoted to public affairs rather than to the interests of their bishoprics. This was no new thing, but Wycliffe spoke and wrote fiercely against the corrupt clergy.

William Langland and John Wycliffe, as well as Chaucer, derided the practices of summoners, pardoners, and friar confessors, who were persecuting blackmailers protected by the law courts. How Chaucer exposes the corrupt clergy we can see it in his Prologue to the Canterbury Tales.

The **Prioress** is the first ecclesiastical figure in "The Prologue". She smiles amiably and sings in her nasal tone. Chaucer says ironically that she is aware of the manners of the society and knows how to carry morsel to her mouth. He says:

Wel koude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe
That no drope ne fille upon hir brest.

She wears fashionable dress with a golden broach, engraved with the words: **"Amor Vincit Omnia" i.e. "Love conquers everything".**

She truly signifies high-class religious-minded ladies of the 14th century. She is not an ideal Nun and typifies the traits of the contemporary prioress.

The **Monk** is a pleasure-loving fellow. **An outridere, that lovede venerie,**

He is fat like a lord, for he leads a relaxed life and passes his time in eating, drinking and merry-making. He is entirely misfit to his profession. He is fond of fine dresses. He wears fur-lined sleeves, gold pins and love-knot. **A love knot in the gretter end there was**

He does not like to study the strict rules and discipline of the cloister. He likes hunting and has fine horses and hounds in his stable.

The **Friar** is a wanton, greedy and corrupt fellow who neglects his duties and does not bother about religion. He is fond of singing, merry-making, drinking and visiting inns and public places. He builds relations with the rich Franklin and worthy women. He is a rogue, seducer of women and scoundrel. He encourages sins by setting an easy solution of apology, misuses his authority and exploits others in terms of their sin. He was also very expert in the art of begging.

For thogh a wydwe hadde noght a sho,
So plesaunt was his In principio

Yet wolde he have a ferthyng, er he wente

The **Summoner** is a nasty figure. Children are afraid of him. **Of his visage children were aferd.**

He loves garlic, red wine and onion. He is a hypocrite who allows people to carry on their sins and forgives them for a small donation to him. He knows the secret of young women and men and exploits them to his own interest.

The yonge girles of the diocise,
And knew hir conseil, and was al hir reed.

The **Pardoner** is a thorough cheat. His bag is full of relics which he sells to housewives and earns a lot.

He hadde a croys of latoun, ful of stones,
And in a glas he hadde pigges bones.

He deceives the simple folk. He sings merrily, sweetly and attracts the people in this way. Chaucer has a poor opinion of him and ironically calls him "a noble ecclesiastical".

In contrast to these corrupt religious characters, Chaucer gives a pleasant picture of the **poor Parson**, a shepherd, who protects his flock from the wolf.

A good man was ther of religioun,
And was a povre persoun of a toun;

He preaches sincerely, correctly and tries to practice what he preaches. He leads a simple, virtuous life of devotion and service. **A bettre preest I trowe that nowher noon ys;**

The **Clerk** is not an ecclesiastical character but he is studying at church. The Clerk is one of the idealized characters. He is well-versed in logic.

A clerk ther was of Oxenford also,
That unto logyk hadde longe ygo.

He does not run after showiness and worldly grandeur. He is a miser and poor. He is quick and meaningful in his talk. He is glad to learn and glad to teach. He is the picture of the poet's learning.

A very notable point in the portrayal of Chaucer's ecclesiastical characters is that the **good ones are dull and drab**; **they are not as alive and interesting as the bad ones**. This indicates that Chaucer was much more at home among real people who had their share of faults and failings which he enjoyed describing with all the artistic means at his command.People like the poor Parson and oxford clerk are idealized, unsubstantial figures whom we find without the warmth and vitality of the Friar and the Pardoner. Likewise, the Wife of Bath is a much more flesh and blood character than the Prioress.

To conclude, the profiteering clerics in the Prologue are easy going who lack spirit of sacrifice, respect for authority, acceptance of discipline, and at least a modicum of otherworldliness. The principal characteristics of Chaucer's monk, friar, pardoner and Summoner are greedy self-seeking, contempt for authority, evasion of discipline self-imposed in the vows of their orders, and a thorough-going worldliness, which not only sought the good things of life, but sought them at the expense of the needy. This great organisation, with its wealth, its power, and its conservative traditions, might have been expected to offer a safeguard against social decay but it was itself a fruitful breeding-ground for the very things which were disorganising feudal society.

"Chaucer's portraits do not illustrate a moral or philosophical thesis."

On first reading them, Chaucer's character sketches in the General Prologue certainly seem to serve as moral judgments on the portrayed individual. However, are these to be seen as functional as typifications of the entire social class that they represent or as portraits of contemporary individuals? I would argue that allegorist and literalist readings of the General Prologue are not mutually exclusive: that characters can exist for the reader on both levels. Insofar as they serve to illustrate an overall thesis, however, it seems sensible to concentrate of the characters as exemplars of their type and class.

Brewster states that "The only class system know to mediaeval theory" has "the familiar Three-fold division... into Knights, Clergy, and Ploughmen... Knights defend society, and maintain law and order; clergy defend men's souls and feed their minds; ploughmen provide food to maintain men's bodies." Although Chaucer chooses not to order his characters appearance in the General Prologue according to the class to which they belong, presumably because doing so would result in less opportunity for comparison, he appears to be sympathetic to such divisions.

The Knight, who we are first introduced to, obviously falls into the first category. Although Terry Jones sees him as something of a bloodthirsty mercenary, I feel he is projecting his own presentist negative attitude towards warfare onto a character Chaucer himself seems to be very sympathetic to. Indeed the Knight embraces and stands for values which Chaucer seems to wholeheartedly support: "trouthe and honour, freedom and curteusie." The rest of his household, his son the squire and the yeoman, seem to be morally worthy by association. His son, for all his youthful faults, is imbued with the same 'curteusie', and it seems so inevitable to me that he is going to mature into the Knight, that I see him as an image of the Knight as he was, before being ennobled by age and experience. As a fellow upholder of the law, the Sergeant of the Lawe can also be placed in this class, and he too is presented in largely sympathetic terms.

Chaucer's treatment of the ecclesiastical class is far less homogenous, ranging from his irony-free beautification of the Parson, to the little satirised Prioress and Monk, to the pilloried figure of the Friar. In fact, some view Chaucer's unfinished Canterbury Tales as the smoking gun, which reveals that the Church has him murdered for publishing such negative views of the clergy. However, his treatment of the clergy is not in any real sense radical or subversive; it merely reflects charges commonly levelled at the orders at the time. The Prioress is the first member of the clergy to appear and through her association with the Benedictine order we are invited to examine the behaviour of these

characters in light of their vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Routine breaking of these supposedly sacred vows, along with the selling of indulgences and other such abuses are what eventually led to the Reformation.

The relative dearth of characters who can be considered ploughmen, figures who are directly concerned with the production of food, reflects the breakdown in feudal society and, more specifically, the breakdown in food supply due to the deaths of massive numbers of labourers at the hands of the Black Death. Although many contemporary figures attacked farm labourers of the day for demanding extortionate wages because of these conditions, Chaucer holds up his Ploughman as the epitome of simple, Christian living, "lyvynge in pees and parfit charitee". The Cook, with his very direct relationship to food production, is also characterised as an amenable fellow, but without the saintly virtues of the Ploughman However, the Peasant's Revolt of 1381 seems to have soured Chaucer's congeniality to the rural poor. This is evident in Chaucer's animalisation of the strong and brawny Miller. He compares his beard o the bristles on a sow. The fact that the Miller routinely breaks down doors with his head marks him out as a threshold-crosser, who does not respect the natural civic order. Chaucer time and time again employs physiognomy, the pop psychology of his day, in order to highlight the bestial and depraved side of his character. Similarly in the Pardoner physical and spiritual deformity go hand in hand.

The characters that do not fit in to this social framework are generally satirised as being overly concerned with the pursuit of profit or pleasure, the Merchant and Franklin being chief in each of these respective categories. The disinterested, asexual, and devoutly religious Clerk seems to be the moral example they should be following. In the five guildsmen, Chaucer mildly mocks middle-class self-importance, but neither holds them up as moral beacons or attacks them as degenerates.

As far as there is a philosophical thesis in The General Prologue, it centres on two qualities: caritas: charity and compassion, and cupiditas: greed and the inordinate desire for wealth. Chaucer seems to accept the cupiditas is a necessary evil insofar as it leads to a functional and productive society. For example, the Merchant's cupiditas is respected as it is honest and makes him a 'better' merchant. On the other hand, the Reeve's dishonest pilfering of his master's estate is seen as bestial, sub-human. His animal nature is reinforced by his association with his master's livestock: "His lordes sheep, his neet, his dayerye | His swyn, his hors, his stoor, and his pultrye." Little more than an animal, his fate is evinced by his constant position at the rear of the company of pilgrims: the furthest from salvation. This seems to recognise that there will be recompense paid in the afterlife for holding cupiditas as one's central tenet, and, conversely, reward for caritas.

It is important to note that Chaucer's characters are neither stereotypes nor, as DW Robertson puts it "elaborate iconographic figures designed to show the manifold implications of an attitude". They are not one-sided unequivocal creations and my own interpretation of what Chaucer saw as their moral virtues and vices is far from unequivocal. The General Prologue, and of course The Canterbury Tales itself, is a rich and complex text, often ambivalent and ironic. Although we are dealing with archetypal figures, we are dealing with them outside the moral boundaries and strictures of everyday life; pilgrims in amoral zone of 'pleye' and 'game'. In Malcolm Andrew's words, "The poet creates a fiction with decontextualises his pilgrims: the commentators employ

a method which recontextualises them." In conclusion, Chaucer does not present us with a moral or philosophical thesis in these portraits. Nor does he provide an antithetical reaction against the hierarchal imposed moral and philosophical theses of church and feudal state. Instead, through his ambiguity and he offers us the opportunity to define and redefine the moral meaning of these brilliantly drawn portraits.

Elements of Drama and Novel in the Prologue

Chaucer had in him distinct characteristics of a novelist and a dramatist. His consummate art of story-telling in The Canterbury Tales does indicate that if he chose he could be one of the immortal novelists of the world. Chaucer proves himself a master of the art of characterisation, skilful in his handling of dialogue, delighting in action, and keenly alive to the value of effective situation and climax. Above all, he is the master of constructive art. He is able to weld different tales into harmonious groups.

The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales is the prologue of modern fiction. Its characterisation, realistic portrayal of life and a sort of structural unity give it the semblance of a novel in miniature. If we could take thirty per cent of Goldsmith, fifty of Fielding, and twenty of Walter Scott, and vitalise this compound with the spirit of the fourteenth century, we should get perhaps fairly near to another Chaucer. But it would be a Chaucer whose right hand wrote in prose and only his left in verse, and our formula, though it may be useful in suggesting the writers to whom Chaucer is most akin, and how modern he really is, would still be defective, for the charm of his poetry remains personal and individual. Chaucer like any other modern novelist was gifted with the ability of revealing the human heart and unravelling the complexities of sentiments.

Like a novelist Chaucer has a masterly **art of description and narration**. His portraits in the Prologue are no less vivid than the characters in any human comedy. The narrative style in the Prologue speaks of an inimitable precision and enviable literary style. The central incident is the pilgrimage which unifies the whole band of travellers to the shrine of St. Thomas into the inter-related people of a novel or the actors of a drama. Above all, it is Chaucer's stark realism and nearly complete objectivity which are the hall-marks of a modern novelist or a real dramatist of any age. The point is that Chaucer as it is evident to us in the Prologue does seem to be possessing the talents of a novelist and a dramatist. The prologues to the Tales are the counterparts of the soliloquies of Shakespeare or the monologues of Browning or the interior monologues of modern fiction writers. His negative capability matches the aesthetics of a true artist who presents his viewpoint not as a lyrical poet but as a passionate at the same time detached story-teller or playwright.

In Chaucer's works contains the seeds of the drama and novel. Had Chaucer been a contemporary of Shakespeare, he might well have written plays. Had he been a contemporary of Fielding, he might well have written novels. The power for both is implicit in the Canterbury Tales, and adds richness to that incomparable work. Throughout the Tales, there is not only creation, but interplay and clash of characters. The pilgrims, brilliantly pointed for us in the Prologue, are developed, and elaborated, some more, some less, as the poem proceeds, and always with a beautiful consistency. There is the mutual disparagement between the Miller and the Reeve, between the Summoner and the Friar; the attempt of the pardoner to make capital out of his story

and his vigorous repulse by the landlord. The Wife of Bath in the immensely garrulous and entertaining dissertation upon marriage, which precedes her story, reveals herself as a full-length comedy character, and satisfies, incidentally, the curiosity of the reader as to why he was casually told, in the Prologue, that she was deaf in one ear. The Knight (perfect and gentle) finds the Monk's catalogue of historical disasters unspeakably tedious. By means of these passages of narrative and comment between the tales Chaucer keeps his characters alive, each one being aware of the rest, so that the tales themselves, though they are in fact the main body of the work, are yet but an incident in the whole.

Chaucer is indeed properly to be called a poet; but he bears a closer relation to the great English novelists than to Spenser. The scholarship which is preoccupied with exposing the derivativeness of Chaucer's poetry tends also to obscure the remarkable newness of what Chaucer has done. How new Chaucer's poetry is it is difficult for us to apprehend because so many of the remarkable developments in English literature since—and each original author has been a new development—have been developments from what Chaucer did for the first time. The Canterbury Tales and Troilus and Criseyde are, if one thinks back to what there was before them which they are developments from, surprisingly new works of art.

With the Canterbury Tales Chaucer inaugurates the English novel; and, moreover, the Great Tradition of it. In this dramatic-poetic novel we see the English novel actually in being, with the characteristics of our eighteenth and nineteenth-century masterpieces. Chaucer's preoccupations here are those of the great novelists. He explores the theme of the individual's relation to the society in which he lives; launches the comedy of the clash of character and the conflict of interest and motives; and shows the comic and ironic effects obtainable from the class distinctions felt by the newly emerged bourgeoisie associated with the growth of town life and of the trades and commerce (the Wife of Bath is the new bourgeois wife asserting her independence). He observes, as do Jane Austen and George Eliot, the changes in manners and outlook between the older generation and the new—between the Knight and his son, and Franklin and his—and, like them he develops to the highest artistic level what is only in an elementary form elsewhere in his contemporaries the kind of characterization which distinguishes the English novel from Bunyan to Henry James—characters which, while exquisitely realistic in detail, are morally and socially typical.

Chaucer's tolerant observation and relish of humanity gave him a power of representing it, which has been rarely surpassed in any respect save depth. It has been disputed whether this power is rather that of the dramatist or that of the novelist, a dispute perhaps arguing a lack of the historic sense. In the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, Chaucer would certainly have been the one, and in the mid-nineteenth the other. It would be most satisfactory could we have his work. The author has, in fact, set himself a high task by adopting the double system above specified, and by giving elaborate descriptions of his personages before he sets them to act and speak up to these descriptions. It is a plan which, in the actual drama and the actual novel, has been found rather a dangerous one. But Chaucer discharges himself victoriously of his liabilities. And the picture of life which he has left us has captivated all good judges who have given themselves the very slight trouble necessary to attain the right point of view, from his own day to this.

Irony in The Prologue

Irony is a method of humorous or sarcastic expression in which the intended meaning of the words used is the direct opposite of their usual sense. It is also the feigning of ignorance in argument. The voice of the satirist speaking out of a mask is subtle irony. Behind the mask his face may be dark with fury or writhing with contempt, but his voice is calm, sometimes soberly earnest, sometimes lightly amused. The lips of the mask and its features are persuasive, almost real, perfectly controlled. Some of those who hear the voice, and see the polite lips, from which it issues, are persuaded that it is the utterance of truth and that the speaker believes everything he says. Aristotle said that irony was the opposite of boasting: it was mock-modesty, dissimulation, and self-depreciation.

Geoffrey Chaucer is frequently ironical in many respects. His irony is what metaphor is for later poets. Both irony and metaphor put into the same set of words a double meaning; whereas in metaphor they are linked by comparison, in irony they are linked by contrast. The linkage is important. In each case the two elements of the double meaning modify each other, though one may be dominant. In the case of irony the superficial 'false' meaning is still part of the total meaning. It modifies the "true" meaning, if only by asserting that even the underlying meaning is not the only competitor for our assent; or by establishing a limited validity even for simple mindedness. The obvious meaning is the contribution innocence makes to experience. More generally the duality of irony contributes a certain kind of uncertainty, and hence a need for toleration, not least for the poet himself, who uses irony to evade responsibility.

Chaucer’s irony is always gentle, seldom severe, and never savage. He is to all intents and purposes a comic ironist. His portraits in the Prologue to the Canterbury Tales are excellent examples of comic irony. In fact, throughout the Prologue the reader has to be on his guard against Chaucer's seeming enthusiasm towards each of his pilgrims, realising that his irony operates indirectly through praise that is characteristically excessive and generous, whether sincere or not.

In the Prologue his remarks about the **Knight** that **'He was a verray, parfit gentil knight'** are straightforwardly respectful, but his generous tribute to the **Monk** '**A manly man, to been an abbot able'** should leave us wondering whether he means that most abbots were appointed for their worldliness and self-indulgence. When he rounds off the description of the **Merchant** by remarking "**For sothe he was a worthy man with alle"** Chaucer's irony is obvious, for he has just disclosed the pilgrim's dishonesty and hypocritical manner. Similarly, that **'verray parfit praktisour'** the **Physician**, although described in terms which recall the Knight, observes a code which inverts the standards of truth, honour and liberality which the Knight strives to uphold. Here Chaucer's seeming praise is doubly ironic.

The **physician** is not the genuine, perfect practitioner of a noble ideal but shrewd, miserly and self-regarding. The **nun** in Madame Eglentine is a charming imposture, imperfectly concealing a woman whose social ambitions lead her into an absurd confusion of purposes—a mimicking of courtly mannerisms that are completely inappropriate to her calling. She is a specimen of fascinating disparity between what she is and what she seems to be, and Chaucer exploits this comic incongruity in a very subtle manner. The **Wife of Bath** is subjected to irony when Chaucer while praising her

charitable nature points out that she goes out of all charity if some other woman in the parish takes precedence over her in making the offering. The implication is that charity should be evidenced by humility, not by pride, by gentleness, not by anger.

Leaving aside such idealisation as the **Knight**, the **Parson** and the **Plowman**, it may be undeniably asserted that Chaucer takes men as he finds them, obtaining that kind of amusement in the ironic yet sympathetic observation of his fellows which yields itself only to the artist's vision. Although he has a loving relish for human behaviour and human weakness, it is wrong, as some critics tend to do, to play down his irony. A high proportion of his pilgrims are rascals, and Chaucer knows that they are. Nor can we ignore his clear attack on corruption in the Church, though here again the attack is done obliquely through the presentation of individual characters. The **Monk** and the **Friar** and the **Summoner** are amusing enough characters as Chaucer describes them, but the behaviour of the latter two, brilliantly presented and magnificently comic though it is, is the behaviour of petty blackguards. The **Pardoner**, perhaps Chaucer's greatest masterpiece of character drawing, implies a whole world of moral hypocrisy.

Lastly, there is an element of Socratic irony in the prologue. He not only uses irony in portrayal of other character but also his own character and says: **My wit is short, ye may well understand**. Chaucer's point of view is no doubt secular throughout the Prologue, and he is intrigued rather than shocked by the weaknesses of human nature. But irony always has moral implications, and Chaucer in the Prologue to the Canterbury Tales was not an ironist for nothing.

Satire in The Prologue

Satire is a genre of literature in which vices, follies, abuses, and shortcomings are held up to ridicule, ideally with the intent of shaming individuals, corporations, government or society itself, into improvement. Although satire is usually meant to be humorous, its greater purpose is often constructive social criticism, using wit as a weapon and as a tool to draw attention to both particular and wider issues in society. Satire differs from humour in that it has a definite moral purpose. The satirist deliberately alienates our sympathies from those whom he describes, and as the true humorist is apt to pass from comedy to romance, and from romance to tragedy, so the satirist not infrequently ends by finding rage and disgust overpower his sense of the ridiculous. The fact is that satire is not Chaucer's natural bent. His interest lies in portraiture rather than in exposure. His object is to point life as he sees it, to hold up the mirror to nature.

Chaucer's kinship as a satirist is with Fielding. They are alike in a certain air of rollicking good-fellowship and a determination to paint men and women as they know them. Both enjoy a rough prank, and have little patience with over-refinement. Both give the readers a sense of studies honesty and kindliness, and know how to combine tenderness with strength. Both with all their tolerance, have a keen eye for hypocrisy or affectation and a sharp tongue wherewith to chastise and expose it. Chaucer hates no one, not even the Pardoner.

In Chaucer we have no sustained satire of the Popean or the Swiftean type. His genius is like that of Shakespeare, having a high degree of negative capability. Hence, Chaucer gives us no impression of being a great satirist, although in his writings especially in the

portraits of the Prologue we have sharp little sallies of satire. It would be rather more suitable to call Chaucer a comic satirist in relation to his Prologue to the Canterbury Tales. Comic satire predominates in extraordinarily rich Prologue.

There are, therefore, certain limitations of scope. The higher aristocracy are excluded, for the Knight is comparatively low ranking, and is in any case an ideal figure. The painfulness and rough comedy of the life of the great mass of the really poor find no place, and again their two representatives are idealized portraits. The characters of highest and lowest ranks were not suitable for comic treatment. In the Prologue we mainly see the middling people, and we see them through Chaucer's eyes from a slightly superior moral and social station. We can afford to laugh at them. We look through the eyes of a poet masculine, self-assured, delighted, who knows that there is "joy after woe, and after joy, sadness. He sees abuses but is neither surprised nor stung by them. Men are not angels, but neither are they devils. Chaucer gives us a vision of men and women in the world, and most of them have some relish of absurdity when looked at carefully especially when they require neither our loyalty nor our fear.

Chaucer does not see his company of pilgrims simply as an incongruous assortment of pantomime figures, to be enjoyed for their grotesquely comic oddity. The pervasive element of social satire in the General Prologue—most prominent in his account of the ecclesiastical figures—suggests Chaucer's serious concern at the debasing of moral standards. There are moments, as when he records the Friar's sneering contempt for the poor, which seem to show Chaucer's habitual good temper revolting against the cynical opportunism which had become widespread in ecclesiastical life. His usual attitude towards the moral weakness which he discloses is one of mocking. The Shipman is a thievish pirate, the Reeve a cunning embezzler, the Physician has a dishonest private understanding with his druggist, and the Man of Law 'semed bisier than he was'. The efforts of the Prioress to mimic courtly manners are detected and set down with the same intuitive sense of false appearance as allows Chaucer to penetrate the Merchant's imposing disguise. The mask of respectability is not roughly torn off, for while he is describing his pilgrims Chaucer is maintaining an outward manner that is awed and deferential; telling us that the Prioress was 'of greet desport', that the Monk was a manly man, 'to been an abbot able', or that the murderous Shipman was an incomparable navigator and pilot.

Because he does not insist upon their moral failings or hypocritical nature, revealing them with an ironic innocence of manner and leaving them to speak for themselves, Chaucer's approach to his pilgrims suggests a psychologist rather than a moralist' He presents vices and shortcomings within the context of human individuality, as a product of the curious pressures which stamp a unique personality upon each of the pilgrims. The Shipman's easy conscience is an integral part of the tough, self-reliant spirit of the man, which has acquired the wilfulness and moral unconcern of the elements in which he lives. His thefts and murders, the Franklin's Epicureanism, the Physician's avarice, interest Chaucer not as evidence of a breakdown of moral values but for what they reveal of individual character.

Thus Chaucer's satire is not directed against contemporary morals, but against the comic self-ignorance which gives man two' identities—the creature he is, and the more distinguished and inscrutable person he imagines himself to be.

Chaucer's Poetic style

The style of an author is his distinctive manner of writing or expressing thought in language. In commenting on Chaucer's style, it would be well to remember that he was writing in English at a time when that language was in a rather poor state of development. To Chaucer goes the credit of having developed the condition of his native language to such an extent, that only the addition of blank verse was required to make English poetry fully equipped. He took up a dialect and left it a language. He enriched it by-adapting words from foreign languages, especially French. He infused the rough English dialect with the refinement and polish of the French language. He brought flexibility to his native language.

Conversational and colloquial style: - As we read The Prologue to The Canterbury Tales, we are immediately struck by its conversational tone. The verse flows with a pleasing fluidity. It shows Chaucer's mastery of the decasyllabic couplet. We find ordinary speech, common proverbs and idiomatic terms, and even contemporary slang in his poetry. It provides a conversational viewpoint to Chaucer's style.

Chaucer's **use of contemporary idiomatic terms and phrases,** adds to the colloquial style. One such instance, which immediately comes to mind, is in the lines about the Monk :

He yaf not of that text a pulled hen And
But thilke text heeld he nat worth an oystre.

In The Prologue, we come across a **racy and forceful style**, which has the pungency of a proverb. It is especially evident in the fabliaux (comic verse), which present the comic aspects of ordinary life.

His owene hand he made laddres thre,
To climben by the rouges and the stalkes……
Unto the tubbes hanginge in the balkes ...

Chaucer's skill, in fact, lies in the smooth transition, which is effected from the "high" to the colloquial style.

Forceful directness and immediacy of style: - Chaucer's style has a directness and immediacy, which comes from the habitual employment of the verb 'to be' in describing the pilgrims. His statements are so plain and simple that they admit no qualifications.

"**A Monk ther was",** "his heed was balled", "**whit was bard as is the dayesie**"—these statements are clear, solid and irrefutable. The terms in which the pilgrims are described, are simple and direct. The most common of the adjectives used are, perfect, gay, fair, wise, and worthy. They often gain their strength and directness through masterly placing in a line. The Wife of Bath comes alive before us in the simplest, but so very graphic terms: **Bold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe.**

The Shipman's tanned face is vividly described in very ordinary words:

The hoote smoer hadde masd his hewe brown.
Forceful directness of the figures of speech

The simple immediacy which marks the adjectives used for the pilgrims is to be found in Chaucer's images, too. Chaucer has plenty of images and similes. But they are all simple, direct, and never elaborate. At the same time, they have vivid and arresting quality. **His mouth as greet was a greet forneys** says Chaucer, and we get a direct picture of the cavernous mouth of the Miller. The Squire is "**as fresh as is the month of May**". The Friar's neck is as white as a lily (flour-delys), and his eyes shine like "**stars in the frosty night."** The Miller's beard is as red "**as any sow or fox**", while the Franklin has a beard, "**white as is a daisy."** The graphic description of the tuft of hair on the wart of the Miller's nose, is unforgettable. It is red "**as the bristles of a sow's ears".** The Pardoner's eyes look like those of a hare, and he has a voice which resembles that of goat. The Monk's horse is "**as brown as a berry"**, and the Franklin's purse is "**white as morning milk",** while the poor Oxford Clerk's horse is "**lean as rake".**

The images are derived from the common spheres of experience. They are uncomplicated and direct. Chaucer does not employ extended simile and metaphor in his poetry. His images are drawn from homely and familiar fields of life.

Use of intensifying terms to emphasise a point: - A special stylistic device used by Chaucer is the emphatic manner in which he underscores his point. Some of his statements have an air of clear finality. **"He was a verray parfit, gentil knyght",** sums up the Knight in simple and direct words. Some of the words which Chaucer uses frequently to intensify and emphasise a point, are ful, wd, al, certainly. They are all affirmative and positive terms. It seems to indicate a stylistic device through which Chaucer associates himself with the positive and generous outlook on life.

The Monk is "**a lord ful fat and in good poynt"** and "certainly he was a fair prelate". The Frankin had "**full many a fat partrirch"** in his house to satisfy his epicurean taste. The use of these intensive adjectives is at its most effective in the description of the five Guildsmen. Though they are described collectively, they are given a sharper reality by the emphasis implied in the terms, ful and al.

Ful fresshe and newe hir geere apiked was;
hir knives were chaped noght with bras
Bill al with silver; wrought ful clene and wel.

Chaucer emphasises on a point at times through arranging words in a way, which is not the normal manner :

God loved he best with al his hoote herte

The medieval stylistic device of alliteration is also to be found in Chaucer's poetry:

Ful long were his legges and ful lene
Ful byg he was of brawn, and eek of bones.

It gives the lines a musical effect. There are some words which Chaucer seems very fond of and which he uses fairly often. 'Wel koude he', wel knew he,' 'ful byg, etc., occur quite a few times in his poetry. Mostly, 'wel', 'ful', etc., are employed to enhance the metrical effect of the lines.

In conclusion, his style is direct, plain and conversational. His imagery is likewise direct and vivid, drawn from common and familiar fields of experience. He has a masterly ability of making a smooth transition from the 'high' to the colloquial style, without losing any fluidity of movement. He shows a sure judgement and confidence in the choice of the right words. The charm of fluent simplicity and perfect appropriateness of word to thought, make Chaucer's style an important aspect of his poetry.

Character of the Wife of Bath

The most vivid and famous portrait in The Prologue to The Canterbury Tales, is, perhaps, the Wife of Bath. She is one character in whom the realistic and the individualistic elements of portraiture outweigh the typical. She is the most entertaining character in The Prologue. We enjoy her sheer vitality, robustness and earthy essence. Chaucer accepted folly, vice and immorality as part and parcel of men as well as women. In presentation of the Wife of Bath, we certainly do have satire, but the satire is not violent or bitter and fierce.

A vivid character of flesh and blood: - The Wife of Bath is the essence of elemental vitality. She is the woman of earthy physical passion, firm boldness and dominating personality. She comes before us vividly. Her red face, bold expression, huge and voluptuous body attired in a riding coat, the gaps in her teeth, her new shoes, broad wimple adoring her head, and her heavy and fine kerchiefs, all add to a startlingly vivid character of flesh and blood. She would not tolerate any other woman of her parish to give the offering before her at church. She was fully insistent on her rights of precedence, as she was a rich and prominent member of her parish. If any confusion about precedence occurred, she would be 'out of all charitee'. The Wife of Bath did not suffer from any false modesty. She knew her place in society and laid full claims to it.

Her forceful personality and experience of the world: - It is not without significance that she is the finest weaver in the country. She is a prosperous and important member of her community. Naturally, she dresses in accordance with her position in society. Her appearance is neat as well as forceful. She wore the best of clothes, though she was slightly overdressed on Sundays. However, she would want to impress upon the world that she is a successful business woman. She wears her bright scarlet stockings neatly and straight.

Her kerchiefs are 'full fine of ground', i.e., of fine texture. Her knowledge of travelling and experience of pilgrimages is shown in her choice of suitable dress and mount for the occasion. She wears a protective outer skirt around her broad and generous hips, and is mounted on an ambling horse, which has been trained to walk in a manner most comfortable for the rider. She also wears spurs, and hence we can conclude that she rides astride and not side-saddle.

The Wife of Bath has a forceful personality which suits her generous physical attributes. She has a firm mind which knows its wants clearly. She also knows how to get what she wants. She is jolly, gossipy, and popular woman fond of men's company and well versed in the art of love. She has widely travelled. We are told that she had visited Jerusalem thrice, besides other places of pilgrimage.

Her amorous adventure: - Her physical vitality is best represented by her various amorous adventures. She is a much-married woman—she has had five husbands and is ready for the sixth. Her promptitude in getting husbands would not have surprised her fellow pilgrims. The Wife of Bath, with her eager willingness to get married, would have found husbands with even greater promptitude. She is, however, the dominant partner in marriage. She would not allow her husband to rule the home. She would have firm control over her home as well as her husband. In her Prologue to her tale, she remarks.

"I wol bistowe the flour of al myn age
In the acts and in fruyt of marriage"

She is entirely as secular figure, and confesses that she has never aspired to live the perfect life. She has no use for transcendental religion.

The Wife of Bath has experienced not merely marital love, but has had a number of affairs in her youth. Her experience of love is subtly summed up by Chaucer when he says at the end of her portrait:

Or remedies of love she knew per chauce,
For She koude of that art the old chauce..

Two striking features : gap teeth and deafness: - The most vivid physical attributes of the Wife of Bath are, perhaps, that she was 'some-del def' and 'gat-toothed'. Gap teeth indicated wide travel, amorousness, and an envious, faithless, irreverent, luxurious, and bold nature. The Wife of Bath has all these features. The reason for her getting somewhat deaf is given later. Her fifth husband in an attempt to assert his male superiority hit her across her ears. But beyond the damage to her ears, we may be quite sure that Wife of Bath would not have allowed her husband to gain any superiority.

Her war against male domination: - The Wife of Bath is a pure militant as far as women's liberation is concerned. She is not merely an aggressive, uninhibited, vulgar woman dominating the particular men fortunate or unfortunate enough to have been married by her. She embodies the eternal female in revolt against a male-ordered and male-centred civilization. Men's evils and vices were firmly attributed to the temptation signified by women. The Wife of Bath, despite all her vulgarity and boisterous coarseness, embodies the demand for respectability for woman as individuals. She is at once a representative of all that a man dislikes in a women—nagging, spending, gossiping, etc.—and what every woman desires for, which is domination over males.

Conclusion: - The Wife of Bath has an awe-inspiring personality, overwhelming in its impact and flamboyancy. It is apt that she should be on the pilgrimage to Canterbury, for a pilgrimage in the Middle Ages was a means of pleasure as well as an object of

piety. The Wife of Bath is a clear-cut individual in her self-revelation before she tells her tale or gives her opinion on marriage, and tells her adventures in the marital field without a sign of inhibition. The Wife of Bath is the most complex character among the pilgrims.

The Prologue as a Picture of Fourteenth Century England

Chaucer is truly the social chronicler of England at the end of fourteenth century. His work is the most precious document for whoever wishes to evoke a picture of life as it then was. The fact is that Chaucer had intimate knowledge of the crosscurrents of English society of his time. His keen observation, vast study, extensive travel and variegated experience in the service of the state had familiarised him with the entire pageant of social life of those days. It was with the intention of describing his boundless knowledge of men and manners that he conceived the plan of the Canterbury Tales which encompass every aspect of life in the fourteenth century England.

The group of pilgrims described in the Prologue is itself an unequalled picture of the Society of Chaucer's time. Here are some thirty persons belonging to the most different classes. There is a **Knight** lately come from the foreign wars. He is a high-minded gentle-mannered, knightly adventurer, type of the courteous, war-loving chivalry which was passing rapidly away. With him is his son, a young **Squire**, curly haired and gay, his short, white-sleeved gown embroidered like mead with red-and-white flowers. He is an epitome of the gifts and graces of brilliant youth. Their servant is a **Yeoman**, in coat and hoof of a green, a sheaf of peacock-arrows under his belt, a mighty bow in his hand. He is the type of solid English yeomanry.

There is a whole group of ecclesiastical figures, representing in their numbers and variety the diverse activities of the medieval church. Most of them are **satirical portraits**, in their worldliness and materialism only too faithfully representative of the ecclesiastical abuses against which Wycliffe struggled. First of all there is a **Monk**, who cares only for hunting and good cheer. His bald head shines like glass, his bright eyes roll in his head. He rides a sleek brown palfrey, and has "many a dainty horse" in his stables. His sleeves are trimmed with fine fur at the wrists ; his hood is fastened under his chin with a gold love-not. As a companion figure to the hunting Monk, Chaucer gives us "Madame Eglantyne," the **Prioress**. She is a teacher of young ladies, speaks French "after the school of Stratford-atte-bowe." is exquisite in her table-manners, counterfeiting as well as she can the stately behaviour of court.

Other ecclesiastics are there, hangers-on and caterpillars of the church. The **Friar**, intimate with hospitable franklins, innkeepers, and worthy women, despises beggars and lazars. The **Summoner** is a repulsive person with "fire-red cherubim face". The **Pardoner** "come from Rome all note" has a bag full of pardons which he sells as relics of the holy saints to gullible people. Chaucer's treatment of these evil churchmen is highly good-natured and tolerant. He never takes the tone of moral indignation against them. But he does better, he sets beside them, as the type of true shepherds of the church, a "poor **Parson**”. Chaucer paints the character of the Parson, poor in this world's goods, but "rich of holy thought and work," with loving and reverent touch. The Parson's brother travels with him—a **Plowman**, a "true swinker and a good", who helps his poor

neighbours without hire and loves them as himself. He reminds us of Piers the Plowman, in the wonderful Vision which is the antitype of Chaucer's work.

A crowd of other figures fill the canvas. There is a **shipman** from the west-country, a representative of those adventurous seamen, half merchant-sailors, half smugglers and pirates, who had already made England's, name a terror on the seas and paved the way for her future naval and commercial supremacy. There is a poor **Clerk of Oxford**, riding a horse as lean as a rake, and dressed in threadbare cloak, who spends all that he can beg or borrow upon his studies. He represents that passion for learning which was already astir everywhere in Europe, and which was awaiting only the magic touch of the new-found classical literature to blossom out into genuine thought and imagination. There is a **Merchant**, in a Flemish beaver hat, on a high horse, concealing, with the grave importance of his air, the fact that he is in debt. There is a group of **guild-members,** in the livery of their guild, all worthy to be aldermen; together with the merchant, they represent the mercantile and manufacturing activity which was lifting England rapidly to the rank of a great commercial power. There is the **Wife of Bath**, almost a modern feminist figure, conceived with masterly humour and realism, a permanent human type. She has had "husbands five at church-door, "and though" somdel deaf," hopes to live to wed several others. She rides on an ambler, with spurs and scarlet hose on her feet, and on her head a hat as broad as a buckler.

Apart from the men and their manners, the Prologue also sheds light on **contemporary clothing, food and occupations**. Almost every character man or woman is in a typical dress and other personal array. Several of the pilgrims are conspicuously armed, others carry small items of equipment, like a silken purse or a pouch or a pair of sharp spurs or a musical instrument. Chaucer uses the details of clothing and other outfit not only to describe the pilgrim's appearance but also to throw further light on his or her character. Thus the Wife of Bath, with her ambition to be the first wife in her parish. The brooch of the Prioress bearing the motto Amor Vincit Omnia indicates that this nun has a character vacillating between secular and divine love.

Chaucer's descriptions of the pilgrims and their food vary at a great deal. We only read that the Knight on his campaigns had often "the bord bigonne," that the Squire "carf before his fader" at the table, and that the Prioress had elegant table manners, never slobbered, and liked to feed her little dogs on bread and milk. The Monk loved hunting and presumably ate venison and game. His special dish was a roast fat swan, a delicacy usually eaten only by kings, abbots, and such folk. We are not told that the Friar had any specially favourite dish, but instead of consorting with the poor, like St. Francis, he loved taverns and tapsters, and all "sellers of vitaille." The Summoner loved garlic, onions, leeks, and strong bood-red wine. This exuberant taste no doubt accounted for his bad, incurable complexion. The Clerk of Oxford quite frankly preferred books to food, and economised in order to add to his library. But the Franklin was a real epicure. His bread and ale were always first class, and his house was never without baked meats, both fish and flesh. It snowed meat and drink in his house, and he had all seasonable dainties provided, partridges, bream, pike, with suitable sauces. He kept practically open house, and was severe with his cook if the flavouring of his dishes was not absolutely to his taste.

The Cook who accompanied the party was the sort of man employed by a City company or at an Inn of Court or by an innkeeper. He was an expert, and could boil chickens and

marrow bones, and cook well-flavoured tarts. He appreciated London ale, and could roast, seethe, boil, and fry and was a successful maker of meat-pies and blanc-mange.

The list of the Cook's capabilities gives us a good idea of the scope of entertainment possible for people of comfortable means, and a good deal of this variety could be obtained at biggish inns on well-known highways and in large towns.

Chaucer has made a **direct transcription from common life**; and, since ordinary things and ordinary people are the most representative, he has provided an invaluable document for those who wish to call up the social life of the time. But Chaucer does not attempt to chronicle contemporary events, nor concern himself with politics or public questions. Chaucer, like his pilgrims, is more interested in his own. His characters, like the majority of people in all time, are wrapped up in their own affairs, and untroubled by the storms around them, except insofar as their private interests are touched. Nevertheless, they are distinctive of their time and country. The Knight stands for the finest chivalry of the Crusades. The clergy are characteristic of his time. Chaucer painted from the life, are the actual men whose vices and corruption Wycliffe and his followers denounced so vehemently.

Finally, it must be borne in mind that as a painter of his society Chaucer acts more as a poet and artist than as a chronicler. His treatment of English men and manners of the fourteenth Century is not as a social reformer but as a tolerant humanist and his attitude of toleration carries more conviction than the denunciation of a moralist.

The Prologue : As a portrait gallery

The Prologue has rightly been called a 'portrait-gallery'. The pilgrims, who collect at the Tabard to set out on their journey to Canterbury, belong to a variety of classes and professions. Chaucer is the first English poet to present such a lovely procession of men and women, who are differentiated from one another by the subtlest touches of characterization. The characters come alive on the pages of The Prologue. They are vital and realistic.

Cross-section of the fourteenth century English society: - The Prologue is often referred to as a social chronicle, and Chaucer as a social historian. Though The Prologue is much more than a mere social chronicle, there is truth in the remark that it gives a cross-section of English society in the fourteenth century. Through the clever device of a pilgrimage, Chaucer has been able to assemble the representatives of the widest possible section of the society of his day. Only the aristocracy and the lowest rungs of society are left out—both classes would have been out of place on such a pilgrimage.

The Knight heads the procession of pilgrims. He has the highest social position among Chaucer's pilgrims. He belongs to the **Chivalric code**. He is accompanied by his son, who is also his **Squire**, and by his **Yeoman**, as was customary for the knights of the medieval times. The Knight has distinguished himself in battle, both in heathen and Christian lands. His son, too, has shown his prowess in wars. He represents the devotee of courtly love. The Yeoman is a forester and a loyal servant to the **Knight** and the Squire.

After the chivalric order, comes the **ecclesiastical order**, i.e., the representatives of the regular clergy. We have a **Prioress**, a **Monk**, and a **Friar**. Each presents the various degrees of corruption and degeneracy which was prevalent in the religious orders of the day. The Prioress' mind seems to be divided between the demands of the religious and the attractions of the secular aspects of life. The motto on her brooch, 'Love Conquers All', clearly indicates the confusion. The Monk hunts and enjoys sumptuous food, contrary to his vows of seclusion and abstinence. The Friar is typical of the order as found in Chaucer's time. He makes money by misusing his authority.

After the ecclesiastical characters representing the regular clergy, we have a procession of **middle class representatives**. Among them are the representatives of trade, the learned professions, a sailor, and other occupations. The **Miller** typifies his class of the day in his ability to cheat and make money. The **Municipal** is clever enough to outwit his learned masters. The **Reeve** cheats both his lord and the tenants.

The rising interest and stability in **trade** is represented by the **Merchant**, whose main desire is to keep the seas free of piracy. The **Shipman** represents England's widening power over the seas. He is typical of the sea captains of the day in his ruthlessness and lack of conscience. There is a **Franklin** who is hospitable and well off. The learned professions are represented by **The Doctor of Physic** and **The Oxford Clerk.** Typical of his age and, perhaps, typical of some doctors through all ages, Chaucer's physician is not too worried by making money out of an epidemic. He likes gold, we are told. **The Lawyer**, too, is adept at entailing property for his own benefit. The **rising middle** class is represented by the **five prosperous guildsmen** whose wives are ambitious of great status and respectability.

If the **corruptness of the clergy** is once again evident in the lecherous **Summoner** and the Cheating **Pardoner**, we have the **good Christian spirit** exemplified in the **Parson** and his brother the **Ploughman**. But the Summoner and The Pardoner exemplify the corruption and degeneracy of morals in Chaucer's time. The Summoner teaches the people the exact opposite of what he is supposed to tell them. He is quite ready to ignore the sins of people if they are willing to bribe him. The Pardoner sells false relics and bogus pardons. Both are partners of an equal temper.

Perhaps the most vibrant personality in The Prologue is **the Wife of Bath**. While she is more individualised than typical, she also represents the **rising middle class**. She is a first-rate weaver of cloth, and a very rich woman. A much married woman, she indicates the existing social conditions in which rich single women were never left single for long.

Typical, universal and individual traits of the characters: - The pilgrims represent different classes and professions of the time. They embody the traits which are considered typical of then: particular position in society and their profession. Incidentally, Chaucer's pilgrims represent the 'best' in each profession. **The Doctor's greed** for making money at the time of an epidemic is at once **typical of the medieval doctor** and also seems to be an individual trait of the particular doctor.

Particulars of dress, moral qualities, behaviour, special features, idiosyncrasies, etc., serve to individualise the pilgrims. The **Squire's pleasantly embroidered dress** and his constant singing, give an individual touch. The Knight's fustian doublet indicates his sober nature while contrasting him with its hair like the bristles of a sow's ears. We 'see'

the thinness of the Reeve and the Franklin's beard, which is white as a daisy. The Wife of Bath is a vibrant personality who wears scarlet stocking and huge kerchiefs. She laughs and jokes and exhibits exuberant energy. The fearsome ugliness of the Summoner comes out clearly in his red face full of pimples. He gets drunk and is fond of garlic and leek. **The Pardoner, has thin hair and shining eyes like hare's**. His voice is thin as a goat's. The Monk wears rich clothes, which at once typifies the fourteenth century monks while individualising him. The Prioress has exquisite table manners.

The details are not only typical of each pilgrim's class. They often belong to **basic human nature**. We may not find such a Miller now, but the traits embodied in the Miller could easily be found in some other person. The **vibrant sexuality and boisterous sense** of fun of the **Wife of Bath** can be found in some **human beings in all ages and nations**. This is true of most of the traits shown by Chaucer in his pilgrims. He has given in each one certain basic feature which are common to human beings through the ages. And he has dealt with all possible facets of the human personality in his pilgrims. We see a mixture of the good and the bad, and all shades of grey as well. We see the Chaucer's tolerant vision and joy in God's creation.

Lastly, Chaucer shows the full realisation that God has created all kinds of human beings, and there is no cause for man to disapprove or criticise violently. He accepted the imperfections in human beings, and presented them in all their variety without castigating their vices or frowning upon their follies. He was an amused and tolerant spectator of God's plenty. He took keen joy in the created world. Life to him was a vast field of delights, and this is very much evident in The Prologue.

"Three poets, in three distant ages born,
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn.
The first in loftiness of thought surpassed;
The next, in majesty; in both the last.
The force of Nature could no further go.
To make a third, she joined the former two."

John Dryden

"O mighty-mouth'd inventor of harmonies,
O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,
God-gifted organ-voice of England,
Milton, a name to resound for ages;"

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

JOHN MILTON (1608-1674)

John Milton was born in London on December 9, 1608, into a middle-class family. He was educated at St. Paul's School, then at Christ's College, Cambridge, where he began to write poetry in Latin, Italian, and English, and prepared to enter the clergy.

After university, however, he abandoned his plans to join the priesthood and spent the next six years in his father's country home in Buckinghamshire following a rigorous course of independent study to prepare for a career as a poet. His extensive reading included both classical and modern works of religion, science, philosophy, history, politics, and literature. In addition, Milton was proficient in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, Spanish, and Italian, and obtained a familiarity with Old English and Dutch as well.

During his period of private study, Milton composed a number of poems, including "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," "On Shakespeare," "L'Allegro," "Il Penseroso," and the pastoral elegy "Lycidas." In May of 1638, Milton began a 13-month tour of France and Italy, during which he met many important intellectuals and influential people, including the astronomer Galileo, who appears in Milton's tract against censorship, "Areopagitica."

In 1642, Milton returned from a trip into the countryside with a 16-year-old bride, Mary Powell. Even though they were estranged for most of their marriage, she bore him three daughters and a son before her death in 1652. Milton later married twice more: Katherine Woodcock in 1656, who died giving birth in 1658, and Elizabeth Minshull in 1662.

During the English Civil War, Milton championed the cause of the Puritans and Oliver Cromwell, and wrote a series of pamphlets advocating radical political topics including the morality of divorce, the freedom of the press, populism, and sanctioned regicide. Milton served as secretary for foreign languages in Cromwell's government, composing official statements defending the Commonwealth. During this time, Milton steadily lost his eyesight, and was completely blind by 1651. He continued his duties, however, with the aid of Andrew Marvell and other assistants.

After the Restoration of Charles II to the throne in 1660, Milton was arrested as a defender of the Commonwealth, fined, and soon released. He lived the rest of his life in seclusion in the country, completing the blank-verse epic poem Paradise Lost in 1667, as well as its sequel Paradise Regained and the tragedy Samson Agonistes both in 1671. Milton oversaw the printing of a second edition of Paradise Lost in 1674, which included an explanation of "why the poem rhymes not," clarifying his use of blank verse, along with introductory notes by Marvell. He died shortly afterwards, on November 8, 1674, in Buckinghamshire, England.

Paradise Lost, which chronicles Satan's temptation of Adam and Eve and their expulsion from Eden, is widely regarded as his masterpiece and one of the greatest epic poems in world literature. Since its first publication, the work has continually elicited debate regarding its theological themes, political commentary, and its depiction of the fallen angel Satan who is often viewed as the protagonist of the work.

The epic has had wide-reaching effect, inspiring other long poems, such as Alexander Pope's The Rape of the Lock, William Wordsworth's The Prelude and John Keats's Endymion, as well as Mary Shelley's novel Frankenstein, and deeply influencing the work of Percy Bysshe Shelley and William Blake, who illustrated an edition of the epic.

The Rise of Puritanism in the Age of Milton

The Age of Milton, the age in which the great poet matured and created, covers roughly the first seventy years or so of the 17th century. Thus in a way Milton is the connecting link between the glorious age of Queen Elizabeth, the Puritan age which followed, and the Restoration Age. It was an age of disillusionment, of increasing gloom and pessimism, and this melancholy and gloom of the age colours the literature of the period. In order to appre-ciate the spirit of Milton's works it is essential to form an idea of his age.

Nature of Puritanism: - It was during this period that Puritanism emerged as the great controlling, moral and social force. Let us here first consider what we exactly mean by Puritanism and then proceed to examine the political, social and religious causes that gave rise to it, and its impact on the literature of the period.

In the broadest sense Puritanism may be regarded as the renaissance of the moral sense of man. The Greco-Roman renais-sance of 15th and 16th centuries was largely pagan and sensuous. It did not touch the moral nature of man, it did nothing for his religious, political and social emancipation. The Puritan movement, on the other hand, was the greatest movement for moral and politi-cal reform. Its aims were:

(1) Religious liberty i.e., that men should be free to worship according to their conscience
(2) Civil liberty i.e., they should enjoy full civil liberty.

The Puritans wanted to make men honest and to make them free. They insisted on the purity of life. In matters of religion the Puritans were fanatics. They were extremists. There had been Puritans even during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. They did not accept the Anglican Church, which was essentially a compromise between Catholicism and Protestantism. They considered its creeds and public worship as too much like Popery. They advocated Church reform. Moreover, they had very strict view about life and conduct. They laid down very austere ideals of life. They were against common pleasures, even innocent ones, like drama, considered singing and dancing as immoral, and hence in the beginning the term 'Puritan' was a term of contempt applied to such extremists. We find frequent satirical references to them in the plays of Shakespeare. The general tendency of the Puritan was anti-social. "Beauty in his eyes was a snare and pleasure a sin; the only mode of social intercourse which he approved was a sermon." As Macaulay puts it, he hated bear-baiting, not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectator. The Puritans thus stood for

(1) Church reform,

(2) For the reform of social life according to their austere ideals,

(3) For the ideal of liberty, both religious and political—man should be free to worship according to his own conscience unhampered by the state.

Various Causes of Its Rise

Political: - The wise, moderate policies of Queen Elizabeth had appealed to all sections of society and Puritanism could not make much headway. But conditions changed with the coming of James I to the throne; the wise Elizabethan compromise soon broke down. A number of causes led to widespread discontent and the emergence of the Puritans as a strong national force. First, there was the theory of the divine right of kings, the theory that the king could do no wrong. James I had exalted ideals of kingship and aimed at despotic powers, but he was not fitted to play the role of flawless divinity. He was ill-mannered, grotesque, and tactless in appearance, and soon made the English Court the laughing stock of Europe. This divine right theory was not palatable to

the English people, it smacked of tyranny and shocked the innate English love of indepen-dence. Puritans regarded it as a direct attack upon their personal and political liberty.

Immorality and Corruption: -Secondly, the immorality and profligacy of the king and his courtiers also fed the flames of discontent. The corruption in high places did much to alienate the sympathies of the common man, and greatly strengthened the moral and social influence of the Puritans, who despised the Court, "as a place of infamy, alien to all good morals". Immorality of the king and the Court is a frequent object of satire in the contemporary literature.

Economic: -Thirdly, James and his ministers were extravagant, they were constantly in debt and constantly in need of money. When James approached the Parliament for money, it demanded more rights and privileges for itself—that it should control religion and finance, and even give advice on foreign policy. James then tried to raise money by granting trade monopolies to his favourites. This raised the hostility of the traders, merchants and manufacturers. It was an encroachment on their rights, and economic virtues of thrift, sobriety and economic living appealed to this middle-class element. Thus emerged a union of interests against James I. This makes the Jacobean Age, a period of stress and strain giving rise to a sense of frustration, and disillusionment.

Internal Dissensions: -The absence of foreign wars also did much to foster internal dissensions. After the defeat of the Spanish Armada, there was no longer any danger of a foreign attack. A foreign war has the great merit of diverting the attention of the people. Now freed from the fears of foreign war, more and more people turned to the discussion of domestic politics. Criticism of the policies of the King and of the immorality and artificiality of his court was widespread. Thus was fostered the critical and satirical temper which is reflected in the plays of Ben Jonson. Social evils were rampant, and satirical references to the follies of the age are frequent in the literature of the period. The rift between the king and his people widened. The court became more uxurious and extravagant, the people were more and more alienated, the appeal of Puritanism increased, and it became a significant force in national life.

Tactlessness of Charles I: - James I was sufficiently clever and died just sufficiently soon, and thus in his reign there was no open conflict between the king and his people. But he left behind him serious problems for his son Charles I (1625). Charles was handsome, cultured and graceful, just such a king as was likely to win the heart of his people. However, he was tactless and did not attach much importance to public sentiments. He surrounded himself with evil counsellors— and with their help tried to enforce the divine right theory of kings. His absolutism roused the apprehensions of the people. In politics he was entirely unscrupulous. Moreover, he had a Catholic queen and was himself suspected of having Catholic leanings. His policies both religious and political, both in Scotland and Ireland, were complete and abject failures. The treasury was already bankrupt and he and his courtiers were not only profligates but also highly extravagant. In dire need of funds, he appealed to the Parliament which demanded even greater privileges for itself. No compromise was possible between the despotic Charles and the Parliament consisting mainly of elements hostile to the King. The stress and strains in national life increased resulting in the Civil War between the King and the Parliament which broke out in 1641.

Frustration and Disillusionment—Loss of Faith:- The age of Milton is an age of uncertainty, misgiving, despondency, anxiety, frustration, pessimism and inner gloom, and in all these respects in sharp contrast to the glorious and exuberant age of Elizabeth when the nation marched from achievement to achievement with zest and confidence. There are a number of political and social causes for this mood of mis-giving and apprehension which overtook the nation during this period. The personal unpopularity of

the king, James I, uncouth and awkward, who made the English court the laughing stock of all Europe, the lowering of standards of national morality and conduct, loss of national dignity, slackness of discipline, plots and intrigues both political and religious, increasing fear of French and Papal interventions, all contributed to the atmosphere of uncertainty and misgiving, and this in its turn bred pessimism and frustration. Further, there was a clash of ideals and philosophies; the old world, the medieval world, with its scholastic learning and metaphysics was breaking down under the impact of new philosophy. Another cause was the influence of Machiavelli whose work The Prince enjoyed wide popularity. His materialistic doctrines along with his Satanic philosophy—that the world order is not moral, but essentially immoral—caused much bewilderment and confusion, and loss of faith in existing values and ideals. All this finds expression in the literatures of the day, more specially its Drama.

London: The Centre of National Life: - In the end, a word may be added regarding the prominence of London during the age and its influence on the literature of the period. It was the centre of the English court and so the abode of the fashionable and cultured upper classes. As the court patronised art and learning, the city was also the haunt of the men of letters of the age. Practically, all the prominent writers of the day made London their home. Shakespeare, Donne, Ben Jonson, Milton—to name only the greatest—were all Londoners. They would meet in taverns, discuss literature or current politics, and frequently come to blows. Tavern brawls were frequent, and even leading personalities were involved in them. The setting of Jonson’s Comedies is London, and London fashions, follies and frivolities are frequent objects of his satire.

Literary Trends: - The atmosphere of conflict, stress and strain, which enveloped the nation even before the death of Queen Elizabeth, in 1603, had an adverse effect on literature. The decline from the high Elizabethan standard is apparent in several ways:

(a) The output, especially of poetry, is much smaller, and the fashion is toward shorter poems, especially the lyric. The poetry of the period is largely lyrical, and Donne and Ben Jonson are the two most outstanding and original lyricists of the age. Milton who links up the Puritan age with the Restoration is a class by himself,

(b) There is a marked decay in the exalted poetical fervour of the previous age. In the new poetry there is more of intellectual play than of passion and profundity. And especially in prose, there is a matured melan-choly that one is apt to associate with advancing years,

(c) There is a marked increase in prose activity, and prose is an almost invariable accompaniment of a decline in poetry.

In an age which, by comparison with the Elizabethan age, produced relatively few great writers, Milton stands as the one man who may claim a place among the very greatest. His prose is among the finest controversial writing in the language, and his poetic achievement has generally been considered to be second only to that of Shakespeare.

Besides Milton, there are the Metaphysicals and the Caroline lyricists. The term Metaphysical was first used by Dr. Johnson, who applied it to Cowley and Donne. It denotes the work of a group of poets who came directly or indirectly under Donne’s influence. Donne’s poetry is a poetry of revolt, revolt against Elizabethan tradition. Usually lyrical in nature, his work shows a surprising blend of passion and thought; his poems are full of learned imagery and striking conceits, and, at their best, reveal great psychological insight and subtlety of thought. To this school belong such great poets as Crashaw, George Herbert, Vaughan, and Marvell.

While most of the Metaphysical poets were of a religious and mystical cast, the Cavalier lyricists best represented by Herrick, Lovelace, and Suckling, deal with the theme of love. They followed Ben Jonson in their classical restraint and concise lucidity. Their work is simple and graceful in structure and finely polished in style.

The prose output during the age is copious and excellent in kind. There is a notable advance in the sermon; pamphlets are abundant; and history, politics, philosophy, and miscellaneous kinds are well represented. Milton's Areopagetica is an immortal monument of English prose. In addition, there is a remarkable advance in prose style and the dramatists contribute a great deal to this advance. Jonson uses prose in his comedies. The controversies and conflicts of the day, both political and religious, result in the rise of satire and pamphleteering, and this in turn contributes to the advance of prose.

Many things combined to cause the decay of drama at this time. Chief among these was the strong opposition of the Puritans. In temper, the age was not dramatic. The actual dramatic work of the period is small and unimportant and characterised by immorality, obscenity, sensationalism, violence, and a free exploita-tion of unnatural themes, such as incest. However, Milton's Samson Agonistes occupies a unique place in the history of English drama. It is the only successful classical Tragedy in the English language.

Paradise Lost: Summary and Critical Analysis

The fable or story for the epic is taken from the Bible; it is the simple and common story of the fall of Adam and Eve form the grace of God due to their disobedience of Him. Paradise Lost encompasses a little more of the biblical story. In heaven, Lucifer (who became Satan after his being thrown to the hell), was unable to accept the supremacy of God, and led a revolt against His divine authority. After a terrible war with His Angels, he was finally thrown to hell, where they lay nine days in a burning lake.

Then Lucifer arose from the burning pitch and resolved- though at the same time despairing – that "all was not lost," that he would take revenge on God. Arousing his friends, he did his best to bring them to spirits, and decided that his purposes could be achieved by guile rather than by force; he decided to take revenge on God by spoiling his latest creation the Eden and the human beings there. The devils built an elaborate palace, Pandemonium, in which Satan organized a conference to decide on immediate action. Moloch advised war. Belial recommended a slothful existence in Hell.

Mammon proposed peacefully improving hell so that it might equal and rival Heaven. Beelzebub, second in command, arose and informed that God and created Earth, which he had peopled with good creatures called humans. It was Beelzebub's proposal to investigate this new creation, seized it, and seduces its inhabitants to the cause of the fallen angels, and saw Satan approaching Earth. God's angel Gabriel under the command of God, appointed two other angels to safeguard Adam and Eve, but they arrived too late to prevent Satan. He had already influenced Eve's dreams. Eve, in her strange dream had been tempted to taste of the fruit of the Tree of knowledge. After the sinful act of disobedience had been committed, God sent the angel Raphael to the garden to warn them. Raphael told Adam and Eve in detail the story of the Great War between the god and the bad angles (much of such stories are told in such conversation and flashback). He told of the creation of the world and how Earth was created in six days and angelic choir singing the praises of God or the seventh days. He cautioned Adam not to be too curious. Adam then told how he had been warned against the Tree of knowledge of God and Evil, and how Eve was created from his rib. After the departure of Raphael, Satan entered the body of a sleeping serpent. In the mourning Eve proposed that they work apart. Adam, remembering the warning of Raphael, opposed her wishes, but Eve prevailed and the couple parted. Alone, Eve was accosted by the serpent, which flattered

her into tasting the fruit of the Tree of knowledge. Eve gave the fruit to Adam, who was at first horrified, but who in his love for Eve, also ate the fruit. Just after eating the forbidden fruit, the couple knew lust for the first time. They knew sickening shame. The guardian angel came to earth to pass judgment. Christ sentenced the serpent to be forever a hated enemy of mankind. He also announced punishment of Eve; her sorrow would be multiplied by the bearing of children and that she would be the servant of Adam to the end of time. Adam, said Christ, would eat in sorrow, would eat bread only by toiling and sweating. This was the curse to man. But more important, he lost God's grace. As Christ announced the punishment, Death and sin, left the gates of Hell to join their father Satan on Earth. Satan sent sin and Death as his ambassadors on Earth. He went back to hell to see that his followers had all become hissing snakes. God made great changes on earth. He replaced the eternal spring with the changing seasons; he created the violence and misery of storms, winds, hail, ice, floods and earthquakes; he sentenced Adam and Eve to expulsion form Eden. Adam and Eve thought of committing suicide, but Michael, the angel sent by God, gave them new hope; he gave Adam a vision of life and death, the rise and fall of kingdoms and empires, and also showed them how in the future Adam and Eve's progeny would go through their evil days, to the flood when God would destroy all life except the good seeds preserved by Noah, and be finally redeemed through Christ's incarnation, death, resurrection and ascension as the redeemer. After Michael gave Adam and Eve this vision, they were pacified, especially because they saw that their children would be saved. They walked form the heights of paradise to the barren plains below. Metaphorically, they fell from the original bliss of god's grace to the present state of mortality, guilt, shame and suffering.

This simple story of 'fall' has become a locus of many themes after Milton used in his epic. He took an apparently very simple story of the "Fall" form the Bible, but he blended within it his puritan thoughts, renaissance humanism, his political as well as domestic ideals, and many such meanings. The 'invocation' is the very beginning of the epic in which Milton prays to the Muse, the Christian spirit, to help him write well. The ninth book is the climactic part of the epic narrative, as well as a book that contains several thematic issues of the whole epic.

The most obvious theme of Paradise Lost is justifying the fall of man, God's punishment and his reopening of the path of salvation to them; in short, the epic justifies how God is right in his treatment of man throughout all these. Milton has explored the sin which brought about the downfall of man. The prime cause of the fall is disobedience to God; the cause of Eve's disobedience is her passion overwhelming her right reason. Adam is also guilty of disobedience; his sin is dread of loneliness and also the surrender of his God given reason to passion. Due to love, he immediately decides to share Eve's fate. Milton emphasizes the importance of reason. Man is noble by nature, but he has free will, and hence free to choose and capable of action, morally good or bad for which he alone is responsible. Milton does not believe in Calvinism according to which God has decided everything, and a man's destiny has been fixed before his birth. Milton is a great humanist pinning his faith in the liberty and adventure of man. Milton therefore believes that God was justified in leaving Adam and Eve exposed to evils, and leaving their reasoning free; only that defines human beings as supreme creatures. God was also right in punishing Adam and Eve. The purpose of Paradise Lost is, therefore, to assert eternal providence and justify the way of God to men.

Milton believes in the orthodox idea of redemption. When men will be redeemed through Christ, they will rise to a more excellent state than Paradise form which Adam and Eve were turned out. Thus Adam did a useful act while sinning. Tillyard says, "Paradise Lost is a mental pilgrimage; the loss of one paradise and the finding on this earth of a paradise within ourselves that is happier far". The paradise in which Adam and Eve lived before eating the forbidden fruit was like a prison. It might have satisfied God, but it would have kept man spiritually undeveloped. So long as knowledge was withheld from

man, his obedience to God was meaningless. Moreover the virtue which Adam and Eve possessed in Paradise was a "fugitive and cloistered virtue", and therefore it was no virtue in the real sense. What man lost by disobedience was only a state of innocence and ignorance. Men gain spiritual rebirth by controlling their passions. And they will find a Paradise within them 'happier far'. Man has all the powers of working out the best, and moves upward, and finds the paradise within himself. This could not be possible by paying homage to God in a state of ignorance in Eden's paradise. Eve sins through weakness of reason whereas Adam through weakness of will.

Milton's style in writing the Paradise Lost has been called a 'grand style', which means it is an elevated, serious, highly crafted, and different from common speech. It is in fact so unfamiliar to common language, even the usual literary language, that Dr. Johnson accused Milton of 'pedantry'. The charge is basically based on his writing that was heavily Latinated. Indeed many critics have complained that Milton spoilt the English language. But in other ways he has contributed to the development of the English language as a literary language. Milton's 'grand', style can be discussed under four or five heads: rhythm and music, word game and figures of speech, diction and decorum, syntax, and remoteness and sublimity of language and theme.

The meter or rhythm of Milton's epic poem is usually called the blank verse, but it is not the common blank verse (lines in iambic pentameter without rhyme); Milton adapted it to his own convenience and purpose. The lines in Paradise Lost do contain ten syllables usually, but the lines contain any number of stresses from three to eight. So, it would not be appropriate to say that this is done by using traditional techniques of variation. Furthermore, the stresses differ in degree and position. The pause or caesura is another even more important feature of rhythm in Milton. The pause falls at different places of the lines, and the weight of different pauses is also different; there are light or shorter pauses and heavy or longer pauses give different effects to the narrative.

Milton's diction is heavily Latin. Even when he uses English words, they have the Latin connotations beneath. The words are so meticulously chosen that many critics have blamed his diction as too labored. Milton somehow 'invented English that is extremely unfamiliar and pedantic. He uses words in such ways that there are always both literal and symbolic meanings, with both English denotations and Latin connotations. His descriptions are florid and highly picturesque. He uses images to reinforce the theme. He shifts tone along with the change of description and setting. That usually helps him shift the emotional intensity, or avoid monotony.

Paradise Lost Book I

Summary

Book I of Paradise Lost begins with a prologue in which Milton performs the traditional epic task of invoking the Muse and stating his purpose. He invokes the classical Muse, Urania, but also refers to her as the "Heav'nly Muse," implying the Christian nature of this work. He also says that the poem will deal with man's disobedience toward God and the results of that disobedience. He concludes the prologue by saying he will attempt to justify God's ways to men.

Following the prologue and invocation, Milton begins the epic with a description of Satan, lying on his back with the other rebellious angels, chained on a lake of fire. The poem thus commences in the middle of the story, as epics traditionally do. Satan, who had been Lucifer, the greatest angel, and his compatriots warred against God. They were defeated and cast from Heaven into the fires of Hell.

Lying on the lake, Satan is described as gigantic; he is compared to a Titan or the Leviathan. Next to Satan lies Beelzebub, Satan's second in command. Satan comments on how Beelzebub has been transformed for the worse by the punishment of God. Still he adds that it is his intention to continue the struggle against God, saying, "Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven" (263).

With effort, Satan is able to free himself from his chains and rise from the fire. He flies to a barren plain, followed by Beelzebub. From the plain, Satan calls the other fallen angels to join him, and one by one they rise from the lake and fly to their leader. As they come, Milton is able to list the major devils that now occupy Hell: Moloch, Chemos, Baalem, Ashtaroth, Astarte, Astoreth, Dagon, Rimmon, Osiris, Isis, Orus, Mammon, and Belial. Each devil is introduced in a formal cataloguing of demons. These fallen angels think that they have escaped from their chains through their own power, but Milton makes it clear that God alone has allowed them to do this.

This devil army is large and impressive but also aware of its recent ignominious defeat. Satan addresses them and rallies them. He tells them that they still have power and that their purpose will be to oppose God, adding, "War then, War / Open or understood, must be resolv'd" (661-62).

This speech inspires the devil host, and under Mammon's direction, they immediately begin work on a capital city for their Hellish empire. They find mineral resources in the mountains of Hell and quickly begin to construct a city. Under the direction of their architect, Mulciber, they construct a great tower that comes to symbolize the capital of Hell, Pandemonium. The devil army, flying this way and that, is compared to a great swarm of bees. When the work is done and the capital completed, they all assemble for the first great council.

Analysis

Milton begins Paradise Lost in the traditional epic manner with a prologue invoking the muse, in this case Urania, the Muse of Astronomy. He calls her the "Heav'nly Muse" (7) and says that he will sing "Of Man's First Disobedience" (1), the story of Adam and Eve and their fall from grace. As the prologue continues, it becomes apparent that this muse is more than just the classical Urania, but also a Christian muse who resides on Mt. Sinai, in fact the Holy Spirit. In these first lines, Milton thus draws on two traditions — the classical epic exemplified by Homer and Virgil and the Christian tradition embodied in the Bible as well as Dante's Divine Comedy and Edmund Spenser's The Faerie Queene.

Milton further emphasizes in the prologue that his theme will be Man's disobedience to God's will, implying not only Adam's disobedience, but all mankind from first to last. He does add that his subject will include the "greater Man" (4) who saved all others from the original disobedience. Moreover, his intention will be to "justify the ways of God to men" (26) through the aid of "Eternal Providence" (25). By "justify," Milton means more than simply to explain; he means that he will demonstrate that God's actions in regard to man are just. This goal suggests that Milton was not bothered by any sense of false modesty, an idea underscored by his statement that he will write in a high style and attempt a purpose never tried before. The one truly poignant line in this prologue is Milton's request of the muse, "What in me is dark / Illumine" (22 — 23), with its oblique reference to Milton's blindness, a subject he will return to more directly in the prologue that begins Book III. At no point in this prologue and invocation does Milton mention Satan, who, though he is the main character of the poem, is not the actual subject.

Following the invocation and prologue, Milton continues in the epic style by beginning in medias res, in the middle of things. Satan is first seen lying in the pit of Hell. That a great religious epic focuses on Satan, presents him first, and in many ways makes him

the hero of the poem is certainly surprising and something of a risk on Milton's part. Milton does not want his audience to empathize with Satan, yet Satan is an attractive character, struggling against great odds. Of course, Milton's original audience more than his modern one would have been cognizant of the ironies involved in Satan's struggles and his comments concerning power. The power that Satan asserts and thinks he has is illusory. His power to act derives only from God, and his struggle against God has already been lost. To the modern audience, Satan may seem heroic as he struggles to make a Heaven of Hell, but the original audience knew, and Milton's lines confirm, that Satan's war with God had been lost absolutely before the poem begins. God grants Satan and the other devils the power to act for God's purposes, not theirs.

Also, at this point in the narrative, Satan is at his most attractive. He has just fallen from Heaven where he was the closest angel to God. He has not completely lost the angelic aura that was his in Heaven. As the poem progresses, the reader will see that Satan's character and appearance grow worse. Milton has carefully structured his work to show the consequences of Satan's actions.

The catalogue of demons that follows Satan's escape from the burning lake follows an epic pattern of listing heroes — although here the list is of villains. This particular catalogue seems almost an intentional parody of Homer's catalogue of Greek ships and heroes in Book II of the Iliad. The catalogue is a means for Milton to list many of the fallen angels as well as a way to account for many of the gods in pagan religions — they were originally among the angels who rebelled from God. Consequently, among these fallen angels are names such as Isis, Osiris, Baal, and others that the reader associates not with Christianity but with some ancient, pagan belief. Of the devils listed, the two most important are Beelzebub and Belial. (For a complete description of each devil, see the List of Characters.)

The final part of Book I is the construction of Pandemonium, the capital of Hell. A certain unintentional humor pervades this section of Book I as well as Mammon's argument in Book II. In both cases, a sense of civic pride seems to overcome the devils, and they act on the idea that "Hell is bad, but with a few improvements we can make it lots better, even attractive." In both Mammon and the hellish architect, Mulciber, the attitude of the mayor whose small town has been bypassed by the Interstate comes out. They both seem to think that with improvements Hell may be nice enough that others may want to relocate.

Milton's real goal here, though, is to establish Hell's capital, Pandemonium — a word which Milton himself coined from the Latin pan (all) and demonium (demons). Thus, the capital of Hell is literally the place of all demons. With the passage of time, the word came to mean any place of wild disorder, noise, and confusion. This idea is subtly emphasized with Milton's choice of Mulciber as the architect. Mulciber was another name for Hephaestus, the Greek God of the Forge, who was tossed from Olympus by a drunken Zeus. Mulciber is consequently a figure of some ridicule and not the most likely architect to build a lasting monument.

One other aspect of the construction of Pandemonium is worth consideration. Mammon and the other devils find mineral resources including gemstones in their search for building materials. This discovery of resources suggests that the Hell Milton has imagined is a multifaceted place. In the first scene, as Satan and the others lie chained on the burning lake, Hell seems totally a place of fiery torture and ugliness. The construction of Pandemonium shows that there is more to Hell. Geographic features such as a plain and hill, mineral resources such as gemstones, and even the possibility for beauty seem to exist in Hell. Other aspects of Hell will be brought forward in later books. All in all, Milton depicts a Hell that has more than one essence, or, at least in the opening books, seems to.

Paradise Lost Book-I : Speeches of Satan

Introduction

Satan of Book-I Paradise Lost, is one of the glorious examples of political leadership and political oratory. His speeches are the key to his character and his art of oratory excels the best of Roman rhetoric. He is the leader of the rebel-angels in Heaven and the uncrowned monarch of Hell. By following his lead, the fallen angels are deprived of "happy fields, where joy forever dwells." Satan has now the task of retaining their loyalty and does so by the sheer magic of his high-pitched oratory. There is a certain pathetic grandeur of injured merit in them which wins the hearts of his followers. Around the character of Satan, Milton has thrown a singularity of daring, a grandeur of sufferance and a ruined splendour, which constitute the very height of poetic sublimity.

Satan is the first to recover from the stupor into which all the rebel angels fall. Soon he notices his first lieutenant, Beelzebub, weltering by his side. He finds that his compeer is much changed. So he makes a cautious approach, for he is not sure whether his friend is in a mood to blame him or he still loves him.

First Speech: "What though the field be lost…tyranny of Heaven."

The speech is an embodiment of Satan's resilience in face of a mortifying defeat. This rout, instead of humbling his aspiring pride has fuelled his design of usurpation and revenge against God. He's aghast at seeing the diminished glory of his minions, the fallen angels who revolted at his command. The deplorable state of Beelzebub and his lost lustre incites Satan to admonish him for his irresolute spirits and weak convictions. Satan in his speech ushers forth convincing arguments to dissuade the bleak hopelessness of his fallen angels. He accepts his defeat 'field be lost' but questions whether it has trampled his armaments of 'unconquerable will', 'study of revenge', 'immortal hate and courage!'

God's glory shall remain a pipe dream as Satan shant surrender to Him. Satan has faith in his strengths which cannot be suppressed by the 'wrath or might' of God Himself. His speech resounds with this consolation which is so convincing to Satan himself that he broaches to battle the Supreme again. He reprimands the cowardly stance of his army which smacks of ignominy far worse than their defeat itself. Satan deters his legion from pleading God's mercy and extolling His power. He mocks His clout as a mere façade aptly proved by God's apprehensions when Satan's mighty terror shook His sovereignty.

Satan assures his fallen cherubs that the fiery mettle of angels as ordained by their fate can never perish but remain immortal. And with the benefit of hindsight he along with his minions must rage another war against the 'tyranny of heaven' that they equal both in arms and in foresight. To war anew, Satan believes portends greater hope of victory and can turn out to be their coup. Satan wishes to execute this 'eternal war' by dint of 'force or guile' but for him the option of reconciling with God is closed sine die, as he's fervent in his convictions to overthrow the tyranny of heaven- God!

A critical Note: By Satan's vaunting of "All is not lost" one is compelled to wonder whether God's victory is a mere pyrrhic one, as He is unable to smother the soul, the ignition of Satan's rebellion which even after a crushing defeat still remains fervent in his spirits-'the unconquerable will, revenge, immortal hate and courage.' This ironic defeat or apparent victory of God provokes Satan to pervert God's holy plans such as instigating the lamentable fall of Adam and Eve.

Even in his last speech of Book-1, Satan sends this message to his legion that the supreme shall learn from his tactics of guile and deceit that he "who overcomes by force hath overcome but half his foe", which quite aptly explains the situation.

Second Speech: "Fallen cherub…resolution from despair"

Analysis: Beelzebub despite Satan's claims of victory after a 'sad overthrow and foul defeat' is tormented by the thought of eternal punishment. He confides to Satan his fear of God's 'vengeful ire' that only their painful suffering can satiate. Satan is quick to allay his apprehensions and without a note of fear in his speech paints his coward whimpering as contemptible. Whether they are coerced to suffer His errands or bear His punishments, 'to be weak is miserable'. Satan further instigates his fallen angel to flout God's high will and seek out evil undertakings as it shall be their 'sole delight.'

In this speech Satan displays his confirmed aversion towards God and defies His plan to' bring forth good' out of their sinister stratagems. Rather he proposes to blight such intention of God and seize upon any means of evil to derail His objectives and aggrieve him beyond measure. Satan wishes to consume malicious joy out of wrecking Almighty's 'destined aim.'

Satan's next lines of his speech further stamp his fortitude against distinct signs of despair and hopelessness. In these lines he's salvaging a break, an opportunity in 'the gloomy deep' to plan retaliation. To Beelzebub he lays bare the various opportunities which he presumes to be propitious to his plot. God, the angry victory, he claims has withdrawn His good angels-'ministers of vengeance' and so they have retreated back to the gates of heaven. The 'sulphurous hail' has ceased to blow, the 'fiery surge' emanating from the edges of heaven has drawn to a close, and the thunder has dissipated its shafts- this occasion could have resulted either because of God's disdain or His ire has been satiated for a while, but be that as it may 'Let us not slip the occasion'.

While still floating above the ebb and flow of the fiery waves, Satan glimpses a 'dreary plain' beyond the lake of fire. He commands his troop to fly towards the vantage ground- 'that seat of desolation' to repose awhile if any respite is feasible. Then reconvene their 'afflicted powers', in order to forge various ways to affront the Almighty, to make amends for the loss, and to triumph over 'this dire calamity'. Finally, he beckons his minions to salvage strength and support from faith, failing which learn and gain from despair a resilient resolve.

A critical Note: What Beelzebub fears is exactly what Satan is putting into practice. By contriving to play foul and offend Almighty, he's in fact obeying His high will, and as its endorsed in the text that only by the 'high permission of all-ruling heaven', which has kept him loose and unfettered, Satan is able to execute his 'dark designs.' That is to say he's in fact carrying out God's 'errands in the gloomy deep' to 'heap on himself damnation' without truly knowing it. This is Beelzebub's apprehension of the eternal punishment which Satan's believes he has overcome by his wits.

Third Speech: "Is the region, this is the soil…what more lost in Hell?"

In this speech lies the key to Satan's dogged tenacity against God and His instruments of eternal punishment. Satan invokes every ounce of his strength to withstand his antagonists and uses firm reasoning to wake up his dispirited angels from the slough of despondency. Many have referred to his reasoning as 'satanic logic' which though connected to such an infamous personage, yet bears relevance in our daily lives.

Satan in a rhetorical fashion comes to term with his new abode and the deprivation of Heaven-'this mournful gloom for that celestial light', and accepts his fate with profound

indifference as if the odds aren't that formidable as they seem. He asserts that God 'who now is Sovran', has the prerogative to execute what He considers right; yet as we are far away from His dominion, this should serve as our consolation in this misery. This 'Sovran' if we measure by the yardstick of reason shall find us as His equals, and only due to His power-'whom thunder hath made greater?' does He claim authority.

Satan confronts his present predicament and bids farewell to the 'happy fields'. Welcoming the 'infernal abode' as its new sovereign, he proclaims that his mind, his spirits, his convictions shall remain undeterred even at the prospect of changing 'place or time'. He explains his logic by asserting that mind can envisage the torments of hell as the pleasant bliss of heaven or can imagine heaven as a seat of gloom -'Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven'. Such is the strength of mind that it drives Satan to persevere in his pursuit of revenge, without any regard to his greatest nemesis.

Satan pictures his dilemma as a boon in disguise because hell shall offer a breeding ground for their evil escapades and as God cannot expel them out of it or purge hell of its 'new possessor' – they 'may reign secure'. His single-minded aim is to be in power, to govern, to reign and his such resolution eclipses the miserable despair he has been plunged into- 'To reign is worth ambition, though in hell…than serve in heaven'.

With such sense of autonomy, Satan invigorates the beleaguered spirits of his 'associates' to partake each other's grief and once again join forces to recoup from heaven what their might is capable of, or on the flip side be deprived of what is still left of hell.

A critical Note: It is interesting to observe the shrewdness of Satan, when he dictates 'we may reign secure', 'we' on the face of it, might denote Satan and his troop but its connotations are obviously pertaining to the sole monarchy of Satan himself. Perhaps he knows there can be only one sun in the firmament (Titus Andronicus, Shakespeare). Such is the convincing sway of his rhetorical reasoning that hardly his minions can see through his design. His persuasive art is further attested by the mortal rebellion his legion waged and for him ' have their lot in pain'- The same sentiment I read in the words of Mephistopheles, ''unhappy spirits that fell with Lucifer, conspir'd against our god with Lucifer, and are forever damn'd with Lucifer' (Doctor Faustus, Marlowe). Satan hence can be regarded as the epitome of cunning politicians and wining speakers.

Fourth speech: "Princes, Potentates…be forever fallen!"

Satan in this speech tolls the final knell of his legions' apprehensions and numbed spirits. He summons his army with noble epithets as Princes, Potentates, Warriors, which is enough to massage their ego and obliterate their melancholic dispositions.

He commands them to accept the bereavement of heaven because their cowardly visage doesn't become 'eternal spirits', nor is it befitting of them to rest their beaten heroism in this gloomy place. Their current milieu shall not be as soothing and peaceful as it would have been in 'the happy fields'.

He further attacks their wretched and humble stoop, by which they have apparently vowed to revere the God Almighty. God is, as Satan claims planning to ambush and quash them in their slumped posture. And finding it as an advantage His henchmen with their 'thunderbolts' shall spellbind all of them to the underbelly of this gloomy chasm. Hence, Satan's final cry- "Awake, arise, or be forever fallen!"

A critical note: Satan sure knows his way around the angels as he quite shrewdly concocts panic alarms to make them subservient to his will, if they wish to survive the looming danger. He strikes a balance in his extol and condemnation of the angels and

makes them believe if they don't arise, they shall be forever fallen. This 'forever fallen' however, is their irrevocable fate which can't be obscured whether they arise or remain 'in this abject posture'.

Fifth speech: "O myriads of immortal spirits…must be resolved."

Satan has successfully wrenched the 'fellows of his crime' out of their regretful stance. Seeing their absolute obedience, in face of overwhelming pains, Satan is conquered by tears and tries to confront their mutual loss- 'amerced of heaven'. His pride falls meek as he mourns and sighs for their cataclysmic defeat, yet he remains sane enough to dispute the cause of their fall. Satan reinforces in their minds that though their defeat shall be counted as a calamity for its done untold damage to them, it yet cannot be rendered as a dishonorable event.

One would have doubted the very omen of their rout for his legion is a union of gods themselves. As if this doesn't sound preposterous enough, the more perplexing is the helplessness of these mighty gods to regain their 'native seat' in heaven. Satan apprehends the cause of their defeat which he presumes either could be the conflicting counsels among the angels or his dread of danger that made him shrink away from the revolt at hand.

Finding these self-accusations unfounded, Satan reprehends Almighty for keeping his supreme power under wraps, which seduced him to challenge God's might-'tempted our attempt, and wrought our fall'. God might have achieved his stature as a monarch either by old repute, consent or custom, but had He abjured displaying royal pomp, and not concealed his strength, Satan and his minions wouldn't have undertaken such a drastic crusade.

Satan appeases his legion to look at the bright side of their defeat, for with benefit of hindsight they are now conscious of Almighty's power and their own. As his reasoning suggests it would be futile to declare an open war with Him yet again, so the only course of combat is –'to work in close design, by fraud or guile'. If they resort to force, their battle shall be half won as Satan's reasoning suggests and so the combative maneuvers shall be underhanded intrigues and furtive treacheries.

To begin their stealthy warfare, Satan mentions the report of God fostering a new generation, which shall be lavished with favours reserved for Sons of Heaven. Their first expedition shall be to inquire of God's holy plan and in such a pursuit hell shant hold divine spirits captive, nor the abyss teeming with darkness, blind their motives.

Satan calls for a profound deliberation on this matter, and urges his army to forswear the dreams of harmony as the price to gain it is slavish submission. Hence he hails war and advocates its resolution.

A critical Note: Satan is desperate to go at lengths and sacrifice his followers for his ambition. As his methods of warfare change, one gets an insight into his degenerating self. From glorious battles, he is shifting to despicable tactics of covert intrigues and deceit. Instead of fighting God like a true warrior, Satan is scheming to pervert God's creations that had no role in his downfall. His change of heart marks his collapse from an angelic Lucifer to a wicked Satan.

Next interesting point Of Satan's speech is his belief that peace demands absolute submission. This if read in modern times, suggests the sacrifice of media, capitalism, and individual sovereignty to the diktats of authority. Surely, this perspective shall find many takers but I believe peace doesn't entertain an authority in the first place. It can entail

the freedom of an individual to give voice to his opinions and let the other fellow contest it with rational justifications.

And if the former is proved wrong, instead of hanging him, lawful penalty can be meted out as per the degree of his falsehood. The case shouldn't become a deterrent for people to leash their thoughts but be an example of how to avoid indecent practices as perjury, outrageous slander, and scandals etc.

Satan if had not chosen insurgence as a tool to question God's tyranny, but a peaceful discourse, then world would have been different. But then again, Satan's avaricious ambition to oust God from his stature, strove him to forgo peaceful measures, and finally exclaim 'Peace is despaired, for who can think submission.'

Conclusion

Thus in five speeches Satan finishes his primary manipulation in the first book of Paradise Lost. In doing so, he has used rhetorical devices in his speeches, so that they may appear logical to his followers, because they have a good deal of deception in their very nature. So much in manner kingly, or like a politician he tries to manipulate the rebel angels that their state is not so despairing as not to wage another war against God, and indeed he succeeds in this pursuit by the aid of his eloquence and tricky speeches. It can be said that it is his speech that makes him become more Satanic, because whenever he talks he talks evil, as if vomiting out all the disease he has inside him, consequently inflicting the multitude that stands in front.

Major themes in "Paradise Lost"

Milton's subject in Paradise Lost was the failure of human kind to live according to divine order and its slow deliverance (God-given) from the consequences of the fall. The myth with which he chose to deal, and in which he believed literally, was, like many other parallel myths and folktales, and exploration of the moral consequences of disobedience. The discovery of the knowledge of good and evil is neither accidental nor happy. The central character Adam has no heroic destiny. Through Eve's corruption all humankind is corrupted and as both are finally obliged to understand, the spiritual struggle to regain paradise equity and equability (self-control) extends through each generation their descendants. In a profound sense Adam and Eve fall from the ideal into the human condition. The great theme of the poem is obedience to a creative order of an omnipotent God. The will of God is imprinted in the harmony of nature, and disaster of the fall is as ecological as it is moral. Despite the temptation we see the rebellion of Satan as a heroic gesture of liberation and the fall of Adam as a species of attentiveness towards his wife, Paradise Lost insistently attempts to assert the ultimate justness of a loving God's 'Eternal Providence.'

Milton's Paradise Lost God is powerful; He creates man from his own image. They were in Eden and Satan live in Hell. Satan revolted against the God and challenged the authority of God so sent in the Hell. Adam is lesser than angels; Eve is created as Adam's partner. They were sent on the paradise in Eden Garden and said that please don't go near to this tree of knowledge and prohibited to eat the fruit of knowledge. But they committed the sin to eat that prohibited fruit. It is in conman human nature, that if someone said that it is prohibited thing than we attract to do that thing. Eve was tempted by Satan because Satan wants to take revenge with God and he knows very well that if he wants to take revenge with God he has to harm His creation. As he is not able to harm him directly he tempts Eve ate that apple and for love of Eve Adam ate that apple willingly and in conscious manner. Knowledge makes man more unnatural, when

both ate that apple they came know about the good and evil, sexuality and other things. In Paradise Lost, Milton has used many themes to write further about the epic. But main theme of Paradise Lost is Disobedience of Adam and Eve. The purpose of Paradise Lost is religious and has three parts (1) Disobedience (2) Eternal providence (3) Justification of God to men.

Disobedience:- The first part of Milton's arguments hinges on the disobedience and its opposite obedience. The universe that Milton imagined with heaven at the top hell at the bottom and earth in between is a hierarchical place. God literally sits on the thrown at the top of Heaven Angels are arranged in groups according to their proximity to God. On the Earth Adam is superior to Eve humans rule over animals. Even in the Hell, Satan sits on a thrown, higher than demons. The proper way of the world was for inferiors to obey superiors because superiors well superior. A king was not because he was chosen but he was superior to his subject. It was therefore, not just proper to obey the kind was merely required. Satan's rebellion because of jealousy is the first great act of disobedience and commences all that happens in the epic.

The crucial moment in the poem results from the disobedience and a breakdown of hierarchy. Eve argues with Adam about whether they should work together or apart. The problem here lies with both humans. Eve should not argue with her superior, Adam, but like arise, Adam should not yield his authority to his inferior, Eve. Likewise, when Adam also eats the fruit, he disobeys the God. Further, he disobeys by knowingly putting Eve ahead of God. Disobedience and disruption of the correct order result in sin and death.

Justification of ways of God to Man: - Eternal providence moves the story to a difference level. Without the fall, this divine love would never have been demonstrated because Adam and Eve disobeyed God. By obeying God, he can achieve salvation. The fall actually produces a new and higher love from God to Man.

Eve's revolt: - There is an argument between Adam and Eve for Division of work. Adam insists that Eve should be closed to him and they have work together. Eve wants to work independently without Adams supervision. She wants to ;live independent life. **"If so near.....good works in her husband to promote"**

She furthers her argument saying that their presents are barrier to their work assign by God. Adam tries to pursuit Eve not to part from him because they have threat to their live from the enemy. But Eve is not convinced by the argument and ultimately decides to part from Adam.

Stan's Revolt: - His revolt for God because is disobeying Him. He speaks against God so he was punished and thrown into the Hell. He knows that he is not capable to take revenge with God so he harms the creation of God. Satan takes the advantage of Eve and Adam's separation. He seduces Eve in the form of serpent. Satan enters in Eden garden unobserved during midnight to take revenge against God. Satan's motto is to destroy the creation of God.

John Milton's Grand Style

In his Oxford lecture 'On Translating Homer: Last Words', Mathew Arnold used this now famous phrase. 'Such a style, he maintained, arises when a noble nature, poetically gifted, treats with simplicity or with severity a serious subject'. Arnold refers to Homer, Pindar, Virgil, Dante, and Milton as exponents of grand style. It was a lofty or elevated style suitable for epic, a style Arnold himself attempted in, for instance in 'Sohrab and Rustum'.

Now, we discuss the devices used in 'Paradise Lost' by Milton which have caused his style to be characterized as the Grand Style.

Erudite Style, Full of Allusion: - The language of 'Paradise Lost' is that of a scholar writing for scholars. A beautiful illustration of the poet's fondness for allusions is provided by his description of Satan's forces, which dwarfed the mightiest armies known to history or legend:

- the giant brood mentioned by Hesiod
- the heroic race that fought at Thebes and Troy mentioned by Homer
- the knights of king Arthur mentioned by Geoffrey of Monmouth
- the Crusaders who fought the Saracens mentioned in history, and
- the warriors of Charlemagne mentioned in the Italian epics.

The whole treasury of poetry and the whole storehouse of learning are at his command.

Suggestive Quality in Style: - In Milton's poetry more is meant than meets the ear. He means more than what he says. As the poet's difficulty throughout the poem is to describe what cannot be exactly described—Heaven, Chaos, Hell, God, Angels, Devils-he throws out a broad hint or two of their intended shapes and appearance and asks the reader to imagine the rest. Thus Satan's huge figure, which nobody can have an idea of, is described with a few suggestive strokes: 'head uplift above the wave', 'eyes that sparkling blazed', and other parts in bulk as large 'as whom the fables name of monstrous size'. Hell is described

As one great furnace flam'd: yet from those flames
No light, but rather darkness visible........
Oh how unlike the place from whence they fell.

We have to suggest a lot to form a whole picture of the Hell.

Unusual Structure of Sentences: - Milton's common practice is to place a noun between its two qualifying adjectives, though the English grammar requires both to be placed before the noun: the upright heart and pure', 'the dismal situation waste and wild', 'ever burning sulpher unconsumed'. Sometimes he uses one part of speech for another, such as verb as noun in 'the great consult began'; adjective as noun 'the palpable obscure' etc. In spite of the violation of the accepted rules of grammar, one cannot deny that 'Paradise Lost' is a poem for scholarly readers. The violation of grammar is not so much criticized as the beauty of his style is appreciated.

Use of Similes: - A striking feature in 'Paradise Lost' is Milton's use of similes. These are expanded to draw complete pictures. They had dignity of the narrative, and do not merely illustrate but also decorate the epic theme and character.

Elevated Speeches: - The lofty tone is maintained in the speeches of Satan, as for instance in the speech to Beelzebub. One cannot help noting the rhetorical eloquence with which Satan encourages the fallen angels.

Conclusion: - Milton maintains a constant elevation and dignity of style corresponding to the greatness of theme, and Mathew Arnold is absolutely right when he

refers to Milton as a poet of grand style. Thus vocabulary sentence, imagery, allusion, Latinisms all mingle and unite to form the majestic garment of Milton's thought and feelings.

Three poets, in three distant ages born,
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn.
The first in loftiness of thought surpassed;
The next, in majesty; in both the last.
The force of Nature could no further go.
To make a third, she joined the former two."

Paradise Lost: Milton's Use of Epic Similes

Epic similes are used in literary works to create elaborate comparisons beyond the original point of similarity Milton uses a number of epic similes in his poem Paradise Lost. As Harding suggests in his article "Milton's Bee-Simile," Milton could have used epic similes in order to raise his poetry to the level of his Greek predecessors. The similes create sympathy for the characters by comparing Satan and the fallen angels to objects and creatures that reduce their severity. As Paradise Lost progresses, Milton's use of epic similes gradually diminishes those that they describe, making the reader more sympathetic to Satan and the Fallen Angels as well as aligning humanity to the fallen characters.

The Greek poet Homer is thought to have originated the epic simile in his poem The Iliad, to which we can make connections to Milton. Milton's bee-simile is an excellent example of a "shared" epic simile between Homer and Milton. There are various functions of Milton's epic similes: foreshadow, exaggeration, emotion / intellectual functions, aesthetic, relief and illustrative. The first simile in which something greater is happening is that when Satan is compared to the sun. Milton's comparison of Satan to the sun is not as straightforward. A "sun new risen" often represents light, life, and all that is good. If the sun represents good and Satan embodies evil, then why does Milton align the two? This is the first instance where Satan appears sympathetic. We become entranced with Satan's character as something alike the goodness of the sun, causing us to create sympathy for him, his angels, and his mission.

Milton often uses epic similes in his descriptions of the Fallen Angels that create sympathy for these sunken characters. Milton compares the fallen angels to fallen leaves. The image Milton creates with this simile is extremely depressing and shows just how far the angels have fallen from their previous glory. Like the leaves from the trees, the angels too have fallen and are strewn about in hell; they are lifeless and piled on top of each other.

Just lines after the fallen leaves simile, Milton compares the Fallen Angels to a swarm of locusts, further instilling the reader's sympathy in the fallen characters. The leaves simile portrays the Fallen Angels as pathetic, fallen beings who are strewn on top of the Earth. The locust simile is unsettling and creates sympathy in a different way than the leaves simile. The reader's initial impulse could be that locusts are evil due to various biblical implications. The movement in the locust simile suggests that the angels have become restless in anticipation for Satan's plan of action. This image of the angels swarming their leader, trapped in unfamiliar bodies, creates a great deal of sympathy.

Milton also uses epic similes to compare Satan to various creatures and with each comparison Satan becomes further diminished. The first epic simile of Satan is found in book one and compares Satan to a large sea monster known as the Leviathan. The

Leviathan is referenced many times in the Bible. The Leviathan, like Satan, also takes form as a giant serpent. This comparison foreshadows Satan's last state of existence in Paradise Lost when he appears as a serpent in books nine and ten. Satan as the Levitation is a disturbing image. In the Bible, the Leviathan is large, has many heads, and dwells in the sea. This simile implies Satan's power and fury as the angels awaken to find they have fallen into hell. Milton does not create any sympathy for Satan in this first simile. Milton offers another simile of Satan in book one that describes him as a sympathetic leader. Although this simile comes not far after the Leviathan simile, there is a drastic difference in how Satan is described. Milton writes,

He, above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent
Stood like a tower; his form had not yet lost
All her original brightness nor appeared
Less than archangel ruined and the excess
Of glory obscured, as when the sun new arisen (Milton 1.589-594).

This is the first simile in which we see Milton's attempt to create sympathy for the fallen characters. Before this he was compared to a giant sea monster, here Satan is likened to solar eclipse. Milton writes that Satan is "shorn of his beams/or from the behind the moon/in dim eclipse" (Milton 1.596-97) Satan is compared to the sun trapped behind the moon. In a solar eclipse, one can only see the outer rays of the sun protruding from behind the moon's shadow.

In book nine, back in Paradise, we see Satan's transformation. Satan says,

"O foul descent, that I who erst contended/
With gods to sit the highest, am now constrained/
Into a beast and mixed with bestial slime/
This essence to incarnate and imbrute/…
But what will not ambition and revenge/ Descend to?" (Milton IX.163-69).

We see that Satan has become aware of his "imbrutement." What makes this transformation sympathetic is how little Satan has learned after his fall. To end his speech Satan says, "spite when with spite is best repaid" (Milton IX.177). Satan's disfigurement has only convinced him further that "Who aspires must down as low as high he soared"(Milton IX169-70). Milton wonders why he is being punished for his ambition rather than recognizing his own evils.

Milton's similes bring sympathy and understanding to those characters that they describe and also align the characters within the comparisons to humankind. Satan begins his journey as an angel in heaven, and ends his journey as a tormenting serpent. As Satan digresses, he becomes more concrete. We see Adam and Eve follow a similar path. Before the fall, man and woman are unfamiliar because their lives are surrounded by perfection and bliss. Once they have fallen, they experience emotions that are easier for us to understand: lust, jealously, revenge. The further Satan falls from heaven, the closer he becomes to humankind and the further Adam and Eve fall, the closer they become to Satan. We cannot picture Satan atop a tree, perched as a large bird or Satan whispering temptation into Eve's ear as a toad. These comparisons are what make Satan relatable; they make Satan more than an angel dispelled from heaven. Satan becomes earthly, sympathetic, and arguably more human. In this context, one should remember Addison's famous observation about the essential characteristic of Milton's epic similes:

"When Milton eludes either to things or persons he never quits his similes until it rises to some very great idea, which is often foreign to the occasions that

gave birth to. He runs on with the idea till he has raised out of it some glorious image to inflame the mind of the readers and to give it that sublime kind of entertainment which is suitable to the nature of a heroic poem".

Paradise Lost as a Classical Epic

An epic is a long narrative poem, ordinarily concerning a serious subject containing details of heroic deeds and events significant to a culture or nation. Homer and Virgil were the two great masters of the Classical epic. Homer's Iliad and Virgil's Aeneid have invariably served as models for all writers of the classical epic. Milton was a great classical scholar and he sought to write an epic. He dreamt of immortality and he aspired to be one with Homer and Virgil as the author of a classical epic. Milton turned his great classical and Biblical learning to a poem to "assert eternal providence, and justify the ways of God to men".

**"I may assert Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men."**

Milton achieved eminent success in making Paradise Lost as classical epic. In spite of certain drawbacks and defects, Milton's epic is entitled to take its rightful place among half a dozen classical epics in the world. **The first essential feature of the epic is its theme**. The theme of an epic must have a national importance or significance; that is, the epic must be a true and faithful mirror of the life and of a nation. Homer represented the national life, thought and culture of the Greeks in the Iliad, and Virgil gave expression to the hopes and aspirations of the Romans in the Aeneid. The Fall of Man is the theme of the epic.

**"Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,"**

The epic action has three qualifications. First, it should be one action, secondly, it should be an entire action, and thirdly, it should be a great action. In short, **the action of an epic should be one, entire and great**. All these three qualities of epic action are followed by Milton.

The action of Paradise Lost is one and there is a **unity of action**. The central action is the Fall of Man, and everything in the epic as, the battle of angels, the creation of the world, is subordinated to this central action. There are digressions at the beginning of the third and seventh books, but they do not affect the unity and central action of the poem. The whole action of Paradise Lost is single and compact. In the second place, its action is entire which means that it has a beginning, middle and an end. The action in Paradise Lost is contrived in hell, executed upon earth, and punished by heaven. In the third place the action ought to be great, by greatness of the action, Aristotle means that it should not only be great in its nature but also in its duration. The entire action of Paradise Lost has a stamp of grandeur and greatness about it. Milton's subject is greater than Homer's Iliad and Virgil's Aeneid. It does not determine the fate of one single person or nation; but of the whole human race.

Milton plunges into the middle of the action. Milton, in imitation of the great poets, opens his Paradise Lost, with an infernal council plotting the fall of man.

The **characters of the epic must have dignity and variety**. In Paradise Lost, we have a wide variety of characters marked with qualities. In Paradise Lost, we have human as well as superhuman characters. Adams and Eve are human characters, whereas God, Christ and Satan are superhuman characters.

An **epic must have a hero with great qualities**. Identification of the hero is different in Paradise Lost. Adam can be called the hero of the epic. He is not a warrior or a conqueror but a noble figure.

An epic is a **serious poem embodying sublime and nobler thoughts**. Milton's Paradise Lost is a sublime and noble poem characterized by loftiness of thought and sentiment.

An epic is **not without a moral**. Moral forms an integral and intrinsic part in Milton's poem. It seeks to "vindicate the ways of God to man, to show the reasonableness of religion and the necessity of obedience to the Divine Law".

Milton, in conformity with the epic practice, begins Paradise Lost by **invoking the Muse** to help him in his great task. But since Milton seeks the aid of the Heavenly Muse, the Holy spirit,

"And chiefly thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for thou know'st:"

He requests:

"- -: what in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support,"

In an epic poem the poet narrates very little in his person. The characters themselves carry forward the mission of the poet.

Lastly the **language of an epic** must be sublime and rose above the language of common vernacular.

"- What though the fields be lost?
All is not lost"

Aristotle observes that a **sublime style** can be formed by three methods - by the use of metaphors, by making use of the idioms and by lengthening of the phrase by the addition of words. Milton employs all these three methods to give the air of grandeur to his epic. His similes and metaphors are epical. Latin words are frequently introduced. The style of Paradise Lost is the truest example of grand style. On one place, Satan says:

"The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n"

On the other place:

"Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heaven."

Milton's Paradise Lost is a successful classical epic. Paradise lost has thus many excellences as an epic but the defects in it also not be forgotten. The introduction of allegorical persons like sin and death, the frequent allusions to heathen mythological fables, the intervention of grotesque incidents, the frequent indulgence in puns and useless display of learning and the unnecessary use of technical terms as in the description of Pandemonium are some blemishes in the style of the poem.

One other point must also be noted. An epic is an objective poem, and personal

reflections are out of place in it. But the most sublime parts of Paradise Lost reflect the individuality of the poet. However this has added to the interest of the work as a poem though it is not, strictly speaking, permissible in an epic.

The Theme & Moral Purpose of "Paradise Lost" Book-I

Introduction: - An epic worthy of the name should deal with an action or story which has universal or even cosmic appeal. All epics of antiquity deal with personalities and events of divine or superhuman dimensions. The Iliad dealt with Gods and heroes, lovely women and romantic lovers, doughty deeds on the battle-field and heroic achievements and death. But the ancient epics dealt with men and events which we know could not have happened as described. Much of it is pure imagination, much of it is fantastic or incredible and many other parts are beyond human agencies. They help us to realise that we are surrounded by invisible powers which can shape us to some extent, and which exert a continuous influence over us for good and ill. Faith in God and a divine order is thus inculcated, and we do not feel as strangers or helpless beings in this world. Death is the final end of all mortal men. But before death comes, we are impelled to do something worthy of our higher natures so that it may remain as an object of inspiration to all mankind. Thus, epics give us delight, instruction, edification and consolation.

Milton's Subject: Fall of Man: - Milton was a profound student of the classics, and from a very early period of his life, he was seized with the ambition to write an epic poem. But the course of his life was chequered by many interests, conflicts and crosses which prevented him from taking up the work on which he kept on brooding. At last he hit upon the subject of the fall of Man as narrated in the Bible as a fit theme for his epic, and planned and completed his Paradise Lost. The actual story of Adam and Eve, of their blissful state of innocence in paradise and the manner of their fall from it is very briefly narrated in the Genesis. Taking it as the kernel of his work, he decided to enrich it in all possible ways with the resources of his poetical faculties, his wide knowledge, learning and scholarship. Coleridge commenting on the theme of Paradise Lost said:

"It represents origin of evil and the combat of evil and good, it contains matter of deep interest to all mankind, as forming the basis of all religion and the true occasion of all philosophy whatsoever."

The fall of man is a subject of **universal interest**. Unlike other epics of ancient times, he could treat it in such a way as to ring conviction to the modern mind. But as mythology is a very essential aspect of all epics, he decided to make use of all his classical lore to embellish and illustrate his own narrative. As an epic should provide for the free play of all the nova rasas as we call them, he developed a plot which provided scope for them in ample measure. Biblical history is a part of the Sematic racial heritage; and the ancient Hebrews had come into contact with the pre-classical body of knowledge which goes back to a much more ancient past than that of ancient Greece and Rome. At the same time, according to the Christian religion, all mankind has been cursed as a result of the disobedience and fall of Man. Also that religion connects it with the coming of Jesus Christ as the Saviour of mankind from the sin of which Adam and Eve were guilty. A.C. George states:

"We can state the essential theme of Paradise Lost as the sustained opposition between love and hate, God responds to the destructive challenge of Satan with the creative expression of love." "Milton has combined two traditional elements - the story of the challenge and response through an indirect agent. The former theme is the direct physical conflict of the Celestial Battle, and the latter is Satan's challenge of God-indirectly through God's own creature man. The second theme arises out of the first."

Another interpretation is that the theme of Paradise Lost is "**the Fall of Man**" from Paradise on account of his sin. Milton has tried to show that **every action of man has its consequences**. His principal concern is that man must make the right use of every moment of life because his actions are irrevocable. Milton's object in this poem was also to emphasize the role of Christ as the Redeemer of mankind and to justify the ways of God to men.

The **doctrine of Free Will** has been insisted on by Milton frequently and emphatically. The kind of action or state of mind Milton felt desirable was one perfectly controlled by the conscious will. Any deed, however significant, performed instinctively or without the full significance of the issue realized, was of little value. Milton has not condemned the element of desire in human nature but the difference between love that is genuine and passion that is not controlled by reason has been brought out.

God's Pity on Mankind: - As **every sin has to be punished** so was it the lot of mankind to suffer death although they had been promised immortality by God. But God himself took pity on mankind after a time, and resolved to come down in human shape to save men from hell and death. So Christ is represented as the Son of God, according to Christian belief, who came on earth and suffered Himself to be crucified, thus taking on himself the sin of mankind. This is known as the doctrine of vicarious suffering. God as man, suffered despite being pure and guiltless. By following Christ men were thus giving a chance of regaining their lost Paradise. This is the main topic which Milton has elaborated in his two great epics called Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained. The first deals with the entire story of the Universe from the moment of the creation of the world and of Adam and Eve, down to the disobedience of Adam tempted by Satan.

Two Groups of Angels: - To explain how Satan came to be an evil spirit, we have another mythological story of how there was formerly great war between one group of angels devoted to God and another group of angels led by Lucifer who wished to overthrow God so that he himself might become the most supreme of spirits, in the end, Lucifer was defeated and hurled down by God with all his hosts into a bottomless pit there to suffer for ever. But Lucifer, thereafter called Satan rankled in his defeat and planned to seek revenge against the Almighty. On hearing that God had created Man to take the place of the fallen angels, he decided to tempt him and wean him away from God. He found an opportunity to do so, since God put Adam and Eve in Paradise and gave him the lordship of all creation with one exception alone. This was that they should not taste of the fruit of the tree of knowledge which grew in Eden.

Satan seized the opening, and after recognising his shattered hosts and placing them in suitable dwellings in Hell, came out, and taking the form of a serpent, entered Eden and caused the fall of both Adam and Eve by persuading Eve to eat the fruit of knowledge. With knowledge, Adam and Eve lost their innocence, and God cursed them not only with the loss of their immorality and happiness but also drove them out of Eden to wander over the earth and earn their bread by the sweat of their brow.

Various Episodes: -Into this main Biblical story, Milton has woven many episodes, drawn from the entire range of ancient lore to give his poem both substance, bulk and shape and impressive majesty and sublimity.

Vastness of the Theme: - Critics have admired Milton's courage in dealing with the universal subject. The scene of action is the universal space; time is represented by eternity. The characters are God and His creation. The epic deals with the fortunes of the whole human race and not of a particular country and nation.

The Problem of Evil: The Conflict between Good and Evil: - The problem of evil is a very old subject. Philosophers have given different views regarding the origin of

the evil. Some regarded it as something external. Others regarded it as something eternal. For Satan, evil is the disobedience of the order of God. It is the will of the Man asserting himself. In fact, Satan brought freedom to Man. He gave consciousness of personality to Man. Man began to act with free choice and judgement. Now this freedom meant facing the consequences of one's choice. Adam and Eve have, therefore, to leave paradise because they followed their own free will. Milton condemned the act of Man. He did not appreciate man's free will and judgement because he was a very strict Puritan. His stress was on the results of the evil which led man to his ruin.

Some critics feel that there are two themes which are quite balanced, namely, the Fall of Angels and Fall of Man. The first half deals with Satan's efforts to do something against God. The second half is the drama of Adam and Eve. But this cannot be accepted. Milton clearly said that his story dealt with the Fall of Man. Satan's story is subsidiary to the main story of Adam and Eve.

Milton's Failure to Justify the Ways of God to Man: - Some critics believe that the poet instead justifies the ways of Satan to men, he has not justified the ways of god on the poetic level. Milton has tried to do so through arguments which are unconvincing. Moreover, the punishment given to Adam and Eve is out of proportion to their sin of disobedience. Hanford points out that the justification of divine ways lies in the representation of Adam as a free agent and in the revelation of the working of God's Grace which allows to him and his descendants the opportunity for a new exercise of moral choice and of consequent salvation even after the Fall. The poet has gone out of his way again and again to insist on the fact of Adam's freedom. Neither personally nor as a part of the system did the idea greatly move or interest him.

Poetic Justice: - The theme of the epic is the justification of "God's ways to Man. "Milton justified the punishment of Adam and Eve for the crime they committed. They are expelled from Paradise. However, Milton is not a pessimist. He believe in spiritual development from Hope to Faith. God through His Goodness redeems man from sin. His son namely Christ offers his own sacrifice for the sake of Adam and Eve. At the end of the Paradise Lost, Adam and Eve feel repentant. They are punished in Heaven by God through the angel named Michael. David Daiches states: **"Milton's heart was not fully in this sort of justification. Whatever he might have consciously thought."**

However, he adds that the true justification lies in the way in that virtue can only be achieved by struggle, that the Fall was inevitable because a passive and ignorant virtue, with the challenge of an imperfect world, cannot release the true potentialities of human greatness.

Conclusion: - Milton's Puritanism and his great faith in the Bible made him choose his subject which was of interest to all men. His great achievement lies in making such a serious subject which is agreeable and acceptable to all. In fact, his sublimity (greatness and grandeur) can only be maintained at high level on a very lofty subject,

Character of "Satan"

Satan occupies the most prominent position in the action of Paradise Lost. Though the main theme of the poem is the “Man’s first disobedience” yet it is the character of Satan which gives a touch of greatness to this epic. All the poetic powers of Milton are shown on the delineation of the majestic personality of the enemy of God and Man, i.e. Satan.

As it is shown in Paradise Lost Book-I that the character of Satan is a **blend of the noble and the ignoble, the exalted and the mean, the great and the low**, therefore, it becomes difficult to declare him either a hero or a wholly villain.

In Paradise Lost Book-I we can hardly doubt his **heroic qualities** because this book fully exhibits his exemplary will-power, unsurpassable determination, unshakable confidence and unbelievable courage. However, the encyclopaedia of religion removes some of the confusion from our minds regarding Satan's character in the following words:

"Satan means the arch-enemy of men, the adversary of God and of Christianity, a rebel against God, a lost arch-angle."

Milton also confirms the remarks and tells us that Satan is an archangel. When God declares the Holy Christ his viceroy, Satan refuses to accept God's order because he himself is a confident for it, his false strength and pride leads him to revolt against God for the fulfillment of his lust for power but he and his army suffers a heavy defeat and throw headlong into the pit of hell.

Milton's description of Satan's huge physical dimension, the heavy arms he carries, his tower like personality and his gesture make him every inch a hero. In his first speech, Satan tells Beelzebub that he does not repent of what he did and that defeat has brought no change in him at all. He utters memorable lines:

"What though the field be lost?
All is not lost – the unconquerable will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield."

Actually he is not ready to bow before the will of God and is determined to wade and eternal war by force and will never compromise. He proudly calls himself the new possessor of the profoundest hell and foolishly claims to have a mind never to be changed by force or time. As he says:

"The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven."

Although Satan undergoes perpetual mental and physical torture in hell yet he is fully satisfied because he is at liberty to do whatever he likes, without any restriction. The following line clearly indicates his concept of freedom.

"Better to reign in Hell, the Serve in Heaven."

It can be said without any doubt that Satan gives an evidence of great leadership qualities which are certainly worthy of an epic hero and Beelzebub appreciates him for his undaunted virtues as the commander of undaunted virtue as the commander of fallen angels. His speech to the fallen angels is a sole roof of his great leadership because it infuses a new spirit in the defeated angels who come out of the pit of hill with their swords and are ready to face any danger regardless of their crushing and humiliating defeat at the hands of God. We fully laud Satan's views on the themes of honour, revenge and freedom, but we cannot help sympathizing him because he embodies evil. He is the embodiment of disobedience to God.

As the poem proceeds, the character of Satan degenerates and he fails to produce any impression to true heroism because he is morally a degraded figure. When we closely examine his addressed to his followers, we find that it is full of contradictions and absurdities, because he tries to throw dust into the eyes of his comrades. In fact, on the one hand, he says that they will provoke war against God and on the other hand, he wants peace which is only possible through submission. Then, on reaching the earth, he enters into a serpent and is completely degrades. Pride is the cause of his fall from Heaven – Pride that has 'raised' him to contend with the mightiest. But where is that

pride when the Archangel enters into the mouth of a sleeping serpent and hides himself in its "Mazy folds". Here from the grand figure that he is in the beginning, he degenerates into a man and cunning fellow, and then he tries to tempt Eve by guile. So, Satan degenerates from the role of a brave hero to that of a cunning villain as C. S. Lewis remarks:

"From hero to general, from general to politician, from politician to secret service agent, and thence to a thing that peers in at bed-room or bath-room window and thence toad, and finally to a snake – such is the progress of Satan."

So, it can easily be said in the light of above mentioned facts that Satan is out and pouter hero in Book-I of Paradise Lost, but in Book-IX he appears before us every inch a villain because of his evil design and he himself says that his chief pleasure lies in the destruction of mankind which lowers him in our estimation as a hero.

The Influence of Reformation and Renaissance on Milton

Introduction: - The Renaissance and the Reformation had their impact on England in the sixteenth century. Milton's work reflects the influence of both the Reformation and the Renaissance. He homogenised Reformation and Renaissance into a perfect whole. When he started writing, the initial exuberance ushered in by the Renaissance and the Reformation was already on its way out. His poetry is the first and the last example of the happy and effortless harmonisation of the two mutually antagonistic enthusiasms which stirred the England of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Milton Blends the Two: - The spirit of the Reformation provides the content and spirit of Milton poetry, and the spirit 6f the Renaissance classicism its moulded pattern. Milton did in the seventeenth century what the poets of the French Pleiade had done in the sixteenth. "No poet", says Grierson in The First Half of the Seventeenth Century, "realised so completely the Renaissance ideal of poetry cast in classical moulds-carried out so entirely and majestically the programme of the Pleiade. Milton and Milton only, succeeded in producing living and beautiful poems in correct classical forms. And into these classical forms he poured the spirit of the Protestant movement." In fact Milton's Puritanism (a product of the Reformation) and his Hellenism (a product of the Renaissance) were more closely harmonised in his genius than the division of theme and form would suggest. Milton seems to have enlivened Puritanism with Hellenism and tempered his Hellenism with Puritanism. Milton was neither a godless pagan nor a Puritan formalist nor was he both simultaneously. He imbibed the true spirit of both tendencies and wrote under the unified impact of both.

The Reformation Elements: - In Milton's poetry the Reformation element is found as his soft and steady puritanism. Puritans were those who "protested" against even the Protestants who in their turn had protested against the Pope and the Popish religion. The Reformation signifies the great religious revolution of the sixteenth century which gave rise to the various Protestant or Evangelical organisations of Christendom. The movement was European in extent and was widely successful in the reign of Henry VIII, and later Elizabeth I. But some splinter sects rose against the Protestant Church of England which they thought was not yet fully reformed, and who urged to take Christianity back to the religion of Jesus Christ. These Puritans devotedly and rather superstitiously revered the Bible, condemned the Protestant bishop (episcopacy) and every institutionalised religion, emphasised every man's inner light, hated all arts such as painting, sculpture and music and even drama, all show and luxury, shied at the least appearance of evil, favoured highly formalised and rigorous conduct, and, in general, turned against all literature and aesthetic pursuits. Now, Milton was born in a Puritan

family. His schooling and surroundings, his social and political affiliations, and a number of other factors combined to instil in him a love of Puritan ideology and way of life. However, he was a man of too strong an individuality to accept any formal "ism" in its totality. He was a deeply religious man, and even at the age of twenty-three he could write:

All is, if I have grace to use it so;
As ever in my great Task Master's eye.

Milton's puritanism has not much to do with the stoic creed of ordinary puritans. The Renaissance elements of his intellectual set-up effectively controvert these tendencies and any fanatic adherence to a rigorous code of conduct and ultimate values. His version of puritanism was tinged by his love of the classics, the love of nature, the love of beauty, and Renaissance humanism insisting on the world of man, and love of "the human face divine." Moreover, unlike most Puritans, Milton emphasises the spirit rather than the conduct. And this emphasis brings him into affinity with the Cambridge Platonists who were themselves mostly Puritans. Milton believed that "the Spirit which is given to us is a more certain guide than Scripture.'' In his pamphlet Of True Religion he states that along with external Scripture there is an internal Scripture, "the Holy Spirit written in the Hearts of believers". Milton departed from the Puritan creed even in some important doctrinal points. For instance, he did not subscribe to the doctrine of predestination and refused the Son an equal status with the Father. In more general terms, he tried to reconstruct the Puritan creed on the basis of the humanistic ideology of the Renaissance.

The Renaissance Elements: - The Renaissance in England gave rise to a large number of tendencies. It brought in its wake love and appreciation of the literature of ancient Greece and Rome, a keen love of beauty and art, and a new stress on human life and pursuits. Milton is obviously affected by all these ramifications of the spirit of the Renaissance. In short, the Renaissance spirit in Milton was influenced and modified by his ingrained puritanism. The Renaissance elements show themselves in Milton in two ways:

(i) They provide, as we have already-said, the classical framework for most of his major poetical works.

(ii) They leaven, humanise, Hellenise, refine, and somewhat secularise his puritanism and mitigate its severity. Almost all of Milton's poetic works are embodiments of the Renaissance and the Reformation elements.

Puritan Element in Paradise Lost: - The very theme of Paradise Lost shows the Puritan or Hebraic element in Milton. The fact that he chose the Fall of Man as the theme of his great epic shows the Puritan in him. Wars and adventurous deeds did not interest the Puritan poet.

Not sedulous by nature to indite"
War!, hitherto the only argument
Heroic deemed... (Book IX-27-29)

The theme is the most heroic of all great English poems. He based his great work on the story of the Fall of Man, as given in the Bible. To him this story was not fictitious or legendary, but literally and historically true. It was indeed his Puritan character that led him to this theme, but it gave full scope for the expression of his stupendous genius. Though he has introduced wars and adventurous deeds into the body of the epic, according to the classical tradition, the central theme of the poem is disobedience to

God's command and the consequent Fall of Man. The conflict in the epic is not external; it is a spiritual conflict 'Man's first disobedience.' The theme of the epic, thus, is religious; it is based on the Bible.

In Paradise Lost, Milton's object is not only to "assert Eternal Providence and justify the ways of God to men," but much more. For the poem contains profound observations on religion, morality, politics, government, war and peace and the relationship between man and woman, arts, sciences, explorations and on practically all the important aspects of life. All are sanctified by 'whatsoever in religion is holy and sublime, in virtue amiable or grave."

"Paradise Lost" based upon classical model: - The division of the epic into twelve books, the relieving similes, the councils, the heroic catalogues and the heavenly messengers, are only some of the technical devices that show Milton's indebtedness to the classics.

The form of the epic and treatment of the religious theme are entirely in classical tradition. Milton had declared that he would write an epic in the style of Homer, and every element in the form of Paradise Lost is in the classical style. We have in Paradise Lost all the ingredients of the classical epic-invocation to the Muse, plunging into the very middle of the action, description of war, gradual development of action leading up to the climax - viz, plucking the fruit of the forbidden trees, resulting in the Fall of Man, and then the resolution of the conflict ending in Man's loss of Paradise. Thus the plan and design of Paradise Lost follows meticulously the classical models of homer and Virgil.

In telling the story of the Fall of Man, Milton fully expresses the spirit of the Renaissance. One of the fundamental attributes of Milton's character was his love of freedom and spirit of independence. In the story of Adam there was the conflict between pre-destination and free will. Without entering into theological controversy we may say that Milton was all for freedom, and pointed out how Adam plucked the fruit out of his free will (induced no doubt by Eve), though he had been commanded by God not to do so. And as a result of disobedience he fell under the wrath of Gold. The moral thesis of Genesis is submission to the Almighty, which makes out disobedience to be sinful. But Milton, who wished to emphasize this moral, had an independent spirit and had lived independently. He had acclaimed and advocated the rebellion against the prelates and even the king, and celebrated the glories of regicide. In spite of himself, he was in deep sympathy with Satan, the great rebel of Heaven and the enemy of God. This spirit of rebellion is embodied in the character of Satan, and it is in Satan that Milton put most of himself, his pride and temperament.

In Paradise Lost we have a combination which is absolutely unique in the literature of the time; a poem which has all the deep spiritual fervour of Puritanism, decorated and diversified by every ornament and beauty which could possibly be borrowed from classical literature and mythology. The reader will feel a sense of confusion arise at times from the strange mixture of Christian and pagan ideas. It is essentially the Hell of the ancient Greeks and Romans which Milton describes where the river of Lathe, Cocytus and Styx flow, and it is the Greek Fury, named Medusa who guards the fort. The dreadful figures of Sin and Death are modelled on ancient classical monsters, while Chaos is surrounded by the classical figure of Ades, Orcus and Demogorgon. This makes us wonder what Milton really did believe in, but the fact is that the Christian Bible does not supply a clear picture of Hell and is not very definite as regards the geography or population of the lower region. On the other hand, the classical conception was clear-cut, vivid and pictorial and hence Milton did not hesitate to draw boldly from it so that the nakedness and deficiencies of the Puritan conception would be well hidden under gaudy pagan robes.

Impact of Classical Scholarship in the Style of "Paradise Lost": - In the style of Paradise Lost again, we find the unmistakable impress of classical scholarship. His use of similes, "his use of history and geography, his knowledge of the ancient and modern literature, his love of art and music, his culture and refinement-all point to the influence of the Renaissance and Hellenism on his receptive mind. There is no poetic work so stupendous in its scope, so sublime in its style and moral outlook, which can be compared with Milton's Paradise Lost.

A typical Renaissance figure Milton was impregnated with the classics but he equally drew his inspiration from the Bible and from Hebrew lore. His epic shows his familiarity with the literature, history and the lore of medieval and Renaissance Europe. He understood the technique of music, architecture, engineering, soldiering, astronomy and uses illustration from all of these to add majesty and variety to his work.

One of the most significant features of the use he makes of his learning in the manner in which he adapts classical lore to his Christian purpose and mingles reference to the classical with the use of the Bible and Hebrew mythology, i.e. He is inspired by a **'Muse'** (classical) but the Muse is 'heavenly', the one which inspired Moses: he combines his **appeal to the Muse for help** with connected appeal to the **New Testament of Holy spirit**. His **Hell** is the Gehenna of the Jews but at the same time the **Hades of the Greeks**. His **devils** will be the **Gods of Paganism** (Palestinian, Egyptian, Greek), and in the remarkable 'naming' section he offers us a full display of his learning in the various mythologies. God-like **Zeus** - uses thunder and is the **Thunderer**. **Sin and Death** are allegorical figures from Milton's Christian imagination, but the de**scription of Sin's birth is adapted from the classical accounts of the birth of Pallas Athene**, while the **revolting description of Sin** herself is modelled on the account given of **Scylla by Ovid and Virgil.** The description of the **position in space of the Earth's Universe**-hanging by a golden chain from Heaven - is taken from **Homer's story of the golden chain of Zeus**, etc.

Conclusion: - Paradise Lost is great by reason of its vast imaginative range, and its deep moral earnestness. It was the influence of the Renaissance, with spirit of humanism and classicism that gave to the poem its epic form and its imaginative grandeur; while its subject-matter and its moral earnestness are due to the influence of the Reformation with its spirit of Hebraism.

Autobiographical Elements in "Paradise Lost"

Paradise Lost is an epic, and an epic is a work of objective art. As such, there is hardly any scope for the poet to express himself in an epic poem. But Milton was a self-centred individual and so, in spite of the fact that he was writing an epic, his personality expressed itself all through the poem. In fact, he revealed himself in all his works, whether he was writing an ode or an elegy or an epic, or a masque or a drama. Coleridge rightly points out: "John Milton is in every line of Paradise Lost." The whole poem is coloured by the personality of Milton. Milton is in truth the only living being who exists in his own works. He projects himself, his feelings, knowledge and aspiration into the characters of his epic, both the primitive human creatures and the superhuman beings, whether celestial or infernal.

Self-revelation in "Paradise Lost": - Being a great epic poem, Paradise Lost should be just as impersonal as that of the drama. But we find that the whole poem is coloured by the personality of Milton; we see Milton, the Puritan, Milton, the classical scholar, Milton, the hater of autocratic government and kingship, Milton, the despiser of women. Throughout the poem some passages stand out among the remaining ones because they form part of the spiritual autobiography of the poet. It is unlikely that they crept in

unconsciously, for their anticipations occur in his earlier utterances in prose or verse. His tirades against the corrupt practices of the Roman Catholic Church, his poor opinion of women, his condemnation of the rosy path of dalliance with particular reference to courtly revelries, and his poignant references to his blindness and solitude.

Milton, the Champion of Popular Liberty: - Milton was particularly independent in character, and could not fit himself into the discipline of an old established University. Whatever savoured to him of oppression in civil life or in religion was to his dislike. In his own way he was as determined a rebel against constituted authority and as ardent an apostle of liberty. This, unconsciously, he puts into the mouth of Satan reflects a great deal of the ideals and aspirations of Milton. It is in the passage where Satan speaks of the joy of independence, and of the hatred which he bears to the tyranny of Heaven's Ruler, that he reaches the most commanding heights of noble eloquence. The reason for this is obvious, for Milton was the great champion of popular liberty in his own day, and gave up the best years of his life, as well as his eyesight, to the cause of England's fight against oppression. Milton cannot impart to Satan some of his own sentiments and putting him in the position of the champion of liberty against autocratic rulers. The very idea of kingship had become hateful to Milton.

Thus, Satan is a projection of Milton's own self. The greatest character of Paradise Lost is a projection of Milton's own self. Satan embodies Milton's courage, love of freedom, republicanism and hatred of tyranny. Just as Milton opposed the autocracy of King Charles I and became a stern republican, so also Satan defied the authority of God and rebelled against Him. Again, the defeat of the republican's cause, with which Milton identified himself did not and could not curb his spirit so also the defeat of Satan could not damp his unconquerable spirit of defiance. It seems Milton himself speaks when Satan says:

What though the field be lost
All is not lost; the unconquerable will
And courage never to submit or yield.
What else is not to overcome.

The wonderful eloquence of the council in Hell is an echo from a period of passionate parliamentary life. It cannot be denied that "the debate in Hell would have been lacking in power and verisimilitude if the poet had not lived through the period of the long parliament." Moreover, the war in heaven is the civil war of England, characterized by bitterness of feeling and language peculiar to internal broils.

Milton's Self in Adam: - Another part of Milton's self is exhibited in Adam, who is pious, God-fearing and grave, but susceptible to feminine charm. Through Adam, Milton expresses his feelings towards woman. Adam expresses a bitter cry wrung from Milton by the unforgotten miseries of his first marriage. The scene of reconciliation between Adam and Eve is reminiscent of a similar scene between Milton and his first wife.

Style Bears Stamp of Milton's Mind: - The style of Paradise Lost bears upon it the unmistakable stamp of Milton's mind. The blank verse of Paradise Lost is the verse of a great poet and a great musical artist. On the one hand, it soars high into the lofty region of imagination and on the other; it possesses a grand music. His achievements in constructing his new blank verse are unique indeed. He made his verse perfectly suited to his lofty subject-matter.

The Biblical and classical allusions which abound in Paradise Lost indicate the scholarship and learning of Milton. The style of Milton, unique in itself, has all the stamp of Milton's personality. The word "Miltonic" has acquired a special significance, and is now synonymous with "sublime". It is not only the theme of the poem that lifts the reader to

a lofty moral plane, but its style also reaches the highest watermark of grand style in English poetry. Milton's constant use of Latinism in his construction and phraseology is not merely a device to impart grandeur to his style, but it is a necessary mode of his self-expression. Though such Latinisms are alien to the genius of English language, they are a part of Milton's intellectual equipment, and come naturally to a man, whose mind was nourished on the classics as Milton's was.

Unconscious symbolism in "Paradise Lost": -The Cavaliers and High Church party were described as Philistines, Moabites, and Hitties, who were indulging in persecution of God's chosen people. Milton unconsciously adopts some of this attitude of Paradise Lost. He gives a list of all the heathen gods, and the tribes who worshipped them, and identifies the angels who fell from heaven with these gods. This leads him into a detailed account of many of the episodes in the history of the Israelites, and one cannot help feeling that Milton is continually thinking of his own party when he talks about God's chosen people, and of his opponents in politics, church, and the ideal worshippers.

Conclusion: - The whole of Paradise Lost is full of autobiographical passages. His high seriousness, his proud and resolute will and his grave sadness at the folly of mankind are interwoven in the whole of his story. Both the theme and the style of Paradise Lost are expressions of Milton's personality, his thought, his learning, and his moral, political and religious outlook. The figure of Satan is partly an embodiment of Milton's own spirit of freedom, republicanism and stern determination and courage in the teeth of adversity. Apart from the revelation of Milton through the characters of Satan and Adam, there are occasional references in Paradise Lost to Milton's blindness. Milton had become totally blind when he wrote Paradise Lost and had fallen upon evil days. The lines describing his misfortune are full of pathos, because they come from the very heart of Milton. Thus the poem is full of passages that recall the life of the poet.

Paradise Lost : Christ as a Hero

The story of mankind's fall from Eden as written by John Milton in his epic poem Paradise Lost portrays a classically heroic Satan and a modern hero in Christ. While Satan fits the model of an epic hero as classic heroes are not the true savoirs of the people. He is directly contrasted by Christ, who is not a gloriously strong warrior like the antique heroes. The complex character of Satan has power beyond measure when compared to man but ultimately falls due to his refusal to bow down before God. Christ is not depicted as a warrior at all, but still remains as the savoir of humankind who falls. However, this fall is not due to any of his flaw. His willingness to die for man is his greatest heroic strength.

Satan takes on the role of protagonist which presents him as a false hero. He is the most essential character to the entire story. Epic heroes such as Odysseus and Achilles were written with very similar traits: **strength beyond that of normal men, natural leaders and warriors**, followers who believed in them, **deities remaining watchful of their actions**, yet **imperfect to the death**. Like Satan, these heroes were the protagonists of their respected epics. This essentially appeals us into viewing him a hero. In Book I, he delivers a reuniting cry to his fellow fallen angel. He is the main character leading his men in a revolution against all powerful system. He is angry that God holds Christ in higher regard than His angels. His evil is brought to human level which enables us to understand him emotionally while his power is elevated to that of a hero, allowing us to see him as a powerful warrior capable of waging war. This deep building of the Satan character gives the illusion that he is a hero. He fits into the criteria for what the hero of an epic poem should be. But he is missing one trait to prevent him from being a true hero: **sacrifice for the greater good**.

Satan's desires are never noble. He is fighting for a cause he truly believes in as he struggles against what he considers oppression, but the actuality is that his cause is an evil one - the corruption of mankind. God explains that Satan was made **"just and right, sufficient to have stood, though free to fall" (3. 98-99),** indicating that his path is not the only one available for Satan. He does not need to serve evil. But he chooses that path, and with no greater noble cause to fight for, he is unable to be a true hero. Instead, his path is selfish as he chooses only to serve himself. Not once does he ask for God's redemption in order to serve Him again, nor does he try to serve God's will on Earth. Satan chooses, using his own free will, to continue down the path of bringing evil into the new perfect world that God has created for man. Without a noble cause, Satan is unable to be a true hero.

Christ is not a classic hero, but he is made to be the most heroic character in Paradise Lost. Milton introduces Christ and immediately depicts God warning Him of Satan's attempt to **"by force... destroy, or worse, ...pervert"** (3. 91-92). And while Satan looks to serve only himself, Christ shows willingness to take the ultimate sacrifice when he proclaims **"I offer, on me let thine angel fall" (3. 237)** and "**on me let Death wreck all his rage" (3. 241).** This is where Christ becomes the hero because he literally offers himself up to die. While the classic hero would fall because of a very human flaw, Christ 's fall was because of mankind's flaws. He is separated from all of the classic heroes and placed above them because he did not save his people as a warrior, killing many armies. He followed God's most noble wish. Achilles died for his country, yet Christ died for all of mankind. Milton intentionally uses this fact to show Christ as not as epic hero, but a true savoir to humanity. This is what makes him a new hero, as Milton cleverly is able to justify by making his achievements so much more valuable to all of mankind than any classic hero.

To put Satan and Christ into heroic perspective, **God must also be examined**. In simple terms, Satan rose up against his oppressor in attempt to overthrow a government he felt was unjust. He fought against the Almighty being from which everything was created, including Satan's own ability to fight against Him. He is not like the Greek and Roman gods that can be fought against while remaining heroic because His will decides what is heroic or if any being is even able to fight against Him. In contrast to Satan's use of his **free will** to rise up against God, there is Christ, Jesus Christ, who chooses to be the **sacrificial lamb for mankind**. This separates him from any other hero in the fact that his death led to salvation, not his personal downfall.

John Milton's Paradise Lost does put a new perspective on what an epic poem's hero can be. Although Satan could be identified as the hero, it seems evident that, according to Milton, classical heroes with similar traits as Satan should not be considered true heroes at all. In the context of Paradise Lost, heroes of that nature are just men. Like all of man, they are sinners, and their true value comes from whether they can use their God enabled free will to do something God deems positive. Christ was the true hero of Paradise Lost, as he showed everything that Satan could not. When he was needed by God, he stepped up voluntarily and acted as an instrument of salvation for humanity. While not portrayed as a larger-than-life warrior, the character of Christ sacrifices himself to be a true hero, breaking all the traditions of an epic hero.

Milton as an epic poet

No Metaphysical Influences: - Milton’s instincts and training kept him almost untouched by metaphysical influence — though we might ask, for instance, if “Himself is his own dungeon” (Comus, Line 385) is less metaphysical than Andrew Marvell’s “mine own precipice I go”. Milton conceived of poetry as “more simple, sensuous, and

passionate" than logic and rhetoric, but these terms are not an adequate description of his own work. Milton was, to put it roughly, as Spenserian who became the greatest of European neo-classical poets. In other words, he belonged to what had once been, and through him continued to be, the main stream, of English poetry. He moved rapidly from a thin and "conceited" Elizabetnan sweetness towards concentration, order, rationality, and restraint, Corm's was a unified mosaic of the earlier and later styles of Milton and his whole century.

His Steady and Sonorous Style: - "The poetry of Milton's earlier years was sensuous, ornate and beautiful, showing decorative features derived from the exuberant literature of the Elizabethan- period. The sonnets written during the 1640s and 1650s show his style growing more direct. In Paradise Lost he brought together the exuberant fancy of his early poems and this new sense that poetry must speak directly about life with dramatic 'immediacy if it is to have the strongest possible effect. The basic movement of Paradise Lost is -steady and sonorous, but the story moves steadily forward all the time without the ornate decorative movements that are so charming but undramatic in a work like Comus. Milton imparts information rapidly, even to the point of distorting the syntax of his blank verse lines so L as to crowd related classes or epithets close together.

Decorative imagination: - Paradise Lost reveals at almost every point a steady forward impulse. Yet the decorative imagination such as characterised Milton's early poems is not excluded. Here, as in so many other respects, Milton learned how to bring all his gifts into plays, ordering them and subordinating them to the grand pattern of his narrative. For example, epic similes introduce the Arthurian legends with their chivalric elements that had fired Milton's youthful imagination. The elves aryl fairies of Elizabethan poetry could be similarly admitted, as could the ornate decorativeness of Spenser. But because these elements are introduced through epic similes they are related to the main story and illuminate it. They exist in a clearly subsidiary position as vivid side-lights on the main action. yet, just as the mellifluous classical names of places and people (for which Milton had shown his fondness as early as in the Nativity Ode of 1629) relate Milton's epic to all human experience and earlier literature, so the imaginative descriptive side of Paradise Lost links it not only with the work of other writers but also with the ideas and areas of study which had found expression in Milton's youthful poems."

Paradise Lost – His Masterpiece: - Milton's Paradise Lost is the greatest epic poem in English literature. Indeed, with its sublime imagery, its harmonious verse, its Titanic background of heaven, hell, and the limitless void that lies between, it is unsurpassed in any literature. It is a colossal epic, not of a man or a hero, but of the whole race of man. The splendour of heaven, the horror of hell, the serene beauty of paradise, the sun and planets suspended between celestial light and gross darkness, are described with an imagination that is almost superhuman.

Harbinger of Tradition "Paradise:- Lost shows Milton as Christian humanist using all the resources of the European literary tradition that had come down to him–biblical, classical, medieval renaissance ; pagan, Jewish and Christian. Imagery from classical fable and medieval romance, allusions to myths, legends and stories of all kinds, geographical imagery deriving from Milton's own fascination with books of travel and echoes of the Elizabethan excitement at the new discoveries, biblical history and doctrine, — all these and more are found in this great synthesis of all that the western mind was stored with • by the middle of the seventeenth century. Like The Faerie Queene, Milton's epic is a great synthesizing poem, but Milton's synthesis is more successful than Spenser's because he places his different kinds of knowledge — biblical, classical, medieval, modern– in a logical hierarchy, and never mingles, as Spenser often does, classical myth and biblical story on equal terms. If all the resources of classical

mythology are employed in order to build up an overwhelming picture of the beauty of Eden before the Fall, that is because Milton is saying that here, and here only, were all the yearnings of men for ideal gardens fully realised. The description of Eden in Book IV is, indeed one of the finest examples of Milton's use of pagan classical imagery for a clearly defined Christian purpose.

Milton's imaginative Power: - Milton's imaginative control of his scenes extends even` to illustrative details and exact features of language. The epic similes are nearly always exactly linked in style and subject with the main events of the story at the moment they occur, while often providing an ironic commentary upon them.

Milton's imagination was always at ease when dealing with immensity, and the scale of Paradise Lost is surely immense. More than any other English poet he is at home with huge panoramas on a cosmic scale. He had a curiously aerial imagination, and the breath taking account of Satan's flight through Chaos at the end of Book II illustrates this. Even in his earliest poems Milton's view frequently broadens out beyond the limits of a particular scene to become a great panorama on a cosmic scale. Here is a stanza from the Nativity Ode:

So when the sun in bed,
Curtained with cloddy red
Pillows his head upon an orient wave.
The flocking shadows pale
Troop to th'infernal
Each fettered ghost skips. to his several grave,
And the yellow-skirted Pays
Fly after the night-steeds, leaving their moon-loved maze.

This stanza is typical of Milton's imaginative practice and anticipates several features of the style of Paradise Lost. The idea of the sun in bed may be far-fetched and Milton writes effortlessly about things on this grand scale. His mind easily slips from this gorgeous, baroque scene to the world of ghosts and shadows and then to a fairy world in the final two

Master of Grand Style: - With Milton's sense of beauty was combined a stateliness of manner which gives a high dignity to his poetry. He is a master of what is known as the grand style. He wielded the blank verse with an exceptional mastery. His poetry is distinguished also by its music. The reader who is deaf to the harmonies of Milton has no music in himself. "After Shakespeare, Milton is the greatest English poet; which means that he is the greatest English poet outside the drama but within the tether of epic poetry.

'Free Will' in Milton's Paradise Lost

Milton's epic, *Paradise Lost* allows its readers a penetrating insight into the debates and anxieties of 17th century England. It is deeply informed by the poet's own political sympathies with the Puritan revolutionaries and his experience of the rule of James I and Charles I. The rise of capitalism and imperialism in Britain too at the same time brought in an increasing consciousness of individuality and agency fuelling the debates on man's free will and potential. However, the most powerful and radical contemporary debate of Milton's concern, would have been the **Puritan rejection of the authority of the king and the church and the redefinition of man's relationship with God in terms of the personal and the individual**. Puritanism in its bid to free Christianity of the bondages of ecclesiastical interpretation and the monopoly of the Church asserted the

right of every man to exert his free will in interpreting the Bible. The same, however, even in destabilizing the idea of authority and social hierarchy made necessary a re-thinking of the very idea of free will itself. The issue of free will and authority in Paradise Lost read in such a context becomes fraught with larger ideological and historical debates, and of great political implication.

A period of such religious transition as that to which Milton belonged could not have been but ridden with anxieties of disorder and loss of faith, also evident is the fact that the emphasis on free will permeating the text of *Paradise Lost* is much a product of Milton's ingenuity. It can be argued nonetheless that though intense, Milton's definition of free will remains inevitably and inherently wanting, in that it becomes more of an instrument to reiterate God's authority as supreme and absolute rather than man's own agency. As explicit in God's speech -

What pleasure I from such obedience paid
When Will and Reason(Reason also is choice)
Useless and vain, of freedom both despoiled
Made passive both, had serv'd necessity
Not mee (Bk III, Paradise Lost)

The exercise of free will becomes a mode of servility to God; in fact it becomes a pre-condition for devotion and obedience. **"Free will allows subjects to respond creatively to their calling for obedience and love and interpret it in their personal way."** Such a restricted understanding as this, derived from Milton's representation of the potential of free will in *Paradise Lost*, suggests some problem in his definition of the term itself.

As can be seen in Adam's parting words to Eve in the separation scene, **"God towards thee has done his part do thine"**, the exercise of agency should according to Adam and the sympathetic voice of the Miltonic bard ideally always be informed by a sense of total obligation towards God, and a fear of death or punishment. Even the exercise of reason becomes suspect

Lest by some fair appearing good surprised
She dictate false, and misinform the will
To do what God expressly hath forbid. (Bk IX, Paradise Lost)

Everything therefore in the Miltonic scheme of things, even reason gets subordinated to the command of God. Here again one must mention as above that "reason is choice".

Free will remains a convenient and non-existent ideal in terms of Milton's human rights agenda, where the only creatures to be exercising it are seen as Satanic or the causal agents of "all our woe". Many critics hail the pre-lapsarian Eden as home to absolute freedom of will however the very example of the punitive relegation of Satan to Hell contradicts the belief.

Adam has been taken as the intellectual superior of Eve. Such a hierarchizing undermines her credibility at making decisions as equally informed as Adam's. At the same time this frames Eve as more susceptible to giving in to temptation. Therefore all of her independent decisions and assertion of individuality becomes suspect. Eve's decision that they work apart is an assertion of free will informed by a personal consciousness of the need for efficiency and to earn their supper. However, it gets branded as an act of transgression in the larger scheme of things as it conflicts with

the wishes of Adam, her "intellectual" superior and her voice is never sympathized with but seen as the voice of challenge or opposition to the feudal patriarchal world order, where God is to man what man is to woman, while the woman remains subjugated twice over.

Satan in his fall affords us with an interesting comparison with Eve. It is inescapable that both are in their social locations relatively inferior, Satan to Christ, and Eve to Adam. As embodied in the speech of the snake, the real temptation for both, Eve and Satan is then to rise above their given locations, to become equals with Adam and God respectively, **"For unequal who is free?"** What thus gets constructed as the sinful temptation is, as in Satan's words, "vent'ring above my lot". The construction of free will purely in terms of obedience to God, then gets exposed as a kind of control mechanism to ensure that all creatures:

Stand fast; to stand or fall
Free in thine own arbitrament it lies
Perfect within, no outward aid require;
And all temptation to transgress repel (Paradise Lost Book VIII)

The actual scene of temptation and the instance of Eve's exercise of free will suggests the presence of certain restrictions on her exercising her free will. "**But his forbidding commends thee more"** reveals how restrictions themselves take the form of temptation, not even in terms of absolute defiance of authority but as an assertion of the absolute freedom of will and aspiration to knowledge that she feels denied. Eve in stating,

For good unknown, sure is not had
And yet unknown is as not had at all

exposes the problems in Milton's definition of free will in terms of its counter, i.e. disobedience, by using the same method of inversion of discourse to define "good" in terms of knowing it from bad. In her understanding of good being proved faulty is also automatically proved erroneous Milton's understanding and adumbration of the idea of free will.

Contextualizing what we have thus argued our understanding of free will as depicted in *Paradise Lost* to be, we can see how such a construction of agency works vis-à-vis Milton's political position. While the emphasis on individual agency is in keeping with the wider social currents and ethos of his time, the subordination of will to the command of God institutes a system of self-imposed morality in the absence of institutionalized systems of enforcement, i.e. the church; the threat of damnation for the sin of impertinence sets an example against the assertion of equal rights that may challenge patriarchy or the dominant. However conducive it might be to Milton's politics, such an understanding of free will remains essentially incomplete and restricted as argued above.

Humanism in "Paradise Lost"

Humanism is an outlook or system of thought attaching prime importance to human rather than divine or supernatural matters. Humanist beliefs stress the potential value and goodness of human beings, emphasize common human needs, and seek solely rational ways of solving human problems. It is in fact Renaissance cultural movement

that turned away from medieval scholasticism and revived interest in ancient Greek and Roman thought.

“Paradise Lost” has held its place for three centuries as the greatest poem in the English language. It has been the touchstone of literary appreciation, the test by which the reader’s taste and understanding have been judged. It came into the world unheralded and unsung, but within a few years it cut out all its contemporaries and the ancients too. To what amazing quality or combination of qualities can this supreme triumph be attributed? Many would answer: the style; and indeed no man, not even Shakespeare, handled the English language with such superb and dignified mastery, with such unerring skill and such sonorous effect as Milton. But no work of art survives merely because of style; it is the perfect combination of manner and matter, the language and the thought-content, which gives such work immortality and raises it to the rank of a classic. It was humanistic touch that made it to survive.

Milton was indeed a humanist. He was brought up in the tradition of Plato; the speculations of the Greek philosophers were his rod and staff, the dramas of the great tragedians his daily bread. He was a Renaissance scholar who had discovered afresh the vitality of the Greek outlook. The stories of Greece were parables that spoke that his inmost being. He had the Greek thirst for knowledge, the Greek love of beauty, the Greek devotion to liberty, the Greek insistence on the primacy of man. He was of the breed which strove with gods outside the walls of Troy and on the high seas. And when he decided to put himself wholly into one mighty utterance which the world would not willingly let die, he chose a theme which would have delighted his Greek predecessors. It had just that slightly ironic flavour which they appreciated, that emphasis on a human problem, that wide sweep which covered the three worlds that are found in the writings of the Greek masters. But Milton had something which the Greeks did not have–the assurance that the problem was not insoluble and–if only the Greeks would understand–it was a solution which continued to uphold the dignity of man, for one greater Man–yes, a Man, could restore us and regain the blissful seat.

Thus we see the fruition of the humanist outlook in Paradise Lost. The story revolves around that weak, helpless creature called Man. But, in spite of his frailty, he is the centre of the universe. For him a whole cosmogony has been devised, for him worlds have been created, and his welfare concerns regions beyond ours. For his salvation councils are held in Heaven and for his destruction pandemonium prevails in Hell. This gives Man a dignity and a status which is entirely different from the position afforded to him in Greek epic or drama. In Paradise Lost, Man is not the victim of some inexorable, inexplicable fate against which he is pitted in unequal struggle, nor can it be said of men that

Like flies to wanton boys are we to the gods,
They kill us for their sport.

Adam’s position in *Paradise Lost* has been much misunderstood, though Eve’s role has been better appreciated. But Adam represents the real human element. He is, as his name implies, truly a man. In his long conversations with the angels are the questions which have always troubled man: Who am I, whence have I come, and what is my destiny? With the creation of the new and strangely fascinating creature Eve, a whole realm of problem and perplexity bursts upon Adam; love, without which man cannot exist which does not enter alone; for in his train are tears and doubts and immemorial pain; and companionship, failure and forgiveness. With the bitter experience of Eden comes the hard lesson that humanity refuses to learn but must learn, if it should survive in God’s universe–that obedience to the moral law is the guarantee of peace and security and that the price of disobedience is the loss of Paradise, the Paradise of an innocent and undefiled mind.

Most readers of *Paradise Lost* have been perplexed by one difficulty, that Milton seems to be on the side of Satan; in the titanic struggle between good and evil he seems to admire the infernal enemy rather than the All-wise and All-good. While it is true that much of Milton's colossal energy has gone into the creation of Satan, it is not correct to say that he is on Satan's side. He is interested in Satan more perhaps than in God, because in Satan he finds the same conflict as in Man, the same dualism, the same upsurging of the good, the same punishment of it and conscious choice of evil that have disfigured humanity. Indeed it is an intensely human Satan that Milton has created, a being who can feel the pangs of envy when he sees Adam and Eve imparadised in one another's arms and realises that he can never know that bliss. So, in this sense, Milton is Satan, Milton is Adam, and now the triumphant instrument of God's punishment.

So to all lovers of humanity, to all believers in the dignity of the human race, to all champions of human rights and liberties, Milton has left his legacy–the soul-stirring, challenging, elevating message of *Paradise Lost.* That such a challenge is needed more than ever today we need not doubt. Nor do we need to question Milton's answer to our perplexity, that human problems cannot be solved merely on the human plane. In the acceptance of this truth lies our only hope, and the fulfillment of Milton's vision of a new Heaven and Earth wherein the just shall dwell,

And after all their tribulations long
See golden days, fruitful of golden deeds
With Joy and Love triumphing and fair Truth.

Paradise Lost Book IX : Summary & Analysis

Summary

In the prologue to Book IX, Milton says that his work must now take a tragic tone and that this Christian epic, though different, is nonetheless more heroic than earlier epics like the Iliad and the Aeneid. Again, he calls on Urania as the muse of Christian inspiration to help him complete his work and show the true heroism that lies in the Christian idea of sacrifice. Then Milton returns to his story.

Satan returns to Eden eight days after being forced out by Gabriel. He has studied all the animals and has decided to approach Eve in the form of a serpent which he considers to be the "subtlest Beast of all the Field" (86).

The following morning, Adam and Eve prepare for their daily work tending the Garden. Because the Garden's growth seems to surpass their labors, Eve suggests that on this day they work apart. She thinks they can accomplish more working individually. Adam argues the point with Eve, saying that Raphael has warned them of dangers and that she is more vulnerable by herself. He and she continue this argument — she proposing that they work alone; he proposing that they work together — until Adam finally relents; however, he makes Eve promise to return to their bower soon, but Milton comments that she will never return to Adam in the way that she was that morning.

Satan in the form of the serpent is surprised and excited to find Eve alone tending flowers. He watches her and for a few moments becomes enraptured and forgets his evil nature. Then he remembers what his purpose is — to destroy God's creation. The serpent approaches Eve upright upon its tail. His various acts fail to attract Eve's attention because she is used to dealing with animals. However, when the serpent speaks, complimenting Eve on her beauty, playing on both her vanity and curiosity, Eve is suddenly interested. She is especially curious about how the serpent learned to speak.

Satan replies through the serpent that he learned speech by eating the fruit of a particular tree in the Garden. He acquired speech and the ability to reason and has, therefore, sought Eve out to worship as the most beautiful of God's creations.

When Eve inquires which tree gave the serpent his abilities, he takes her to the Tree of Knowledge. Eve tells the serpent that God has forbidden Man to eat from that tree, and she chooses to obey God. Satan, using the same sophistic reasoning he has used throughout the story, tells Eve that God has tricked her and Adam. He has eaten of the tree and is not dead; neither will they die. Instead the tree will give them knowledge, which will make them like God. This fact makes God envious and has caused him to demand that Adam and Eve not eat of the tree. Eve is taken in by the words of the serpent, and after some rationalizing, she convinces herself that she should eat the fruit. And she does.

Now Eve suddenly worships the Tree of Knowledge as a god, even as all nature weeps for her fall. Her thoughts turn to Adam, and she decides that he must eat the fruit also. She cannot bear the idea that she might die and Adam would be given another wife. When Eve approaches Adam, he drops the wreath of flowers that he was weaving for her hair. Eve quickly tells him what she has done, and Adam just as quickly makes his own decision. He allows his physical love and passion for Eve to outweigh his reason. He knowingly eats the fruit and is immediately affected with carnal desire for Eve. The two humans exit to engage in "amorous play" (1045). The description here is not of love but lust.

After sex, Adam and Eve fall into a deep sleep. They awake and are overcome with shame and guilty knowledge. They both are weeping, and they launch into arguments with each other. Adam says Eve is at fault; she replies in kind. Milton describes them as spending "fruitless hours" (1188) in bitter accusation. Each is willing to blame the other, but neither is willing to accept responsibility. Paradise is gone and in its place guilt, blame, and shame. Milton says that both of them have given way to "Appetite" (1129), and reason is lost. Paradise has ended; the earth has begun.

Analysis

Milton's fourth invocation differs from earlier ones in that he does not call on Urania, except obliquely, and he does not mention his blindness. Rather he offers an explanation for his epic and says that the tone must now become "Tragic" (6). The word "tragic" had two connotations for Milton. First, it carried the simple moral meaning of something terribly bad or unfortunate. Christians since the Middle Ages had always considered the falls of Lucifer and Adam tragic. But "tragic' also refers to the dramatic concept of tragedy as first defined by Aristotle and developed through the centuries to its high achievement in Elizabethan England. Milton knew the nature of dramatic tragedy from his study of the Greeks (he patterned Samson Agonistes on Greek tragedy) as well as from reading Shakespeare and other Elizabethan dramatists (he wrote an essay On Shakespeare for the Second Folio).

By the seventeenth century, tragedies had assumed a basic format. The play would have a noble hero who had a tragic flaw in either personality or actions. The fortunes of the hero would reverse during the play from good to bad with the hero recognizing his own responsibility for these consequences that resulted from his flaw. The end of the play would result in the death of the hero. Throughout the play, fate would, in one form or another, control the action, and, at the end, the audience would experience a catharsis or purging of emotions, resulting from their empathy with the hero. They should feel pity for the hero and fear for themselves.

To see that Paradise Lost has an underlying tragic structure is not difficult. Adam is a noble character. He has a flaw in his passion for Eve that overrides his reason. He makes the mistake of eating the fruit. He recognizes, eventually, his responsibility for his actions. Death, though not occurring in the epic, is the main result of Adam's action. Fate (God) knows what will happen throughout the poem. And finally, Milton wanted his audience to experience pity for Adam and all mankind but fear for the consequences of their own sinful lives. So when Milton speaks of changing his "Notes to Tragic" (6), he means more than a passing remark.

Yet for all of these connections to tragedy, Paradise Lost is not a tragedy; it is a Christian epic with a tragic core. Adam is a noble hero, but as Milton notes in this prologue, he is not a hero like Achilles, Aeneas, or Odysseus. He is, in Milton's words, a hero of "Patience and Heroic Martyrdom" (33). Ultimately too, Adam is regenerated and reconciled rather than just killed. Paradise Lost will end on a hopeful — even joyful — note, since through Adam's fall, salvation and eternal life will come to Man through God's mercy and grace. This felix culpa or "happy fault" is not the stuff of tragedy.

Moreover, even as an epic, Milton says that he was attempting something different in Paradise Lost. He did not want to glorify warfare as in earlier epics like the Iliad. Instead, in his only description of warfare (Book VI), he creates parody rather than magnificence. Rather Milton's goal was to write a Christian epic, specifically a Protestant Christian epic with a new sort of hero, one who wins ultimately through patience and suffering. At the time Milton wrote this particular invocation, he still prayed to the Muse (Urania, Christian inspiration) to help him complete his work and to let it gain acceptance in a time when such a work's fate was unclear.

After the invocation, Milton begins this book with Satan who has been absent for the three books in which Adam and Raphael talked. Satan has degenerated as a character. In his speech in Eden, he is unable to make his thoughts logical. He thinks Earth may be more beautiful than Heaven since God created it after Heaven. He thinks he might be happy on Earth but then argues that he could not be happy in Heaven. He fusses about Man being tended by angels. Satan's ability to think, which seemed potent in Book I, now appears weak and confused. An even greater indication of Satan's character degeneration is that he is now self-delusional. In the early books, he lied but only to get others to do his bidding. In this speech, he lies to himself. He questions whether God actually created the angels, he sees Man as God's revenge on him, and he says that he took half of all the angels out of Heaven. Satan who seemed somewhat heroic in his rebellion now seems to be a dangerous con man who has come to believe his own lies. In the early books, the reader can at least see reasoning as well as envy behind Satan's actions, but, here in Book IX, Satan has become the delusional psychopath who believes his own lies. The concept of heroism cannot be stretched to include Satan's attitude and thinking at this point in the epic.

Milton reinforces Satan's degeneration with visual images. Satan creeps along the ground of Eden in a low-lying mist and ultimately takes on the form of the serpent who crawls along the ground. The shape changes Satan has made in Paradise Lost show a pattern. From angel to cherub, from cherub to cormorant, then to lion and tiger, and finally to toad and snake, Satan has progressively made himself more and more earthbound and lowly. The irony of these shifts in shape is not lost on Satan. As he searches for a serpent to enter, he complains of the bestial nature of the animal that he must

"incarnate and imbrute,
That to the highth of deity aspired" (166-167).

That is, as he tries to become like God, he takes on lower and lower forms. The next scene of Book IX involves the argument between Adam and Eve over whether they should work alone or separately. Some commentators have seen Eve's arguments as a kind of calculated sophistry akin to Satan's that demonstrates Eve's complicity in her own fall. Her argument, however, is more of innocence. She has played the proper womanly role during Raphael's visit, and now she simply wants more freedom and responsibility. Perhaps she wants to show that she can be Adam's equal. To read Eve as a conniver is to overlook her naiveté and innocent desire to be more like Adam.

Satan's attitude when he finds Eve alone shows that the two humans made the wrong decision in separating. When Satan sees Eve by herself, he is pleased that she is not with Adam, who would have been a "Foe not informidable" (486). Eve's only real defense against Satan seems to be her basic beauty and goodness. Satan is so astounded when he first sees her that for a brief period he forgets his purpose and stands "Stupidly good" (465). The scene makes two points: First, the goodness expressed just by Eve's physical person is overwhelming. And second, Satan has lost the capacity for real goodness. He may be momentarily struck dumb and be "stupidly good," but he quickly recovers and is not in any way deflected from his evil purpose.

Satan's temptation of Eve is a cunning masterpiece. As a prelapsarian serpent, he is able to approach her standing upright upon his tail, a

"Circular base of rising folds, that tow'r'd
Fold above fold, a surging maze" (498-99).

* Prelapsarian means characteristic of or belonging to the time or state before the fall of humankind

The images of circuitous, folding mazes occur intermittently throughout Paradise Lost and reach their culmination in this image of the serpent rising to tempt Eve with his body a coiling labyrinth. Visually, Eve is pure, simple innocence; the serpent, unfathomable, complex evil. Eve will soon be lost in his labyrinthine argument and plot.

Satan as serpent first uses his physical beauty and speech to impress Eve, who finds him beautiful. A number of writers have found sexual undertones in the description of the serpent:

"pleasing was his shape,
And lovely" (503-04).

An old Jewish tradition even had it that Eve made love with the serpent. Milton's subtle sexualizing of the serpent followed this tradition and adds another element to Eve's fall. William Blake, in his illustration for this scene, certainly noticed sexual imagery. At first glance, Eve appears to kiss the serpent, but is, in fact, taking a bite of a very phallic apple in the serpent's mouth. The fruit hanging from the Tree of Life in Blake's illustration suggests nothing so much as male genitalia.

Eve is also taken with the fact that the serpent talks. Further, the snake is not in the angelic form of the tempter in Eve's dream, so she is not put on guard by the creature. (Milton has made it clear earlier that Adam and Eve were never threatened by any animal in Eden.) Satan first flatters Eve. He licks the ground. He says he worships her beauty. The reader recalls that Eve narcissistically became enamored of her own image in the water at her creation. She is vain, but she is also secondary to Adam. Here a talking snake praises her beauty and says he worships her. She is interested though not enraptured.

But when the serpent takes Eve to the Tree of Knowledge, his arguments come so fast and so deviously that she cannot follow them. At first, she does what she should. She tells the serpent that she cannot eat from the tree. He argues that he has eaten and did not die. Then he adds that God wants her to eat of the tree and, contradictorily, that he envies what the humans might learn if they did eat. The arguments come so fast that Eve cannot answer, let alone think through them. Her innocence in comparison with Satan's cunning overcomes her reason. She is no match for Satan, and so his sophistic arguments seem reason to her. Unlike Adam, Eve buys into the arguments without grasping what is really happening. Eve eats the fruit, and eats, for the first time, gluttonously, letting her appetite take control of her reason.

After she eats, Eve at first feels elated. She thinks that she has reached a higher level but shows this ironically by starting to worship the tree. Her thoughts turn to Adam. Initially, she thinks she might keep this new power for herself and perhaps become his equal. At this point, Eve is conniving; already the fruit has changed her innocence. Even her reason for telling Adam shows this fact. If the fruit indeed leads to death, she does not want to die and leave Adam to another woman. She selfishly wants him to be in the same condition she is.

Adam's temptation and fall is much less complicated than Eve's. When Adam drops the flowery chaplet that he has been making for Eve, he symbolically drops all that he has in Eden. He immediately realizes what Eve has done. Adam makes a conscious decision to eat the fruit because he cannot give up Eve. He allows his physical passion for her to outweigh his reason, and so he eats. Adam's decision is willful, unlike Eve's, which was based on fraudulent argument and weak reason.

After the fall, the two are overcome by lust. Adam says to Eve,
"if such pleasure be
In things to us forbidden, it might be wish'd,
For this one Tree had been forbidden ten" (1024-26).

The language of the entire scene is charged with sexual imagery and innuendo. Their appetites are in control, and reason is lost. After their lovemaking, they fall into a troubled sleep — no more innocent dreams. When they wake, they are cognizant of what they have done, and their arguing is that of real people. If their argument at the end of Book IX is compared with their discussion of whether to work alone or together at the beginning, the difference in Man before and after the fall is clear. The opening discussion is reasoned and pleasant; the closing, irrational and bitter.

Paradise Lost Book IX: Human Nature as Central Issue

“Paradise Lost” is a poem about the nature of man. The Biblical story of the fall and its consequences serve as a framework to get the desired aim. The exposure of human nature is made through the characters of Adam and Eve. Both are like and unlike human beings.

Prior to Satan’s entry into the Garden of Eden, they are unlike human beings. The degree of innocence, simplicity, credulity, nobility, gentleness, obedience, submission and purity, which the reader finds in them, is hard to be found in human beings. They are more angels-like and less like us. However, after Eve’s debate with Adam over the separation of their labour still repentance that they become attractive and representatives of universal human nature.

It is first of all Eve who attracts our attention. She argues with Adam over the division of work. Her dissatisfaction, doubts and complaints are familiar thinking processes of

human psychic make up. The complaining wife tries to convince her contended husband that their work to maintain the Garden of Eden is beyond their capacity that all their efforts to keep the garden well-trimmed have failed, hence, there is pressing desirability to divide their labours. The important thing to note is the presence of germs of evil in Eve's mind, which is another, proof of her being a real human being. She, on the one hand, calls God unjust by complaining of excessive work while on the other hand, finds faults with Divine Plan, which enjoins them to work together. In short, her complaints and suggestions are natural to human mind.

Adam's disagreement corresponds to the thinking of the typical God fearing human being. His arguments are sensible and logical but they are thoroughly coloured with religious sentiments like a gentle husband, he advises Eve not to criticize Divine Scheme because it is not binding on them to keep on working and to do nothing else. He further expresses his apprehension like a true Christian. He thinks that the 'crafty importer' would prefer to seduce one of them instead of seducing both. It is worth noting that Adam is too gentle to attract reader's attention. Unlike Eve, he loves to live a life of obedience and submission. At the same time, Adam has a noble disposition, but neither he is authoritative nor assertive. The reader gets some dim glimpses of his Uxuriousness (excessively devoted to one's wife).

Eve exposes typical female psychology by insisting upon her original plan. She wrongly interprets Adam by saying that if they confine themselves within a small area and remain all the time in a state of fear; their life cannot be called happy. Like a kind-hearted man, Adam reassures her that he does not doubt Eve's virtuosity. What he means to say is that union is strength; when together they would administer to withstand any trial easily. He idealizes Eve that it is in her presence, he feels stronger and more courageous.

Eve reveals obstinacy in her behaviour. She once again gives clear indication of the presence of germs of evil in her mind. She advances a novel argument that God has not made them so imperfectly that they should be incapable of meeting danger or temptation individually. The implication of Eve's argument is that if she fails to resist the temptation singly. It would mean that God made her imperfect. She becomes representative of universal human nature by showing her inclination towards evil. There is blend of both good and evil in Eve, though good dominates. Eve becomes more attractive human being than Adam as she behaves, talks and thinks, like an average human being.

Adam is more reasonable and convincing than Eve in his arguments. He rightly feels there is danger inherent in the fact that man may lose control over his own faculties or the devil might drag him into fraud and deception through something that seems too good and fair and that freewill requires to be exercised under the constant control of reason. Thus instead of endorsing Eve's desire for independence and liberty he advises her to remain within the limits of divine rules and regulations. He knows that whosoever violates the human limits will be punished by God. His apprehensions are that of a true Christian. He also becomes a spokesman of human nature.

By now it becomes clear that exposure of human nature is central to "Paradise Lost". Both Adam and Eve are the proto-types of universal human nature. Hence, both are like human beings therefore attract our attention and appreciation.

Paradise Lost Book IX: Drama of fall of Adam and Eve

The climax of "Paradise Lost" is the fall of Adam and Eve. They become the victim of forbidden fruit, on the temptation of Satan. In the guise of serpent he secretly entered

the Garden of Eden in order to frustrate God's plan about the new creation. The whole of this episode is described in a dramatic and epic style. Exchange of dialogue, interaction of characters, suspense and the interplay of the feelings of frustration, independence, warning, partition, flattery, praise, benefits, tough reasoning, silent thinking taste, effect of fruit, pride, superiority, pathos, love, relish companionship with Eve, nakedness, lustfulness and quarrel are the sources of dramatic element in Book IX of "Paradise Lost". But the major source is the internal and external conflict of characters. It is important to note here that the element of epic grandeur is never lost.

The first dramatic situation is the scene when Eve advances her suggestion that she and Adam would accomplish more if they were to divide their labour. She also criticizes on the ground that the work, which they do in Paradise, is somewhat more than their capacities permit. Her dissatisfaction with the order of things is a pointer towards her tragic and ominous fall. Adam in his turn dismisses Eve's suggestion in a gentle way. He says that they are stronger when united. He also expresses his doubts about the wisdom of Eve's plan; she may be found by "the malicious foe". Hence, Adam insists that "the attempt itself" should be abided. Eve agrees about the existence of such an enemy but she is hurt at Adam's opinion that she could be shaken or reduced. The argument with Adam ends when he allows her to work independently whenever she likes. Adam is embarrassed where Eve is happy at her newfound independence.

This newfound emancipation is the concept of liberty, which has been a point of discussion for critics. As far as Milton is concerned, he does not approve of this kind of liberty. The event of the fall would not have taken place if Adam and Eve have remained together.

Moreover, separation of Adam and Eve is directly against God's plan that had devised an interdependent life programme for them. Violation of interdependent relationship becomes a tragic flaw. We compare this concept of liberty with the concept of liberty enunciated by Satan in Book 1, there is a clear-cut difference. Satan rebels against God on account of injured merit. He thinks that God was rewarding him in view of his qualities and merits. Satan's rebellion germinates from his intense hatred for God. He prefers to reign in hell than serve in Heaven, Satan's concept of liberty is, in short a, direct challenge to God's authority. On the other hand, the concept of liberty expressed in Book IX and enacted through the character of Eve is a matter of difference of opinion with God's way of doing things. If we take these two concepts of liberty together, one thing at least is sure that God does not approve any of these.

The next scene portrays Satan and Eve. Here the drama is at its height. If the scene with Adam is exposition, the scene with Satan is the development of action. Finding Eve alone at the early hours of the day, Satan becomes happy and makes his way towards her. Milton writes about Satan's advancements in descriptive. This descriptive passage serves the purpose of pause in action and enhances the effect of suspense because it prepares us for the great events that are to follow. Reaching Eve, Satan flatters her in the manner of a court poet. Satan tells her that she is a

"Goddess among gods".

Eve is flattered by her praise but at the same moment she is surprised at the serpent's capacity for speech. She becomes curious and desires to know more about the reptile's power of speech. This gives Satan an opportunity to continue his dialogue with her. He gives an account how he came to eat the fruit of "A godly Tree". He describes the physical as well as intellectual pleasures, which he got from the fruit of that tree. Eve is compelled by her inquisitive nature and she asks him to show her the tree. On seeing the tree Eve bends her head because it was the forbidden tree. Eve tells the serpent that she has been forbidden to taste its fruit. Here the serpent shows a great psychological

understanding of the character of Eve. He delivers a powerful rhetorical speech. He turns his attention away from Eve to the tree, itself. Headdresses the tree in the following words:

"O sacred, wise and wisdom-giving plant. Mother of Science…"

In this way he withdraws his pressure from Eve for a moment, but at once catches her and starts with his usual manner of flattery.

He calls her "Queen of this universe" and informs her that there is no need to believe in the threats of death. The serpent traps her in his arguments in such a way that there is no way out left for her. He asks her if the tree offers knowledge of good how can it be just of God to refuse such knowledge. And if it offers knowledge of evil, why they should be effused since one Evil is known, it may be "easier to shun".

He further tells her that God would praise their courage for eating the fruit of this tree. Eve is completely nonplussed at the argument of the famous temptation speech. But before committing the fatal sin, she pauses and thinks. Her thinking at that moment is a kind of soliloquy. What she reasons out is much more effective than the temptation speech of Satan. She argues that the prohibition is unreasonable since it prevents her from judging the very problem, which it raises. Ignorance of evil keeps her away from the full importance of goodness. But the irony is that her conclusion is based on Satan's lie that he had tasted the forbidden fruit. She unmindful of all things plucks the fruit and greedily eats it. The immediate effect of eating the fruit is that there is an upheaval of Nature, which sighs through all his works.

Nevertheless, it is Satan's encounter with Eve that Milton has exposed some of the prominent facets of human nature namely internal and external conflict between opposing forces, curiosity, vanity, love of flattery, self-projection, self-interest, failure to distinguish between the appearance and reality, greed etc. Since most of these aspects of human nature, we find in Eve's personality, she appears more attractive than Adam. She is closer to normal, average and common human beings.

Paradise Lost Book IX: The Temptation Scene and its Implication in the Development of Paradise Lost

Satan is a con artist of a very high order. He adopts the right channel to seduce Eve. He flatters her in the persuasive manner. That Eve is trapped to Satan and it does not seem unnatural. His attack is well planned and well executed. Eve's failure to see beyond false appearance is the predicament of almost each and every human being.

Satan hypnotizes Eve and succeeds in bringing her reason under his control by yelling fibs that his comprehension got sound and his vision broadened after he tasted the forbidden fruit. Accordingly, her curiosity inflated to the maximum. Like Faustus, she surrenders and gladly submits to Satan's guidance. Her response or reaction is not surprising though it is shocking and painful.

It is an open secret that in the course of their life the human beings get strayed and run after false, illusive and hollow ideals. "Paradise Lost" is fundamentally a poem about the nature of man.

The last act of the drama of fall also depicts several shades of human nature. It is once again Eve who becomes Milton's mouthpiece. After tasting the forbidden fruit on the one hand, she develops a sense of superiority while on the other hand exposes typical female

jealously. She is worried that if death comes and claims her life. Adam might marry another Eve.

On catching sight of Eve with a branch of tree of knowledge in her hand, Adam's temptation is different from that of Eve. In Adam's case his passions overrule his reason. He tastes the forbidden fruit out of sheer love for Eve. His act of disobedience confirms him a real human being of flesh and blood. Afterwards, their last sexual act bickering, realization, shedding of tears, feeling of remorse and repentance are typical to human beings.

Milton: Treatment of woman in "Paradise Lost"

Adam and Eve are the very first human couple and the parents of the whole human race and the masterpiece of God's art of creation, primarily lived in Eden which is an indescribable beautiful garden in Heaven. God had given them the liberty to enjoy everything available there, with only one restriction that they were not to eat the forbidden fruit there, but they could not act upon this curb, therefore, God punished them for their disobedience and expelled them from Paradise.

When we make a careful and critical analysis of "Paradise Lost" Book IX, we discover that in spite of having many common features of character and personality both Adam and Eve have a world of difference between them as well. Both of them are made of clay, have steadfast faith in God and equally love each other yet at the same time they are divided in opinion about their work, passion and the fear of an enemy.

As far as Eve is concerned, she possesses female charm and attraction, a suggestive and justifying mind, a rational and convincing manner of conversation, but at the same time she is highly confident, short sighted, jealous and deluded about her powers.

Adam, on the other hand, is an embodiment of sagacity, moderation, contentment, foresightedness, knowledge, mankind, passionate love and sacrifice.

When Eve rationally suggests that they should work separately because when they are together, they waste most of their time in petty things. Adam foresightedly objects the idea and reminds her of the danger of her being seduced by Satan. At this, she pounces upon him for suspecting her faithfulness. She also under-estimates their enemy. Adam tries his best to convince her that they should not separate from each other but she remains unmoved. At last, he retreats and reluctantly allows her to work after her own heart and, thus, they part from each other for the very first time and this very alienation, in fact, leads to their expulsion from Heaven.

Satan, who possesses a great determination and an unyielding power and ever-scheming mind, is, in fact, afraid to face Adam because of his physical strength, intellectual powers, great courage and impressive manlihood. He, therefore, is always in search of an opportunity to find Eve alone, so that, he may succeed in his evil and revengeful designs against God and His master creature. After assuming the shape of a serpent, which is the most cunning of all animals, he managed to enter Eden where he finds his target, that Eve is all alone, busy with her work. He very cleverly starts praising and flattering her that she is "the sole mistress", "the queen of this universe", "the empress" and "the humane goddess". When she, in the state of utter amazement, asks him how he can speak while he is a serpent he relates a fake story of his tasting the forbidden fruit of knowledge and its miraculous effects.

When she tells him about the warning of God that tasting the fruit of knowledge could result in death, he washes her brain by saying that this fruit will raise her to the stature

of God and that she will not die because he is a living example before her eyes. She is fully entrapped by the oily tongue of Satan, tastes the forbidden fruit due to short sightedness and over confidence. After eating the fruit she thinks if she dies, God will create another Eve for Adam and he will live a long life of everlasting enjoyment with the new Eve. This very thought arises in her an intense feeling of jealousy for the first time and she mounts to Adam to tell him about her blunder.

On the other side, Adam restlessly waits for her with garland of beautiful and attractive flowers to welcome her back, but she does not reach at the fixed time. He goes out in search of her and finds her on the way with a bough of apples in her hand. She tells him all about the talking-serpent and her act of tasting the forbidden fruit. Adam leaves a deep sigh of grief and scolds her, but at the same time his passionate love for Eve over powers him and he expresses his uncontrollable sentiments of love in the following famous romantic and emotional words:

The link of nature draw me; flesh of my flash,
Bone of my bone, thou art, and from thy state
Mine never shall be parted; bliss or woe.

Thus Adam also eats the forbidden fruit deliberately just for the sake of his love for Eve for Adam feels himself incomplete without Eve. Thus he prefers a woman to obedience of God.

In the end, we can conclude that both Adam and Eve are responsible for their sin of disobedience and their consequent expulsion from Heaven. It is, however, clear that Eve is entrapped by the glib-tongue and the praising words of Satan while Adam falls a prey to his passionate love for Eve in the Victorian style, but she develops it in a new direction.

"Oh goodness infinite, goodness immense!
That all this good of evil shall produce,
And evil turn to good; more wonderful
Than that which by creation first brought forth
Light out of darkness! Full of doubt I stand,
Whether I should repent me now of sin
By me done, and occasioned; or rejoice
Much more, that much more good thereof shall spring;
To God more glory, more good-will to men
From God, and over wrath grace shall abound."

Milton: Pandemoniun in "Paradise Lost"

0 John Milton, Poetry 2:59:00 AM



Some angels rushed towards a nearby hill, Pandemonium, a hill not far from there that emerged fire and smoke. All the rest of the hill shone with a bright crust, which was a sure sign that in its interior was buried metallic ore or sulphur. Towards that hill a company of numerous angels moved with great haste like groups of miners, hurrying in advance of the royal army to dig trenches in some battlefield or to build a fortification.

Those angels were guided thither by Mammon. He first taught human beings to pillage the earth, in order to obtain treasures buried. Soon had his companion made a huge opening in the hill and dug out large pieces of gold.

Let nobody feel surprised by the riches that exist in Hell. The soil of Hell perhaps is most appropriate for gold. And here let those who boast of human achievements and who describe, with a feeling of wonder, the Tower of Babel and the Pyramids of Egypt, learn how the greatest monuments, which have been built by human strength and skill and which have become famous, are easily surpassed by the work of worthless Spirits who can do in an hour what countless human beings, with unceasing labour, can hardly accomplish in a long period of time.

Nearby on the plain a second large group angles prepared many cells beneath which burns liquid fire. With wonderful art they melted the massive ore, separating each metal, and skimmed the scum or the impurities. A third group of angels had, with equal promptitude, set up, within the ground, moulds of various kinds and shapes, and filled each hollow recess with the melted gold transported there from the cells by a wonderful device.

Soon out of the earth, a huge structure emerged like a mist. This structure was built like a temple. It was set with round-shaped columns. It had pillars of the Doric style of architecture and the pillars were overlaid with a golden beam. Nor was there lacking cornice or frieze inscribed with sculptures in relief. The roof was carved with gold. Neither Babylon nor Cairo ever attained such splendour in all their glory, even in building temples dedicated to their gods. The rising structure now became complete, having reached its full and impressive height, and at once the doors, opening their brassy leaves, revealed over a wide area within, large spaces on the smooth and level pavement. From the arched roof, many rows of star-like lamps and bright fire-baskets hung as if by some mysterious magic. These lamps were fed with naphtha and asphaltus, and their light fell as if form a sky.

The multitude of angles entered the building hastily, admiring it. Some of them praised the building and some praised the architect. This architect’s sill was known in Heaven by a large number of high buildings, having towers, where angels holding their rods of authority dwelt and sat, like princes whom the supreme ruler, God, had raised to such power and to each of whom He had given the authority to rule according to his status and rank. The name of this architect was also well-known and much respected in ancient Greece; and in Italy he was known by the name of Mulciber. It was told in a fable how this architect had fallen from heaven, having been thrown by angry Jove clean over the bright walls. He had kept falling from morning to noon, and from noon to dewy evening, for the whole of a summer’s day; and with the setting sun he had alighted from the height, like a falling star, on the island of Lemnos in the Aegean sea. Such is the story people relate mistakenly because he, with that rebellious throng of angles, had fallen from Heaven long before that. Nor was it of any use to him now that he had erected building with high towers in Heaven. Not could he escape from his present fate in spite of all his contrivances, but was thrown headlong with his hard-working companion to build a palace for Satan and his followers in Hell.

Milton: Hell in "Paradise Lost"

0 John Milton, Poetry 3:02:00 AM



This is how Milton describes Hell as Satan sees it after his fall from Heaven:

At once, as far as Angles ken, he views

The dismal situation waste and wild:

A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,

As one great furnace flamed; yet from those flames

No light, but rather darkness visible

Served only to discover sights of woe,

Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace

And rest can never dwell, hope never comes

That comes at all; but torture without end

Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed

With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed.

Such place Eternal Justice had prepared

For those rebellious; here their prison set,

As fat removed from God and light of Heaven

As from the centre thrice to the utmost pole.

Oh how unlike the place from whence they fell!

This description is brief but vivid and effective. We are to visualize a region which is sinister, barren and wild. The place is a horrible dungeon or pit burning like a huge furnace. Yet from the burning flames comes no light. The flames give out just as much light as is needed to make the darkness visible. The flames of Hell give no light. All around him Satan discerns sights of misery and unhappy dark spaces, where peace and rest can never dwell. It is a place where even hope which comes to all beings, is never felt. This region is far away from God. The contrast between this place and the Heaven conveyed to us is:

Oh how unlike the place from whence they fell!

The place is perpetually afflicted with "floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire".

Thus Milton's Hell is a place of darkness where flickering light of fire serves only to make more dark. Geologically it is a volcanic region, "fed with ever-burning sulphur" in inexhaustible quantities. Satan and his followers have fallen into a "fiery gulf", a lake that burns constantly

with liquid fire. The shore of this lake marks the beginning of a plain to which Satan flies after raising himself from the lake.

----------------------------- till on dry land

He lights—if it were land that ever burned

With solid, as the lake with liquid fire,

And such appeared in hue, as when the force

Of subterranean wind transports a hill

Torn from Pelorus, or the shattered side

Of thundering Aetna, whose combustible

And fuelled entrails thence conceiving fire

Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds

And leave a singed bottom al involved

With stench and smoke:

This means that in one case it is "liquid fire", and in the other "solid fire". The heat of the land is naturally as intense as is that of the boiling lake. Satan walks uncomfortably over the boiling soil. Heat is everywhere. In the background, we are later told, is a volcanic mountain:

There stood a hill not far, whose grisly top

Belched fire and rolling smoke, the rest entire

Shone with a glossy scurf—undoubted sign

That in his womb was hid metallic ore,

The work of sulphur.

All these description are certainly terrifying. Milton's object in describing Hell is two-fold; firstly, to indicate the torments which the fallen angels have to endure in contrast to the bliss and joy of Heaven which they have lost for ever; and, secondly, to infuse a feeling of horror in the readers. The modern reader, with his scientific background and scientific notions, may not feel as awed or horrified by these descriptions as readers of Milton's time might have felt. But even the modern reader has to recognize, not only the graphic quality of the description, but its oppressive and overwhelming effect.

The size of Hell, the nature of its tortures or the degree of heat that Satan feels, such thing can be felt to the reader's imagination, simulated by words which carry frightening associations for all of us. Hell is a place of absolute darkness, fierce heat, hostile elements and most terrible sight of all, the entire space is "valued with fire". Its all-enclosing dreadfulness typifies the dwarfing awareness of remorse, distance from God and pain from which its inhabitants cannot escape. Though terrible it is not formless; sea and land exist and from its soil the precious metals are refined which go into the construction of Pandemonium.



ALEXANDER POPE

Satire’s my weapon, but I’m too discreet
To run amuck, and tilt at all I meet.

The Augustan Age

Introduction: - According to Hudson the epithet —Augustan was applied as a term of high praise, because the Age of Augustus was the golden age of Latin literature, so the Age of Pope was the golden age of English literature. This epithet serves to bring out the analogy between the first half of the eighteenth century and the Latin literature of the days of Virgil and Horace. In both cases writers were largely dependent upon powerful patrons. In both case a critical spirit prevailed. In both cases the literature produced by a thoroughly artificial society was a literature, not of free creative effort and inspiration, but of self-conscious and deliberate art. It is also known as the —classic age. Hudson writes: The epithet —classic, we may take to denote, first that the poets and critics of this age believed that the writers of classical antiquity presented the best models and ultimate standards of literary taste, and secondly, in a more general way, that, like these Latin writers, they had little faith in the promptings and guidance of individual genius, and much in laws and rules imposed by the authority of the past. Some remarkable political and social changes began to take place in England during the closing years of William III and the accession of Queen Anne (1702). That had a great impact on the development of literature during this period. The literature of this era was partly new and partly a continuance of that of the Restoration.

This age may be divided into two periods: the first stretching from 1700 to 1750 in the neo-classic Age, and the second, the transitional period which spans from 1750 to 1798. The classical tendencies lost their hold during the second period and there was a transition from classicism to romanticism. The period of transition is also known as the Age of Gray and Collins.

Political and Social Milieu: - Politically, this age witnessed the rise of two political parties: the Whigs and the Tories. Their political opinions and programmes were sharply divided. The Whig party stood for the pre-eminence of personal freedom and the Tory party supported the royal Divine Right. The Tories objected to the foreign wars because they had to pay taxes to prolong them, while the trading class Whigs favoured the continuance of war because it contributed to their prosperity. In order to propagate their ideologies and programmes both the parties utilized the services of literary men. And the politicians bribed the authors to join one or the other political party. The politicians took the authors into their confidence. Thus began the age of literary patronage. Consequently, most of the writers showed a strong political bias. It was, in other words, a party literature. Literature was honoured not for itself but for the sake of the party. The politics of the period helped to make it an age of political pamphleteering. And the writers were too willing to make the most of it. In order to get prominence in political struggle both parties issued a large number of periodicals. The periodicals were the mouthpieces of their respective political opinions. Thus began the age of journalism and periodical essay. The rise of periodical writing allowed great scope to the development of the literary talent of prose writers of the time. The real prose style— neat, simple, clear and lucid— was evolved during this period. In the words of Albert: "It was the golden age of political pamphleteering and the writer made the most of it".

Coffee Houses and Literary Activities: - People were keenly interested in political activity. A number of clubs and coffee houses came into existence. They became the centers of fashionable and public life. The Coffee houses were dominated by either of the parties. A Whig would never go to a Tory Coffee house and Vice Versa. The Coffee houses were the haunts of prominent writers, thinkers, artists, intellectuals and

politicians. They figured prominently in the writings of the day. The Coffee houses gave rise to purely literary associations, such as the famous Scribblers and Kit-cat clubs. In the first number of The Tattler, Richard Steele announced that the activities of his new Journal would be based upon the clubs. The discussions in coffee houses took place in polished, refined, elegant, easy and lucid style. Thus coffee houses also contributed to the evolution of prose style during the eighteenth century.

Interest in Reading and Publishing Houses: - The rising interest in politics witnessed the decline of drama. It resulted in a remarkable increase in the number of reading public. Consequently a large number of men took interest in publishing translations, adaptations and other popular works of the time. They became the forerunners of modern public houses. They employed hack writers (the writers who write for money without worrying about the quality of their writing) of the period. They lived in miserable hovels in the Grub Street.

The Rise of the Middle Class: - This period of literature saw the emergence of a powerful middle class. The supremacy of the middle class made it an age of tolerance, moderation and common sense. It sought to refine manners, and introduce into life the rule of sweet reasonableness. The church also pursued a middle way and the religious life was free form strife and fanaticism. The powerful dominance of the middle classes led to moral regeneration in the eighteenth century. The people were fast growing sick of the outrageousness of the Restoration period. People had begun once more to insist upon those basic decencies of life and moral considerations, which the previous generation had treated with contempt. The middle class writers were greatly influenced by moral considerations. Moreover, William III and Queen Anne were staunch supporters of morality. Addison in an early number of The Spectator puts the new tone in writing in his own admirable way: —I shall endeavor to enliven morality with wit and wit with morality. It was an era of the assimilation of the aristocracy and the middle class. The middle class appropriated classicism with its moralising needs. The emergence of middle class led to the rise of sentimentalism, feelings and emotions, which influenced the literature of the latter half of the eighteenth century.

Evangelical Movement: - Religion in the age of Pope was deistic, formal, utilitarian and unspiritual. In the great Evangelical Revival, known as Methodism, led by Wesley and Whitefield, the old formalism and utilitarianism was abandoned. A mighty tide of spiritual energy poured into the Church and the common people. From 1739 the Evangelical Movement spread rapidly among the poor all over England, and it became particularly strong in the industrial towns.

Literary Characteristics of the Age: - The political and social changes exhibiting the supremacy of good sense, rationality, sanity and balance left an imperishable mark on the literature of the Age of Pope and Dr. Johnson. The literature of the period bore the hallmark of intelligence, of wit and of fancy, not a literature of emotion, passion, or creative energy. The main literary characteristics of the age are given below:

(a) Age of Prose and Reason: - It is an age of prose, reason, good sense and not of poetry. A large number of practical interests arising from the new social and political conditions demanded expression not simply in looks, but in pamphlets, magazines and newspapers. Poetry was inadequate for such a task. Hence prose developed rapidly and excellently. Indeed, poetry itself became prosaic, as it was not used for creative works of imagination, but for essays, satires and criticism. The poetry of the first half of the eighteenth century as

represented by the works of Pope and Dr. Johnson is polished and witty but lacks fire, fine feeling, enthusiasm and imaginative appeal. In short, it interests us as a study of life but fails to delight or inspire us. Matthew Arnold rightly calls if the eighteenth century —an age of prose. The poetry of this period, according to Hudson, —lacked inevitably the depth and grasp of essential things which alone assure permanence in literature, and the quest for refinement in style resulted too often in stilted affectations and frigid conventionalism.

(b) Age of Satire: - The predominance of satire is an important literary characteristic of the age. Nearly every writer of the first half of the eighteenth century was used and rewarded by Whigs or Tories for satirising their enemies and for advancing their special political interests. Pope was an exception but he too was a satirist par excellence. W. J. Long writes: —Now satire—that is a literary work which searches out the faults of men or institutions in order to hold them up to ridicule—is at best a destructive type of criticism. A satirist is like a labourer who clears away the ruins and rubbish of an old house before the architect and builders begin on a new and beautiful structure. The work may sometime be necessary, but it rarely arouses our enthusiasm. While the satires of Pope, place them with our great literature, which is always constructive in spirit; and we have the feeling that all these men were capable of better things than they ever wrote.

(c) Age of Neo-Classicism: - The Age of Pope and Johnson is often called the neo-classic age. We should clearly understand the meaning of the word —classic. The term —classic refers to writers of highest rank in any nation. It was first applied to the works of Greek and Roman writers like Homer and Virgil. In English literature any writer who followed the simple, noble and inspiring method of these writers was said to have a classic style. Period marked by a number of celebrated writers who produce literature of a very high order, is also called the classic period of a nation‟s literature. The age of Augustus is the classic age of Rome. The age of Dante is the classic age of Italian literature. The age of the classic age is like those of Homer and Virgil. The writers of this period disregarded Elizabethan literary trends. They demanded that their poetry should comply with exact rules. In this respect they were influenced by French writers, especially by Boileau, who insisted on precise rules of writing poetry. They professed to have discovered their rules in the classics of Aristotle and Horace. Dryden, Pope and Johnson pioneered the revival of classicism which conformed to rules established by the great writers of other nations. They preferred only set rules to the depth and seriousness of subject matter. They ignored creativity, depth, vigour and freshness of expression. The true classicist pays equal consideration to the depth and seriousness of subject matter, and the perfect and flawless expression. The neo-classicist disregards the subject matter expresses the hackneyed and commonplace subjects in a polished and finished style modelled on the stylistic patterns of ancient writers. Grierson in his famous book The Background of English Literature asserts that the hallmark of ancient classical literature is a harmonious balance between form and substance. This harmonious balance between form and substance was disturbed in the Age of Pope and Johnson. The writers of this period care for form, not for the weight of matter. They care only for manner, for artistic finish and polish, but not for genuine poetic inspiration. The content thought and feeling are subordinated to form.

(d) Age of Good Sense: - Good sense is one of the central characteristics of the literature of this period. In the words of W. H. Hudson: —Good sense became the ideal of the time, and good sense meant a love of the reasonable and the useful and a hatred of the mystical, the extravagant and the visionary.

(e) Follow Nature: - Another important characteristic of the age was the belief that literature must follow nature. Pope wrote in The Essay on Criticism:

The rules of old discover'd, not devis'd,

Are Nature still, but Nature methodiz'd;

Nature like Liberty is but restrained

By the same laws which first herself ordain'd

. . . . . .

Learn hence for ancient rules a just esteem

The follow Nature is to follow them.

By nature the Augustans meant to copy man and manners of society. Pope said, "The proper study of mankind is man". Addison also wrote "Wit and fine writing consist not so much —in advancing things that are new, as in things that are known, an agreeable turn".

(f) Town and City Life as a Theme of Literature: - Another feature of the literature of the age is that it has a limited theme. It is a literature of the town and the fashionable upper circles of the city of London. Pope, Johnson, Addison, Steele etc., though urban in outlook and temperament, show remarkable interest in the middle classes and, thus, broaden the scope of literature. The theme of literature before them was strictly confined to fashionable and aristocratic circles. In the works of middle class writers classicism shows itself slightly coloured by a moralising and secretly sentimental intension.

(g) The Heroic Couplet and the Poetic Diction as Tools of Writers: - The use of heroic couplet was predominant during this period. The heroic couplet was recognised as the only medium for poetic expression. In it the poets put all the skill and wrote with an unimaginable correctness and precision. The language of poetry became gaudy and inane. The common words or ordinary language were deliberately kept out from poetic literature. The result was that literature of the Augustan Age became artificial, rational and intellectual.

Alexander Pope as a Poet

Alexander Pope was born in London on May 21, 1688, disadvantaged from the start by being born into a Roman Catholic family (at a time when Catholics were severely restricted in their liberty and property by the English government). Barred from an English university education by his religion, he nevertheless received some schooling at a couple of Catholic institutions, but soon supplemented this with his own extensive reading in Greek and Latin authors. He began writing verse by doing translations of

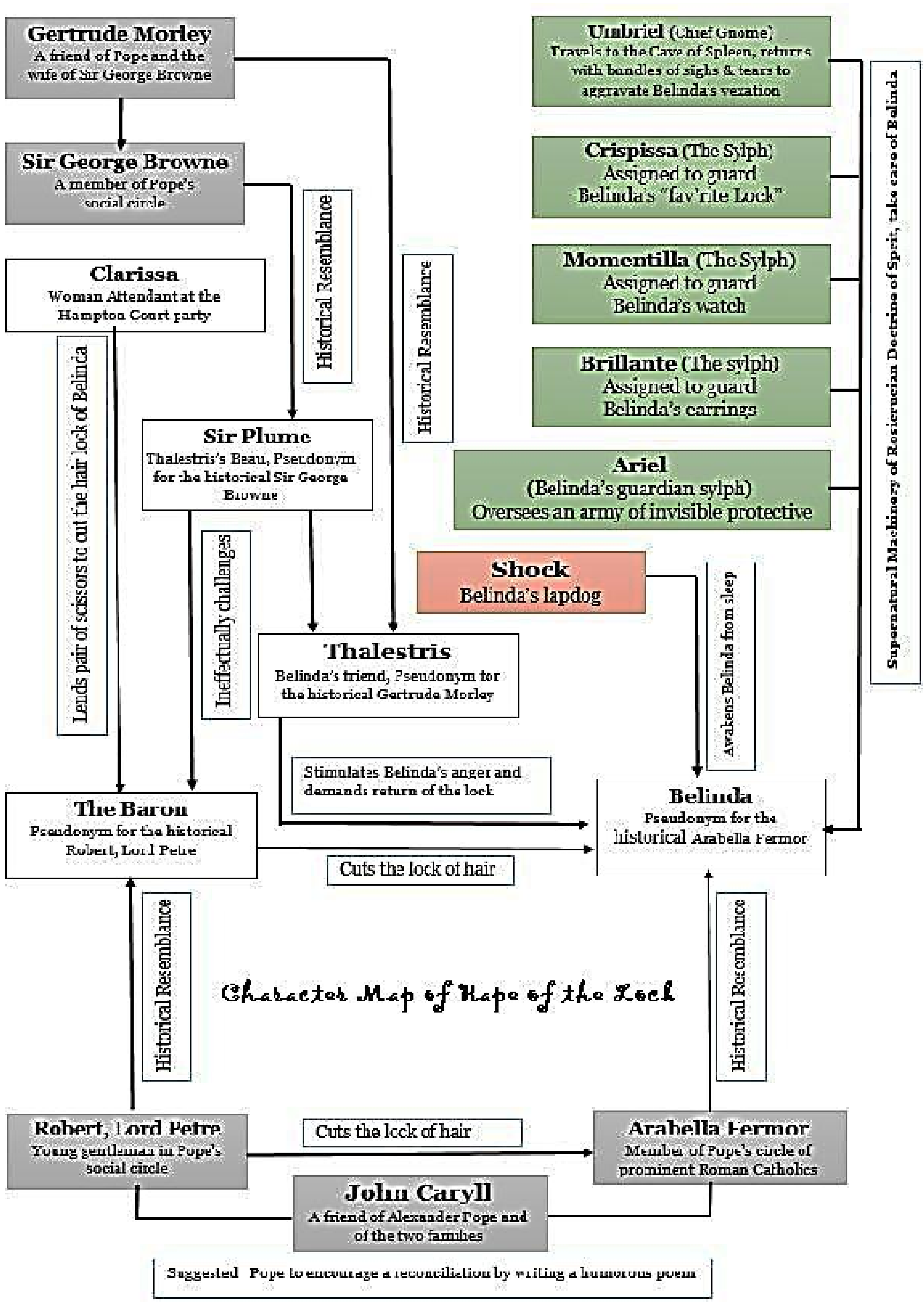
these authors, and imitations and adaptations of others such as Chaucer, Waller, and Cowley.

Pope is by far the most important poetic figure of the age called after him (1700-1740). His importance lies in the fact that he exercised the greatest influence on the classical poetry of the century. His poetry was intellectual, didactic and satiric, and was almost written in heroic couplet. It is never of the highest class, but within its limits, it stands unrivalled in the language

Pseudo Classicist: - The true classicism is meant to be a combination of poetic ardor and excellence of form. In Pope the true poetic ardor and energy is absent but he is exceedingly careful about the technique of form and style. When we look at the contents of Pope's poetry we do not find anything worthwhile. Satire, didactic poetry, and a flimsy mock-heroic poem---are all his poetic achievements. They are mere products of intellect, and artificially constructed; they do not reproduce true classical spirit. Hence it is not correct to describe Pope as a true classicist. (Milton, with his poetic impulse and perfection of form, is a true classicist.) The classicism of Pope is the shadow of classicism; it is false or pseudo-classicism.

Intellectual Poetry: - Pope's poetry was of his age, and it reflected in full measure the spirit of the age. It is intellectual and its appeal is to the mind rather than to the heart. It is full of wit and epigram, the brilliancy of which is unsurpassed. Pope is next to Shakespeare, in contributing quotable lines of verse, which are remarkable for their pregnancy, neatness and brevity. Here are some of his famous quotes.

To err is human, to forgive divine.
Never elated when someone's oppressed,
Never dejected when another one's blessed.
We think our fathers fools, so wise we grow.
Our wiser sons, no doubt will think us so.
For fools rush in where angels fear to tread.



The Rape of the Lock: Summary

Canto 1 : Summary

The Rape of the Lock begins with a passage outlining the subject of the poem and invoking the aid of the muse. Then the sun ("Sol") appears to initiate the leisurely morning routines of a wealthy household. Lapdogs shake themselves awake, bells begin to ring, and although it is already noon, Belinda still sleeps. She has been dreaming, and we learn that the dream has been sent by "her guardian Sylph," Ariel. The dream is of a handsome youth who tells her that she is protected by "unnumber'd Spirits"—an army of supernatural beings who once lived on earth as human women. The youth explains that they are the invisible guardians of women's chastity, although the credit is usually mistakenly given to "Honour" rather than to their divine stewardship. Of these Spirits, one particular group—the Sylphs, who dwell in the air—serve as Belinda's personal guardians; they are devoted, lover-like, to any woman that "rejects mankind," and they understand and reward the vanities of an elegant and frivolous lady like Belinda. Ariel, the chief of all Belinda's puckish protectors, warns her in this dream that "some dread event" is going to befall her that day, though he can tell her nothing more specific than that she should "beware of Man!" Then Belinda awakes, to the licking tongue of her lapdog, Shock. Upon the delivery of a billet-doux, or love-letter, she forgets all about the dream. She then proceeds to her dressing table and goes through an elaborate ritual of dressing, in which her own image in the mirror is described as a "heavenly image," a "goddess." The Sylphs, unseen, assist their charge as she prepares herself for the day's activities.

Commentary

The opening of the poem establishes its mock-heroic style. Pope introduces the conventional epic subjects of love and war and includes an invocation to the muse and a dedication to the man (the historical John Caryll) who commissioned the poem. Yet the tone already indicates that the high seriousness of these traditional topics has suffered a diminishment. The second line confirms in explicit terms what the first line already suggests: the "am'rous causes" the poem describes are not comparable to the grand love of Greek heroes but rather represent a trivialized version of that emotion. The "contests" Pope alludes to will prove to be "mighty" only in an ironic sense. They are card-games and flirtatious tussles, not the great battles of epic tradition. Belinda is not, like Helen of Troy, "the face that launched a thousand ships" , but rather a face that—although also beautiful—prompts a lot of foppish nonsense. The first two verse-paragraphs emphasize the comic inappropriateness of the epic style (and corresponding mind-set) to the subject at hand. Pope achieves this discrepancy at the level of the line and half-line; the reader is meant to dwell on the incompatibility between the two sides of his parallel formulations. Thus, in this world, it is "little men" who in "tasks so bold... engage"; and "soft bosoms" are the dwelling-place for "mighty rage." In this startling juxtaposition of the petty and the grand, the former is real while the latter is ironic. In mock-epic, the high heroic style works not to dignify the subject but rather to expose and ridicule it. Therefore, the basic irony of the style supports the substance of the poem's satire, which attacks the misguided values of a society that takes small matters for serious ones while failing to attend to issues of genuine importance.

With Belinda's dream, Pope introduces the "machinery" of the poem—the supernatural powers that influence the action from behind the scenes. Here, the sprites that watch over Belinda are meant to mimic the gods of the Greek and Roman traditions, who are sometimes benevolent and sometimes malicious, but always intimately involved in

earthly events. The scheme also makes use of other ancient hierarchies and systems of order. Ariel explains that women's spirits, when they die, return "to their first Elements." Each female personality type (these types correspond to the four humours) is converted into a particular kind of sprite. These gnomes, sylphs, salamanders, and nymphs, in turn, are associated with the four elements of earth, air, fire, and water. The airy sylphs are those who in their lifetimes were "light Coquettes"; they have a particular concern for Belinda because she is of this type, and this will be the aspect of feminine nature with which the poem is most concerned.

Indeed, Pope already begins to sketch this character of the "coquette" in this initial canto. He draws the portrait indirectly, through characteristics of the Sylphs rather than of Belinda herself. Their priorities reveal that the central concerns of womanhood, at least for women of Belinda's class, are social ones. Woman's "joy in gilded Chariots" indicates an obsession with pomp and superficial splendor, while "love of Ombre," a fashionable card game, suggests frivolity. The erotic charge of this social world in turn prompts another central concern: the protection of chastity. These are women who value above all the prospect marrying to advantage, and they have learned at an early age how to promote themselves and manipulate their suitors without compromising themselves. The Sylphs become an allegory for the mannered conventions that govern female social behavior. Principles like honor and chastity have become no more than another part of conventional interaction. Pope makes it clear that these women are not conducting themselves on the basis of abstract moral principles, but are governed by an elaborate social mechanism—of which the Sylphs cut a fitting caricature. And while Pope's technique of employing supernatural machinery allows him to critique this situation, it also helps to keep the satire light and to exonerate individual women from too severe a judgment. If Belinda has all the typical female foibles, Pope wants us to recognize that it is partly because she has been educated and trained to act in this way. The society as a whole is as much to blame as she is. Nor are men exempt from this judgment. The competition among the young lords for the attention of beautiful ladies is depicted as a battle of vanity, as "wigs with wigs, with sword-knots sword-knots strive." Pope's phrases here expose an absurd attention to exhibitions of pride and ostentation. He emphasizes the inanity of discriminating so closely between things and people that are essentially the same in all important (and even most unimportant) respects.

Pope's portrayal of Belinda at her dressing table introduces mock-heroic motifs that will run through the poem. The scene of her toilette is rendered first as a religious sacrament, in which Belinda herself is the priestess and her image in the looking glass is the Goddess she serves. This parody of the religious rites before a battle gives way, then, to another kind of mock-epic scene, that of the ritualized arming of the hero. Combs, pins, and cosmetics take the place of weapons as "awful Beauty puts on all its arms."

Canto 2 : Summary

Belinda, rivaling the sun in her radiance, sets out by boat on the river Thames for Hampton Court Palace. She is accompanied by a party of glitzy ladies ("Nymphs") and gentlemen, but is far and away the most striking member of the group. Pope's description of her charms includes "the sparkling Cross she wore" on her "white breast," her "quick" eyes and "lively looks," and the easy grace with which she bestows her smiles and attentions evenly among all the adoring guests. Her crowning glories, though, are the two ringlets that dangle on her "iv'ry neck." These curls are described as love's

labyrinths, specifically designed to ensnare any poor heart who might get entangled in them.

One of the young gentlemen on the boat, the Baron, particularly admires Belinda's locks, and has determined to steal them for himself. We read that he rose early that morning to build an altar to love and pray for success in this project. He sacrificed several tokens of his former affections, including garters, gloves, and billet-doux (love-letters). He then prostrated himself before a pyre built with "all the trophies of his former loves," fanning its flames with his "am'rous sighs." The gods listened to his prayer but decided to grant only half of it.

As the pleasure-boat continues on its way, everyone is carefree except Ariel, who remembers that some bad event has been foretold for the day. He summons an army of sylphs, who assemble around him in their iridescent beauty. He reminds them with great ceremony that one of their duties, after regulating celestial bodies and the weather and guarding the British monarch, is "to tend the Fair": to keep watch over ladies' powders, perfumes, curls, and clothing, and to "assist their blushes, and inspire their airs." Therefore, since "some dire disaster" threatens Belinda, Ariel assigns her an extensive troop of bodyguards. Brillante is to guard her earrings, Momentilla her watch, and Crispissa her locks. Ariel himself will protect Shock, the lapdog. A band of fifty Sylphs will guard the all-important petticoat. Ariel pronounces that any sylph who neglects his assigned duty will be severely punished. They disperse to their posts and wait for fate to unfold.

Commentary

From the first, Pope describes Belinda's beauty as something divine, an assessment which she herself corroborates in the first canto when she creates, at least metaphorically, an altar to her own image. This praise is certainly in some sense ironical, reflecting negatively on a system of public values in which external characteristics rank higher than moral or intellectual ones. But Pope also shows a real reverence for his heroine's physical and social charms, claiming in lines 17–18 that these are compelling enough to cause one to forget her "female errors." Certainly he has some interest in flattering Arabella Fermor, the real-life woman on whom Belinda is based; in order for his poem to achieve the desired reconciliation, it must not offend (see "Context". Pope also exhibits his appreciation for the ways in which physical beauty is an art form: he recognizes, with a mixture of censure and awe, the fact that Belinda's legendary locks of hair, which appear so natural and spontaneous, are actually a carefully contrived effect. In this, the mysteries of the lady's dressing table are akin, perhaps, to Pope's own literary art, which he describes elsewhere as "nature to advantage dress'd."

If the secret mechanisms and techniques of female beauty get at least a passing nod of appreciation from the author, he nevertheless suggests that the general human readiness to worship beauty amounts to a kind of sacrilege. The cross that Belinda wears around her neck serves a more ornamental than symbolic or religious function. Because of this, he says, it can be adored by "Jews" and "Infidels" as readily as by Christians. And there is some ambiguity about whether any of the admirers are really valuing the cross itself, or the "white breast" on which it lies—or the felicitous effect of the whole. The Baron, of course, is the most significant of those who worship at the altar of Belinda's beauty. The ritual sacrifices he performs in the pre-dawn hours are another mock-heroic element of the poem, mimicking the epic tradition of sacrificing to the gods before an important battle or journey, and drapes his project with an absurdly grand

import that actually only exposes its triviality. The fact that he discards all his other love tokens in these preparations reveals his capriciousness as a lover. Earnest prayer, in this parodic scene, is replaced by the self-indulgent sighs of the lover. By having the gods grant only half of what the Baron asks, Pope alludes to the epic convention by which the favor of the gods is only a mixed blessing: in epic poems, to win the sponsorship of one god is to incur the wrath of another; divine gifts, such as immortality, can seem a blessing but become a curse. Yet in this poem, the ramifications of a prayer "half" granted are negligible rather than tragic; it merely means that he will manage to steal just one lock rather than both of them.

In the first canto, the religious imagery surrounding Belinda's grooming rituals gave way to a militaristic conceit. Here, the same pattern holds. Her curls are compared to a trap perfectly calibrated to ensnare the enemy. Yet the character of female coyness is such that it seeks simultaneously to attract and repel, so that the counterpart to the enticing ringlets is the formidable petticoat. This undergarment is described as a defensive armament comparable to the Shield of Achilles and supported in its function of protecting the maiden's chastity by the invisible might of fifty Sylphs. The Sylphs, who are Belinda's protectors, are essentially charged to protect her not from failure but from too great a success in attracting men. This paradoxical situation dramatizes the contradictory values and motives implied in the era's sexual conventions.

In this canto, the sexual allegory of the poem begins to come into fuller view. The title of the poem already associates the cutting of Belinda's hair with a more explicit sexual conquest, and here Pope cultivates that suggestion. He multiplies his sexually metaphorical language for the incident, adding words like "ravish" and "betray" to the "rape" of the title. He also slips in some commentary on the implications of his society's sexual mores, as when he remarks that "when success a Lover's toil attends, / few ask, if fraud or force attain'd his ends." When Ariel speculates about the possible forms the "dire disaster" might take, he includes a breach of chastity ("Diana's law"), the breaking of china (another allusion to the loss of virginity), and the staining of honor or a gown (the two incommensurate events could happen equally easily and accidentally). He also mentions some pettier social "disasters" against which the Sylphs are equally prepared to fight, like missing a ball (here, as grave as missing prayers) or losing the lapdog. In the Sylphs' defensive efforts, Belinda's petticoat is the battlefield that requires the most extensive fortifications. This fact furthers the idea that the rape of the lock stands in for a literal rape, or at least represents a threat to her chastity more serious than just the mere theft of a curl.

Canto 3 : Summary

The boat arrives at Hampton Court Palace, and the ladies and gentlemen disembark to their courtly amusements. After a pleasant round of chatting and gossip, Belinda sits down with two of the men to a game of cards. They play ombre, a three-handed game of tricks and trumps, somewhat like bridge, and it is described in terms of a heroic battle: the cards are troops combating on the "velvet plain" of the card-table. Belinda, under the watchful care of the Sylphs, begins favorably. She declares spades as trumps and leads with her highest cards, sure of success. Soon, however, the hand takes a turn for the worse when "to the Baron fate inclines the field": he catches her king of clubs with his queen and then leads back with his high diamonds. Belinda is in danger of being beaten, but recovers in the last trick so as to just barely win back the amount she bid.

The next ritual amusement is the serving of coffee. The curling vapors of the steaming coffee remind the Baron of his intention to attempt Belinda's lock. Clarissa draws out her scissors for his use, as a lady would arm a knight in a romance. Taking up the scissors, he tries three times to clip the lock from behind without Belinda seeing. The Sylphs endeavor furiously to intervene, blowing the hair out of harm's way and tweaking her diamond earring to make her turn around. Ariel, in a last-minute effort, gains access to her brain, where he is surprised to find "an earthly lover lurking at her heart." He gives up protecting her then; the implication is that she secretly wants to be violated. Finally, the shears close on the curl. A daring sylph jumps in between the blades and is cut in two; but being a supernatural creature, he is quickly restored. The deed is done, and the Baron exults while Belinda's screams fill the air.

Commentary

This canto is full of classic examples of Pope's masterful use of the heroic couplet. In introducing Hampton Court Palace, he describes it as the place where Queen Anne "dost sometimes counsel take—and sometimes tea." This line employs a zeugma, a rhetorical device in which a word or phrase modifies two other words or phrases in a parallel construction, but modifies each in a different way or according to a different sense. Here, the modifying word is "take"; it applies to the paralleled terms "counsel" and "tea." But one does not "take" tea in the same way one takes counsel, and the effect of the zeugma is to show the royal residence as a place that houses both serious matters of state and frivolous social occasions. The reader is asked to contemplate that paradox and to reflect on the relative value and importance of these two different registers of activity. (For another example of this rhetorical technique, see lines 157–8: "Not louder shrieks to pitying heaven are cast, / when husbands, or when lapdogs breathe their last.") A similar point is made, in a less compact phrasing, in the second and third verse-paragraphs of this canto. Here, against the gossip and chatter of the young lords and ladies, Pope opens a window onto more serious matters that are occurring "meanwhile" and elsewhere, including criminal trials and executions, and economic exchange.

The rendering of the card game as a battle constitutes an amusing and deft narrative feat. By parodying the battle scenes of the great epic poems, Pope is suggesting that the energy and passion once applied to brave and serious purposes is now expended on such insignificant trials as games and gambling, which often become a mere front for flirtation. The structure of "the three attempts" by which the lock is cut is a convention of heroic challenges, particularly in the romance genre. The romance is further invoked in the image of Clarissa arming the Baron—not with a real weapon, however, but with a pair of sewing scissors. Belinda is not a real adversary, or course, and Pope makes it plain that her resistance—and, by implication, her subsequent distress—is to some degree an affectation. The melodrama of her screams is complemented by the ironic comparison of the Baron's feat to the conquest of nations.

Canto 4 : Summary

Belinda's "anxious cares" and "secret passions" after the loss of her lock are equal to the emotions of all who have ever known "rage, resentment and despair." After the disappointed Sylphs withdraw, an earthy gnome called Umbriel flies down to the "Cave of Spleen." (The spleen, an organ that removes disease-causing agents from the bloodstream, was traditionally associated with the passions, particularly malaise; "spleen" is a synonym for "ill-temper.") In his descent he passes through Belinda's bedroom, where she lies prostrate with discomfiture and the headache. She is attended

by "two handmaidens," Ill-Nature and Affectation. Umbriel passes safely through this melancholy chamber, holding a sprig of "spleenwort" before him as a charm. He addresses the "Goddess of Spleen," and returns with a bag of "sighs, sobs, and passions" and a vial of sorrow, grief, and tears. He unleashes the first bag on Belinda, fueling her ire and despair.

There to commiserate with Belinda is her friend Thalestris. (In Greek mythology, Thalestris is the name of one of the Amazons, a race of warrior women who excluded men from their society.) Thalestris delivers a speech calculated to further foment Belinda's indignation and urge her to avenge herself. She then goes to Sir Plume, "her beau," to ask him to demand that the Baron return the hair. Sir Plume makes a weak and slang-filled speech, to which the Baron disdainfully refuses to acquiesce. At this, Umbriel releases the contents of the remaining vial, throwing Belinda into a fit of sorrow and self-pity. With "beauteous grief" she bemoans her fate, regrets not having heeded the dream-warning, and laments the lonely, pitiful state of her sole remaining curl.

Commentary

The canto opens with a list of examples of "rage, resentment, and despair," comparing on an equal footing the pathos of kings imprisoned in battle, of women who become old maids, of evil-doers who die without being saved, and of a woman whose dress is disheveled. By placing such disparate sorts of aggravation in parallel, Pope accentuates the absolute necessity of assigning them to some rank of moral import. The effect is to chastise a social world that fails to make these distinctions.

Umbriel's journey to the Cave of Spleen mimics the journeys to the underworld made by both Odysseus and Aeneas. Pope uses psychological allegory (for the spleen was the seat of malaise or melancholy), as a way of exploring the sources and nature of Belinda's feelings. The presence of Ill-nature and Affectation as handmaidens serves to indicate that her grief is less than pure ("affected" or put-on), and that her display of temper has hidden motives. We learn that her sorrow is decorative in much the same way the curl was; it gives her the occasion, for example, to wear a new nightdress.

The speech of Thalestris invokes a courtly ethic. She encourages Belinda to think about the Baron's misdeed as an affront to her honor, and draws on ideals of chivalry in demanding that Sir Plume challenge the Baron in defense of Belinda's honor. He makes a muddle of the task, showing how far from courtly behavior this generation of gentlemen has fallen. Sir Plume's speech is riddled with foppish slang and has none of the logical, moral, or oratorical power that a knight should properly wield.

This attention to questions of honor returns us to the sexual allegory of the poem. The real danger, Thalestris suggests, is that "the ravisher" might display the lock and make it a source of public humiliation to Belinda and, by association, to her friends. Thus the real question is a superficial one—public reputation—rather than the moral imperative to chastity. Belinda's own words at the close of the canto corroborate this suggestion; she exclaims,

> **"Oh, hadst thou, cruel! been content to seize**
> **Hairs less in sight, or any hairs but these!"** (The "hairs less in sight" suggest her pubic hair).

Pope is pointing out the degree to which she values outward appearance (whether beauty or reputation) above all else; she would rather suffer a breach to her integrity than a breach to her appearance.

Canto 5 : Summary

The Baron remains impassive against all the ladies' tears and reproaches. Clarissa delivers a speech in which she questions why a society that so adores beauty in women does not also place a value on "good sense" and "good humour." Women are frequently called angels, she argues, but without reference to the moral qualities of these creatures. Especially since beauty is necessarily so short-lived, we must have something more substantial and permanent to fall back on. This sensible, moralizing speech falls on deaf ears, however, and Belinda, Thalestris and the rest ignore her and proceed to launch an all-out attack on the offending Baron. A chaotic tussle ensues, with the gnome Umbriel presiding in a posture of self- congratulation. The gentlemen are slain or revived according to the smiles and frowns of the fair ladies. Belinda and the Baron meet in combat and she emerges victorious by peppering him with snuff and drawing her bodkin. Having achieved a position of advantage, she again demands that he return the lock. But the ringlet has been lost in the chaos, and cannot be found. The poet avers that the lock has risen to the heavenly spheres to become a star; stargazers may admire it now for all eternity. In this way, the poet reasons, it will attract more envy than it ever could on earth.

Commentary

Readers have often interpreted Clarissa's speech as the voice of the poet expressing the moral of the story. Certainly, her oration's thesis aligns with Pope's professed task of putting the dispute between the two families into a more reasonable perspective. But Pope's position achieves more complexity than Clarissa's speech, since he has used the occasion of the poem as a vehicle to critically address a number of broader societal issues as well. And Clarissa's righteous stance loses authority in light of the fact that it was she who originally gave the Baron the scissors. Clarissa's failure to inspire a reconciliation proves that the quarrel is itself a kind of flirtatious game that all parties are enjoying. The description of the "battle" has a markedly erotic quality, as ladies and lords wallow in their mock-agonies. Sir Plume "draw[s] Clarissa down" in a sexual way, and Belinda "flies" on her foe with flashing eyes and an erotic ardor. When Pope informs us that the Baron fights on unafraid because he "sought no more than on his foe to die," the expression means that his goal all along was sexual consummation.

This final battle is the culmination of the long sequence of mock-heroic military actions. Pope invokes by name the Roman gods who were most active in warfare, and he alludes as well to the Aeneid , comparing the stoic Baron to Aeneas ("the Trojan"), who had to leave his love to become the founder of Rome. Belinda's tossing of the snuff makes a perfect turning point, ideally suited to the scale of this trivial battle. The snuff causes the Baron to sneeze, a comic and decidedly unheroic thing for a hero to do. The bodkin, too, serves nicely: here a bodkin is a decorative hairpin, not the weapon of ancient days (or even of Hamlet's time). Still, Pope gives the pin an elaborate history in accordance with the conventions of true epic.

The mock-heroic conclusion of the poem is designed to complement the lady it alludes to (Arabella Fermor), while also giving the poet himself due credit for being the instrument of her immortality. This ending effectively indulges the heroine's vanity, even though the poem has functioned throughout as a critique of that vanity. And no real moral development has taken place: Belinda is asked to come to terms with her loss through a kind of bribe or distraction that reinforces her basically frivolous outlook. But even in its most mocking moments, this poem is a gentle one, in which Pope shows a basic

sympathy with the social world in spite of its folly and foibles. The searing critiques of his later satires would be much more stringent and less forgiving.

Critical Analysis of "The Rape of the Lock"

The occasion of the poem Alexander Pope's The Rape of the Lock was the quarrel between two aristocratic Roman Catholic families. Lord Petre, in a moment of youthful frolic had cut off a lock of hair from Miss Arabella's Fermor's head which caused a violent quarrel. The gentle satire was written to reconcile quarreling families.

Thus The Rape of the Lock was dedicated to Miss Arabelle Fermors belonging to a distinguished Catholic family. It was dedicated to her as it was to reconcile her family with that of Lord Petre who had cut off a lock hair from the lady's head which caused a violent quarrel.

Coming to the title the word Rape in the title means violence on women. In the poem no woman is the victim of rape but it is the lock of a woman named Belinda that is raped by a fashionable Baron. So, the title brings out the triviality of the subject-matter and is hence appropriate. Again the title of the poem bears literary reminiscent. The title is reminiscent of Shakespeare' Roman matron, Lucrece where the rape of the Roman matron Lucrece by Emperor Tarques arouses a most shameful and painful event. It also satirically refers to the rape of Helen of Sparta by Paris, the Trojan prince.

The poem also reflects the picture of the contemporary society. The Rape of the Lock mirrors eighteenth century elegant society and life in London with all it's the fashions, follies, frivolities and vices. The poem is a witty social document which mirrors false ideology. Morality intrigue debauchery corruption social scandals mostly sexual pleasure and fashion of the ladies the tawdriness of the morality of the beau-demon is revealed through the poem.

Pope in the manner of epic poets, Homer, Virgil and Milton, sets forth his mock epic with a proposition announcing the subject and in invocation to the muse to help him sing how a dreadful consequence arises from a love affair and a fierce quarrel results from a very trivial incident. However, Pope's The Rape of the Lock is a mock heroic poem which imitates the elaborate form and ceremonious style of the epic genre and it applies to a common place or trivial subject matter. Pope's The Rape of the Lock is the perfect of mock-heroic poem. The characteristics of a mock heroic poem -the discrepancy the triviality of the subject matter, the Invocation to the muse, epic similes, the sonorous and grand speeches, use of epic machinery, journey to the underworld the of amber a voyage on board are present here.

The proposition, the Invocation to the muse, epic machinery of sylphs and gnomes, the journey description of Belinda's toilet in grand manner, the heroic battle between the sexes make the poem an epic. First of all The term epic machinery mean the agency of the fairy being called Sylphs Gnomes Deities and Demons and angels made to act in a poem. The machinery as pope said signifies the part that the fairy being played in the epics and dramas by intervening in human affairs and assisting the moral portages. Pope uses it to admirable humorous purposes in his mock-heroic. In conformity with classical epics where the gods and other supernatural being are seen intervening in human affairs and taking sides and ending. Assisting and fighting for this protégés. Pope introduces the sylph machinery for enhancing the comic effect. Again, it is Rosicrucian. Rosicrucian Doctrine is the name given to secret brotherhood supposed to have been founded by

Christian Rosankrents. The doctrine of the Rosicrucian was a mixture of religion and magic. In the poem Sylphs, gnomes, nymphs, salamanders are mentioned as being obtained from the Rosicrucian source.

Pope invokes to the muse in the epic convention which sets forth the theme of his mock-epic. The Invocation prepares us for an impending dreadful mischief arising from love affairs and its terrible result. At the same time it admits the triviality of the subject. Invocation to the muse is an epic convention Pope invokes the muse to learn the secret cause of the Lord's assault on the gentle maid. He also wants the muse to enlighten how a little man could dare such a bold task and how a soft female heart could harbor such violent anger.

Pope in a mock heroic vein presents Belinda, the heroine of The Rape of the Lock, as a representation of the flawed manners, degraded morals false pretense and absurdities rampant in the life of the 18th century London. When Belinda sleep is prolonged beyond the meaning hours, she has a mysterious vision of a beautiful youth which sent by Ariel the guardian sylph. Ariel whispers to her ears continuing her against a dreadful event which might be fall her before sunset. Pope with an epic grandeur describes Belinda's toilet to satire the fashion and frivolity of the woman in the 18th century aristocratic society. Her toilet table displays a number of silver uses arranged in a mystic order. Toilet goods included a casket containing ornaments set with bright game a box of perfumes, combs made of ivory and tortoise shell, powders, pins puffs, a mirror some love-letters Bibles. Pope with an epic grandeur describes Belinda's toilet to satirize the fashion and frivolity of the women of the 18th century aristocratic society. The articles of luxury are conceived of as the articles of worship with which Belinda worship, thus the poet treated a trivial subjection a grand style to register the cut and satire vivacity of the scene. When Belinda dons her safety aids with the help of Betty at her toilet it reminds us of Achilles arming himself for battle in Iliad. The arming of Achilles is an indispensable epic convention and the woman putting on make-up in terms of martial idiom effectively evokes the mock-heroic atmosphere.

Major Themes

Gender Roles: - Pope constantly manipulates traditional gender roles in The Rape of the Lock. He portrays Belinda, the poem's protagonist, alternately as an epic hero preparing for battle (I.139-44), a cunning military general reviewing his troops (III.45-6), and a Moor bellowing in rage (V.105-6). The poem thus describes Belinda in specifically male terms: heroism, battle, anger. Other women in the poem similarly demonstrate masculine characteristics. Thalestris displays her prowess on the battlefield while Clarissa provides a weapon to the otherwise impotent Baron. By contrast, the men act with feminine delicacy, fainting during the battle. Pope figures the Baron in mostly feminine terms. He is a fop, willing to prostrate himself before the altar of Love, and he cannot act on his desire without the explicit assistance of a woman. When Belinda conquers him in battle, she stands above him in a position of dominance. Even the poem's more mechanical elements partake in this reversal of gender roles. The mythological sprites literally switch genders after they die, transforming from human women to male spirits. All this gender manipulation calls attention to the perverse behaviors of this fictional society. The poem certainly alludes to the expected behavior of each gender role: women should act with modesty while men should embody heroic and chivalric ideals. However, these characters flout the rules of traditional society.

Female Sexuality: - Pope frequently focuses on female sexuality and the place of women in society throughout the corpus of his poetry, and it was a popular topic in the early eighteenth century (just think of Jonathan Swift's misogynistic poems). The Rape of the Lock does not, however, feature a Swiftian tirade concerning the evils of women. It instead makes a considered exploration of society's expectations for women. The rules of eighteenth-century society dictate that a woman attract a suitable husband while preserving her chastity and virtuous reputation. Pope renders this double-standard dramatically in his depiction of Belinda's hair, which attracts male admirers, and its petticoat counterpart, which acts as a barrier to protect her virginity. Of course, a woman who compromised her virtue—either by deed or reputation—usually lost her place in respectable society. Pope examines the loss of reputation in the poem's sexual allegory, i.e., the "rape" of the lock. By figuring the severing of Belinda' hair as a sexual violation, Pope delves into implications of sexual transgression. After the Baron steals her curl, Belinda exiles herself from the party, retiring to a bedchamber to mourn her loss. Pope thus dramatizes the retreat from society that a sexually-compromised woman would eventually experience. Though Belinda is ultimately celebrated, not ostracized, by her community, her narrative provides Pope with the opportunity to explore society's views on female sexuality.

The Deterioration of Heroic Ideals: - Pope's use of the mock epic genre in The Rape of the Lock affords him the poetic occasion to lament the deterioration of heroic ideals in the modern era. Though he depicts conventional epic themes such as love and war, his comic tone indicates that the grandeur of these matters has suffered since the days of Homer and Virgil. The "amorous causes" in Pope's poem have little in common with Hector's love for Andromache or Paris' theft of Helen in The Iliad or Penelope's devotion to Odysseus in The Odyssey (I. 1). By contrast, the love Pope portrays is that of the Baron for Belinda's icon (her hair), not Belinda herself. Similarly, the "mighty contests" that once populated epic poetry now arise "from trivial things" (I.2). Achilles' rage at Agamemnon for affronting his honor with the theft of Briseis has diminished to the anger of a young beauty at the theft of her hair, which will certainly grow back. Pope thus presents a society that is merely a shadow of its heroic past.

Religious Piety: - The Rape of the Lock demonstrates Pope's anxieties concerning the state of religious piety during the early eighteenth century. Pope was Catholic, and in the poem he indicates his concern that society has embraced objects of worship (beauty, for example) rather than God. His use of religious imagery reveals this perversion. The rituals he depicts in the first and second cantos equate religion with secular love. During Belinda's toilette, the poem imbues the Bibles and billet-doux (love letters) on her dressing table with equal significance. The Baron's altar to Love in the second canto echoes this scene. On the altar—itself an integral part of Christian worship, in particular Catholic Mass—the Baron places "twelve vast French romances, neatly gilt" to honor Love, rather than gilded Bibles (38). Pope symbolizes this equation of religious and erotic love in the cross that Belinda wears. This central symbol of Christianity serves an ornamental, not religious function, adorning Belinda's "white breast" (7). The cross remains sufficiently secular that "Jews might kiss" it and "infidels adore" it (8). Of course, Pope leaves ambiguous the implication that the Jews and infidels are admiring Belinda's breasts and not the cross. This subversion of established principles of Christian worship critiques the laxity of early eighteenth-century attitudes towards religion and morality.

Idleness of the Upper Classes: - The idleness and ignorance of the upper classes is integral to Pope’s critique of contemporary society in The Rape of the Lock. His satire focuses largely on the foibles of the aristocracy and gentry, who he depicts as interested only in trivial matters, such as flirting, gossip, and card games. Pope’s rendering of ombre as an epic battle demonstrates the frivolity of upper-class entertainment. In reality an excuse for flirting and gambling, the card game represents the young aristocrats’ only opportunity to gain heroic recognition. This is not, of course, true heroism, but rather a skill that serves no purpose in the outside world. Chief among the upper classes’ other pastimes is gossip, but Pope limits their conversation to the insular world of the aristocratic lifestyle. They care most about “who gave the ball, or paid the visit last,” the irrelevant structures of upper-class socializing (III.12). Few discuss the world beyond the society of Hampton Court: “One speaks the glory of the British Queen, / And one describes a charming Indian screen” (III.13-4). This couplet alludes to the worldly pursuits of trade and empire that are occurring outside of these aristocrats’ small social world.

Ephemeral Nature of Beauty: - Beauty’s ephemeral nature reinforces Pope’s critical project in The Rape of the Lock. His poem attempts to dissuade society from placing excessive value on external appearances, especially since such things fade over time. Clarissa’s lecture in particular questions the value that society places on appearances. She notes that men worship female beauty without assessing moral character. Pope demonstrates that this is essentially a house without foundation: because “frail beauty must decay,” women must have other qualities to sustain them (V.25). Though Clarissa is complicit in the general frivolity and pettiness that Pope censures in the poem, her articulated scruples with regard to appearances serve his social critique.

Man’s Place and Purpose in the Universe: - In his prefatory address to the reader of An Essay on Man, Pope describes his intention to consider “man in the abstract, his Nature and his State, since, to prove any moral duty, to enforce any moral precept, or to examine the perfection of imperfection of any creature whatsoever, it is necessary first to know what condition and relation it is placed in, and what is the proper end and purpose of its being.” Pope explores man’s nature and his place in the world throughout the poem. The first epistle explains man’s relation to the universe. Pope explains that man’s place in the “Vast chain of being” is in a middle state, below the angels but above beasts and fowl (I.237). Because man is an integral part of God’s creation, he cannot and should not try to comprehend God’s design. The second epistle depicts man’s relation to the individual. Pope argues that man is governed by the principles of self-love and reason. Self-love and the passions are the origins of human action while reason regulates human behavior. The third epistle examines man’s relation to society. The bonds that unite man to others are governed by instinct or reason. Man’s relationship with nature is largely instinctual, based on a primordial knowledge of the things necessary to survival (nourishment, sex, etc.). By contrast, man’s relationship to other men and to God is based on reason, and consequently, man established the institutions of government and religion. The former proves his love for other men and the second his love for God. The fourth epistle investigates man’s relation to happiness, which, Pope argues, is man’s ultimate aim. Though Pope does not provide a universal solution to “the proper end and purpose” of man, he does reveal one of the defining characteristics of humanity: man will always seek to understand his purpose in the world.

The Rape of the Lock" as a Social Satire

Satire is humorous criticism intended to point out the flaws in the social and cultural fabric of a given society. Social satire focuses on aspects of society itself, including current events, prevailing attitudes, and political institutions. Social satire has existed for centuries, originating with the ancient Greeks and Romans. It is still a popular venue for social criticism in modern times. The Rape of the Lock exposes in a witty manner the follies and absurdities of the high society of the times. All the recognised weapons of satire have been employed by Pope in a most effective manner. The principal targets of satire in this poem are the aristocratic ladies and gentlemen of Pope's day.

Pope gives us an **amusing picture of the society-ladies** of his time. He tells us that the vanities of society-ladies do not end even with the death of the ladies. Apart from **making fun of their late-rising**, Pope tells us that the aristocratic ladies of those days were **excessively fond of gilded chariots and of Ombre**. He also gives us a **satirical division of ladies of different temperaments into different categories**—fiery termagants, yielding ladies, grave prudes, and light coquettes. He mocks at the extravagant aspirations of the ladies who imagined matrimonial alliances with peers and dukes and dreamt of "garters, stars, and coronets". Pope ridicules the fickleness and superficiality of the ladies 'by referring to their hearts as moving toy-shops and their varying vanities.

The poet **ridicules women's excessive attention to self-embellishment and self-decoration**. In a famous satirical passage, Belinda is described as commencing her toilet operations with a prayer to the "cosmetic powers". "Puffs, powders, patches, bibles, billet doux" lie in confusion on Belinda's dressing table. Ariel's conjectures regarding the disaster that threatens Belinda are stated in some of the most amusing lines in the poem. Ariel wonders whether Belinda shall break Diana's law, or some frail China-jar receive a flaw; whether she shall stain her honour, or her new brocade; whether she shall forget her prayers, or miss a dance-party; whether she shall lose her heart or her necklace. The paired calamities here are not merely ridiculous contrasts; they show the moral bankruptcy of the ladies of the time.

The **superficiality of the ladies** of the time and a **lack of any depth** of feeling in them are **ridiculed** in the lines in which the domestic pets of the ladies are equated with their husbands. The death of a domestic pet caused as much grief to a lady of fashion as the death of her husband would have caused not even the breaking of a China-vessel in the house had the same effect.

The poet makes ironical references to a lady's love of a coach-and-six, her interest in scandalous books, her desire to be invited to entertainments, and her readily making an appointment with a lover. Some very pungent satire is to be found in the lines which describe the strange shapes in the Cave of Spleen:

> **Here sighs ajar, and there a goose pie talks;**
> **And maids turned bottles, call aloud for corks.**

The poet is here making a sarcastic reference to the suppressed sexual desires of women and their unexpressed cravings or sexual gratification. Women's tendency quickly to give way to sorrow and grief is ridiculed in the lines which describe the contents of the bag and of the phial which Umbriel brings from the Cave of Spleen. The contents are sighs, sobs, soft sorrows, melting griefs, and flowing tears.

The moral bankruptcy of the ladies is further ridiculed when Thalestris points out the need for sacrificing everything, even chastity, for the sake of maintaining a good reputation. Virtue might be lost, but not a good name:

> **Honour forbid ! at whose unrivalled shrine**
> **Ease, pleasure, virtue, all our sex resign.**

The same attitude of mind is expressed in the lines in which Belinda declares that she would not have felt so offended if the Baron had stolen any other hair from her but spared that particular lock of her hair:

> **Oh, hadst thou, cruel! been content to seize**
> **Hairs less in sight, or any hairs but these !**

The **gallants of the time are not spared** by Pope. They are the target of mockery which is as sharp and keen as the satire on the ladies. One of the most amusing passages is the one in which the Baron is described as building an altar of love and setting fire to it with his amorous sighs and with tender love letters. The Baron's worship of love here is comparable to Belinda's worship of the cosmetic powers. No less amusing is the satire on gallants like Sir Plume. Sir Plume's affectations are ridiculed with reference to his amber snuff-box and his spotted cane.

The conversation of the ladies and the knights at the court amuses us by its emptiness and shallowness. The talk generally centred round dance-parties, court-visits, and sex-scandals. The pauses in conversation were filled by snuff-taking, fan-swinging, singing, laughing, ogling, etc. The two principal diversions of the time, the game of Ombre and coffee-drinking, have also their share of ridicule. All these ceremonies expose the normal vacuum in which they are performed. Each ceremony highlights a social absurdity because of the extravagant importance that it receives at the cost of serious concerns of life.

Finally, The Rape of the Lock is a comic assault on a society preoccupied with superficialities. It is a commentary on polite society in general, and on fashionable women in particular. It exposes all values, especially trifling and artificial ones. It ridicules the laziness, idleness, frivolities, vanities, follies, shams, shallowness, superficiality, prudery, hypocrisy, false ideas of honour, and excessive interest in self-embellishment of the aristocratic ladies of the eighteenth century. It ridicules also the foppery, amorous tendencies, bravado, snuff-taking, and affectations of the aristocratic gentlemen of the time. Humour, wit, irony, sarcasm, innuendo, persiflage, insinuations are all employed as weapons of attack. An occasional touch of obscenity makes the satire spicy.

The Rape of the Lock : Representative Poem of the Age

An incredible masterpiece, however general in its claim, is the most ordinary result of its time. It is established in the contemporary society and social life and reflects that life is in its pith and totality. It is an extraordinary poem by all cannon of arts and it does all that splendidly. Its center chiefly catches the regular peculiarities of the highborn class of his age.

The Rape of the Lock is a mirror to this sort of society of which Master Petre and Belinda are the delegate figures. Belinda is displayed as amazing beguiling like the sun, and lap-canines were an alternate key part of their lives. She is representative women of the time. What is her life, and how can she use her day? There is not the scarcest flash of

earnestness or truthfulness, goodness or glory of human life in any of her words and activities. Belinda is a wonderful woman; she has an assembly of admirers; she is a coquette and a flirt.

At the same time regardless of all their flirtation and the contempt they indicated for their significant others, these women of the court did furtively pine for adoration as Ariel, the watchman sylph, uncovered about Belinda:

'A natural beau prowling at her heart. They furtively harbored desire to get hitched to rulers and dukes, or men holding some high titles. What's more longing for their rich prospects ladies like Belinda rest late and are accustomed to climbing late from their cots.'

At the point when Belinda rises, she is locked in promptly with her can which takes up an expansive piece of her time. The excellence of Belinda and the involved subtle elements of her latrine are all situated hence with inimitable beauty, yet behind such a lot of entrancing depiction, there is an invading feeling of vanity and void.

Their hearts are toy-shops

In Canto III, Pope gives a point by point portrayal of the scene where Belinda's lovely bolt of hair is to be assaulted. There is Hampton Court, the royal residence of the English Queen perfectly arranged on the banks of the stream Thames, where

Britain's statesmen oft the fall foredoom,
Of outside dictators and of fairies at home.

The writer in an extremely unpretentious way parodies the exercises of the royal residence. The Queen's interviews with her priests and her bringing tea with the lights of her administration are compared. The genuine and the paltry have been said in one breath, as though taking insight is as normal and pointless a matter as taking tea. The interests of the court are likewise revealed.

Not women just, however the men of honor of the keen set are similarly frivolous. Master Petre and his colleagues are the delegates of the trendy society of the time. They are all unmoving, vacant minded society, and appear to have nothing else to do yet making adoration to or playing with women. The fight between the women and men of honor shows void and vanity of their lives. They visit clubs and espresso houses, and there they enjoy unfilled outrageous talks. "At each expression a notoriety passes on".

Pope depicts the card-diversion in point of interest, on the grounds that card-recreations appeared to involve a vital place in the everyday exercises of in vogue women and refined men of the period.

Sir plume is an alternate fashionable man of his word, surpassing all others in his vanity and utter void. When he is asked for by his woman love Thalestris to convince Lord Petre to surrender the valuable hairs of Belinda, he articulates words which are unsurpassed in their emptiness.

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Conclusion: Pope completely bears the witticism of its age. In his origination of subject and determination of the tile, Pope shows his incredible wit. This was the sort of life

headed by the in vogue individuals of the privileged societies in the time of Pope, and Pope has depicted it in dazzling colors from one perspective and with scorching parody on the other. While it demonstrates the effortlessness and interest of Belinda's latrine, he shows the vanity and uselessness of everything. There is nothing profound or genuine in the lives and exercises of the stylish individuals, all is vanity and void and this Pope has uncovered with symbolization and splendor. The Rape of the Lock reflects the fake age with all its outward quality and internal vacancy. It the mirror of a specific part of life in the period of Pope. It was, says, Lowell, a mirror in a drawing room, however it gave back a dependable picture of society.

Supernatural Machinery in "The Rape of the Lock"

Alexander Pope explains that "machinery" is a term invented by the critics to signify the part which deities, angels, or demons play in a poem. He goes on to say that the machinery in his poem is based on the Rosicrucian doctrine of spirits. According to this doctrine the four elements are inhabited by sylphs, nymphs, gnomes, and salamanders. The sylphs, whose habitation is in the air, are supposed to be the best-conditioned creatures imaginable.

Pope tells us in the poem that beautiful women return, after their death, to the elements from which they were derived. Violent tempered women become salamanders or spirits of the fire. Women of gentle and pleasing disposition pass into nymphs or water-spirits. Prudish (Narrow-minded) women become gnomes or earth-spirits. Light-hearted coquettes are changed into sylphs or spirits of the air. Pope attributes to the mischievous influence of the gnomes many unguarded follies of the female sex which he holds up to ridicule.

The first and perhaps the foremost occupation of the **sylphs** is the **protection of fair and chaste ladies** who reject the male sex. It is they who guard and save the chastity of maidens who are on the point of yielding to their lovers. They save these maidens from falling victims to the allurements of "treacherous friends" and dashing young men whose music softens their minds and dancing inflames their passions. The **gnomes fill the minds of proud maidens with foolish ideas** which make them indulge in vain dreams of being married to lords and peers. These **gnomes teach young coquettes to ogle and pretend blushing at the sight of fashionable young men who cause their hearts to flutter**.

It is the **sylphs**, however, who **safely guide the maidens through all dangers.** Whenever a maiden is about to yield to the seduction of a particular young man, another who is more attractive and tempting appears on the scene and the fashionable maiden at once transfers her favour to the new comer. This may be called fickleness in women but it is all contrived by the sylphs.

In most of the famous epics gods and angels play a vital role in the action of the poems thus showing that the human world is not independent or even adequate and that supernatural powers have an important bearing on this world. Pope thought that his mock-epic would be incomplete without a parody of this established practice of epic poets in introducing machinery. The machinery of his poem comprises the sylphs led by Ariel (named after Shakespeare's immortal creation in The Tempest).

Ariel tells us in the poem that to him and his followers has been assigned the humble but **pleasant duty of serving fashionable young ladies**. The functions of these

sylphs are described humorously and include saving the powder from being blown off from the cheeks of ladies, preventing scents from evaporating, preparing cosmetics, teaching the ladies to blush and to put on enchanting airs, suggesting new ideas about dress.

The sylphs are "light" by any heroic standards. They feel scared when a crisis approaches. Yet they are in every detail Belinda's intimates and counsellors. They explain the various complicated conventions and anxieties that make up Belinda's day.

The **sylphs** The Rape of the Lock poem are both a **mirror and mock-apotheosis of customs and conventions of the society of the time.** Belinda is told in a dream that sylphs guide and protect her through the dangers of life. Ariel's account of the predicament of the "tender mind" in a circle of rakes reduces his use of noble words such as "innocent", "honour", and "purity" to the level of a muddle and a sham. He is there, he tells her, to protect her purity according to sylphic theology. Defended by sylphs, the "melting maids" are safe, for what we call "honour" is really no more than Providence. Reassuring Belinda in this way, Ariel is in effect undermining her moral position, taking away with one hand the credit he gives with the other. He explains how a woman's defence is achieved. A maid would fall to Florio if Damon were not at hand to divert her attention, and if, an old folly were not expelled by a new. A maid "shifts the moving toy-shop of her heart" with her varying vanities. It is the sylphs that make her do that.

The **machines are present at every crucial situation** in the play. The sylphs are present in the course of Belinda's journey by boat to Hampton Court. They have been warned by Ariel to remain alert and vigilant, fifty of them having been deputed to take charge of Belinda's petticoat. They are in attendance on Belinda when she plays Ombre. They hover around her when she sips coffee. And they withdraw only when Ariel sees "an earthly lover lurking at her heart". A gnome, called Umbriel, goes to the Cave of Spleen and returns with a bag full of sighs, sobs, screams, and outbursts of anger, and a phial filled with fainting fits, gentle sorrows, soft griefs, etc.—all of which are released over Belinda. And the sylphs are present to witness the flight of Belinda's lock of hair to the sky. In short, the machinery of the poem is constantly kept in the reader's view, to the very last.

The use of machinery serves various other purposes in the poem. It imparts qualities of splendour and wonder to the actors and the actions in the story. Like Homer's gods, Pope's sylphs move easily in and out of the lower world; they surprise without offending our sense of the probable; and they give to ordinary human impulses a sensuous or concrete form. What they really stand for feminine honour, flirtation, courtship, the necessary rivalry of man and woman—are seen in its essence, and a human impulse seen in its essence is always beautiful.

These "light militia of the lower sky" increase dramatic suspense, and therefore story depth, since they foreknow and warn of the central disaster. They reflect the implied belief that humanity and its sensible world do not exhaust the total of a comprehensive statement. They are also spirits of the dead, acting as guardian angels to the living. The sylphan machinery is exquisite, but it must also be recognized as demonic. In tempting Belinda to transcend the flesh-and-blood world by lifelong chastity, Ariel offers her a Satanic substitute for Christianity.

The Rape of the Lock as a Mock Epic Poem

The epic is **long a narrative** poem of supposed **divine inspiration. It** treats a **subject of great and momentous importance for mankind**. The **characters** of the story are **partly human and partly divine**. The **language and style,** in which the incidents are related, are full of **elevation and dignity**. Mock-epic belongs to the class of literature called "burlesque". A burlesque is a parody on a large scale, in which not a single poem, but a whole type of style of literature is parodied, the language and thought proper to a serious theme reproduced in setting forth something ridiculous or trivial. In the Rape of the Lock all the epic traditions are parodied.

"The Rape of the Lock" opens with the proposition of the subject matter and Pope's **invocation to the Muses** to **seek divine inspiration** to compose the literary art. Such a grand treatment of a trivial subject matter like the clipping of the lock of Belinda provokes laughter when the poet says:

"I sing – this verse to Caryll, Muse! Is due:
This, ev'n Belinda may vouchsafe to view:"

Instead of grand passions and great fights between heroes in which the immortals take part, we have as the **theme** of The Rape of the Lock a **petty amorous quarrel assisted by the spirits of the air**. The epic portrays an age round the personality of a god or a semi-god, and its characters are heroes. The Rape of the Lock, on the other hand, gives us a **picture of a fashionable society**. The central figure in that picture is a pretty society girl, and the other characters are a rash youth, a foolish dandy and a few frivolous women. Instead of deep and genuine passions as found in ancient epics, we come across a succession of mock passions in The Rape of the Lock.

The **action** of The Rape of the Lock turns on a **trivial incident**—the cutting off a lock of hair from a lady's head. Such a thing had taken place in reality. One lord Petre cut off a lock of hair from the head of Lady Arabella Fermor. There was a quarrel between the two families, and Pope was requested to make a jest of the incident, and 'laugh them together'. This was the occasion of the composition of the poem. Pope did give to the world a fine work of wit—the best mock-heroic poem in the English language, but we do not know whether the families were reconciled.

The theme of the poem is suggested in the invocation, as in an epic poem, but the **theme is ridiculously trivial**, in comparison with the grand theme of an epic. The action opens with a mock-heroic manner with the awakening of Belinda, the heroine of the poem. Belinda is the very goddess of beauty, and the luster of her eyes surpasses that of the sun, who peeped timorously through the white curtains in Belinda's room:

"Sol through white curtains shot a timorous ray,
And opened those eyes that must eclipse the day."

The whole **structure** of The Rape of the Lock is cast in the epic mood, but it could not be a serious epic because the incident is **trivial**—so we have the mock-heroic or heroi-comical poem. The poem is divided into Cantos like an epic poem, and there are ironic parallels to the main Incidents of the epic. The poem begins with an invocation in epic tradition:

"Say, what strange motive, Goddness! could compel
A well-bred lord to assault a gentle belle?"

As in epics, in The Rape of the Lock, too, divine beings are portrayed. Belinda is in the divine care of the sylphs:

"Fairest of mortals, thou distinguished 'care,

Of thousand bright inhabitants of air".

But then the sylphs are fragile, airy beings and they are helpless before the caprices of men. Despite all their concern for Belinda, her beautiful lock of hair is raped by the naughty Baron. There is the mischievous gnome who, like Milton's Satan, is intent upon making Belinda miserable and thereby all her admirers. The gnome addresses the wayward Queen who rules the sex from fifteen to fifty, thus:

"Hear me, and touch Belinda with chagrin,
That single act gives half the world the spleen."

The epic always uses the **supernatural** element. In The Iliad there are gods and goddesses; in The Rape of the Lock, there are the **sylphs and gnomes**. These aerial spirits are small and insignificant things, and are, therefore, exactly in keeping with the triviality of the theme. They guard the person of the heroine and when there is a fight between the followers of Belinda and those of the Baron; they take part in the fight, like the gods and goddesses in the Trojan War:

"Propped on their bodkin spears, the spirits survey,
The growing combat or assist the fray."

An epic poem must contain some **episodes** also. In keeping with this practice Pope has introduced the **episode of the game of Ombre** which is described in great detail. There is also the hazardous journey of Umbriel to the Cave of Spleen. Then there is the battle between the lords and ladies just like the battles in epic poetry. But in the true mock-heroic style this battle is fought with fans and snuff instead of with swords and spears.

There are single **combats** also between Belinda and the Baron and between Clarissa and Sir Plume. Belinda's toilet is another engaging account in which Pope has attributed in a perfect mock-heroic manner, the solemnity of a religious observance to the luxurious toilet of a lady of fashion and frivolity. Puffs, powders, patches, bibles, billet-doux, are all brought to the same table and the slight and the series are all strangely synthesized.

The Rape of the Lock is a rare instance in which the slight theme is given an exalted treatment for satirical purposes. All through the poem, a pose of importance is given to all that is thoroughly unimportant and insignificant and practically meaningless and farcical. The very conception of writing an epic on the rape of a lock of hair is funny and bears testimony to the poet's effort to make the little great and the great little.

In The Rape of the Lock the balance between the concealed irony and the assumed gravity is nicely trimmed: the little is made great and the great made little. It is the triumph of insignificance, the apotheosis of foppery and folly, the perfection of mock heroic.

Rape of the Lock - Significance of Cave of Spleen

Spleen was the Augustan name what Elizabethan described as melancholy. It is less of a disease than a fashionable affectation. Fashionable ladies, poets, and playwrights pretend to suffer from it so as to give an impression that the victims are serious thinkers of creative writers. Pope exalts Spleen to the level of Goddess and cave of Spleen to the level of underworld and personifies her as the Queen of underworld. This suits his scheme to mock the epic conventions systematically because the serious epics like "Illiad" and "Aenied" show heroes taking a voyage to the underworld. In mockery of this convention, however, Pope packs a lot of social criticism, especially the criticism of fashionable vanities and affectations of the fashionable women.

Sylphs were in attendance to Belinda when she plays Ombre. They hover around her when she sips coffee. They withdraw when Ariel sees "an earthly lover lurking at her heart". A gnome, called 'Umbriel' holds the place of Ariel. After the rape of the lock of Belinda, Umbriel wanted to inflict her with Spleen. So he took a journey to the underworld to the cave of spleen.

It is reported that the Queen of Spleen as a fickle and eccentric goddess holds full control over the fashionable ladies ranging from fifteen to fifty. She, the Goddess of Spleen is the aspiration behind the affectation of melancholy as well as the pretension to the poetry by the female sex.

The effect of Spleen on the women varies according to their temperament. While some consults the physician for their treatments. Some begin to write scandalous plays and those who are proud give them an air and try to delay their visit as to show their importance.

While speaking of the cave of Spleen, Pope gives a vivid picture of the fantastic vision to which the men and women plagued with spleen are exposed to. At the moment we see flaming devils and snakes erected on their coils, lustrous ghosts, opening sepulchers and red fires and the other moment we visualizes the lakes of liquid gold, scenes of paradise, transparent places and angles coming to solve the difficulties in human life. Thus the description of the cave of Spleen is highly symbolic and conveys the accurate picture of the people suffering from Spleen.

Moreover, Pope points out the illusion from which morbidly melancholic people suffer. Such people are often plagued with fantastic ideas or visions and often imagine themselves transformed into various objects.

Then, there are two hand maidens who wait upon the Goddess of Spleen, are Ill-Nature and Affectation. Apparently, it is seemed that Pope has delineated the pictures of two hand-maidens just to emphasize the splendour of Goddess of Spleen. But since Spleen, Ill-Nature and Affectation are the typical feminine vices in Pope's time, therefore, the delineation of their portraits provide the vivid picture of the fashionable women who affected so many things.

Ill-Nature is presented as an ugly, wrinkled and decayed woman who pretends to be virtuous and pious but essentially a vicious creature who takes delight in murdering reputations of the other people. The black and white lines of her dress presents the contrast between her pretension and reality – the white colour suggests purity, innocence and religiosity and the black colour suggest malice, envy and scorn. In fact, Pope has satirized the double role of the woman's nature of his times that pretends to be pious and virtuous just to maintain their good reputation i.e. the woman of his age gives importance to their reputation than their virtues. In other words they are hypocrite.

The, Pope delineates the portrait of the Affectation, the second hand maiden of the Goddess of Spleen. Affectation is personified as an old woman who is beautiful, young and tender though she is fairly old. Delineation of the portrait of the Affectation provides a vivid picture of the fashionable woman. It includes a sharp, ironical commentary on the vanity, frivolity and hypocrisy of fashionable women.

> **There Affectation, with a sickly mien,**
> **Shows in her cheek the roses of eighteen,**
> **Practiced to lisp, and hang the head aside,**

Faints into airs, and languishes with pride,
On the rich quilt sinks with becoming woe,
Wrapt in a gown, for sickness, and for show.
The fair ones feel such maladies as these,
When each new night-dress gives a new disease.

Then, the bag, which the Goddess of Spleen gives to gnome, Umbriel, is the clever mimicry of the bag in which Ulysses entrapped the winds. The bag contains all the violent and noisy emotions while the Phial contains the noisiest sort of sufferings. This bag is indicative of female weaknesses. Thus, Pope seems to imply that the women are capable of all sorts of antics to demonstrate their sufferings.

To sum up, the visit to the cave of Spleen is introduced for the sake of mock-heroic effect, which gives an opportunity to the poet to satirize the evil nature and the affectations of ladies and gentlemen of his society. Furthermore, it also serves the action of the poem.

Technique & Plot-Construction in "The Rape of the Lock"

The Rape of the Lock has greatly been admired for its development of the theme and its pattern of construction. The successive scenes, says a critic, are given with so firm and a clear touch—there is such a sense of form—that it is impossible not to recognise a consummate artistic power. The poem has the merit that belongs to any work of art which expresses in the most finished form the sentiments and characteristics of a particular class of society. It contains the truest and liveliest picture of eighteenth century high society. Its subject is of a more elegant nature, as well as more artfully conducted, than that of any other mock-epic poem.

The poem opens judiciously with the guardian-sylph warning Belinda against some unknown, imminent danger. The account which Ariel gives of the nature and activities of these inhabitants of the air, namely, the sylphs, is exquisitely fancied. Several strokes of satire have been inserted into this account with great delicacy. The transformation of women of different tempers into different kinds of spirits has a great appeal. The description of the toilet, which follows, is given in magnificent terms. Belinda's dressing is painted in as pompous a manner as Achilles arming. Canto 1 ends with a circumstance artfully contrived to keep this beautiful machinery in the reader's eye: "The busy sylphs surround their darling care", etc.

The mention of the lock of hair, on which the poem turns, is rightly reserved for the second Canto. The sacrifice of the Baron, to implore success for his undertaking, is another example of Pope's judgment in heightening the subject. The succeeding scene of sailing upon the Thames is most gay and delightful. The machinery is again introduced here, and with much propriety. Ariel summons his denizens of the air who are painted with a rich exuberance of fancy. A different sylph has charge of each part of Belinda's dress. But as many as fifty sylphs are deputed to guard Belinda's petticoat which, though a "seven-fold fence," has often been known "to fail". The celebrated raillery of Addison on the hoop-petticoat has nothing equal to Pope's description of the difficulty of guarding a part of dress of such high consequence: "Oft have we known that seven-fold fence to fail."

Pope shows great delicacy in his satire when he employs, with the ; utmost judgment and elegance, all the implements and instruments of the toilet as means of punishment to those spirits who shall be careless of their duties—of punishment such as sylphs alone could undergo. If Virgil has earned such high commendation for exalting his bees, by the majesty and magnificence of his diction, Pope deserves equal praise for the pomp and luster of his language on so trivial a subject.

The same mastery of language appears in the lively and elegant description of the game of Ombre in the third Canto. Here, again, Pope artfully introduces his machinery:

Soon as she spreads her hand, the aerial guard Descend, and sit on each important card. The majesty, with which the kings of spades and clubs, and the knaves of diamonds and clubs are spoken of, is very amusing to the imagination; and the whole game is conducted with great art and judgment. It is finely contrived that Belinda should be victorious, as the victory represents a change of fortune in the dreadful loss she was speedily to undergo, and gives occasion to the poet to introduce a moral reflection from Virgil, which adds to the pleasantry of the story:

> **O thoughtless mortals: ever blind to fate,**
> **Too soon dejected, and too soon elate.**

To this scene succeeds a coffee-table. It is doubtless as hard to make a coffee-pot shine in poetry as a plough; yet Pope has succeeded in giving elegance to so familiar an object. The guardian spirits are again active, and importantly employed. But nothing can excel their behaviour, and their wakeful solicitude for Belinda, when the danger grows more imminent, and the catastrophe approaches: "Swift to the lock a thousand sprites repair". The methods by which they try to preserve her from the intended mischief are such as could only be executed by sylphs. Still further to heighten the piece and to preserve the characters of the machines to the last, one of the sylphs intervening to protect the lock is cut into two by Fate with its shears. The line: "But airy substance soon unites again" is an admirable parody on that passage of Milton, which describes Satan wounded.

The parodies are some of the most exquisite parts of this poem. The introduction of parodies on serious and solemn passages of Homer and Virgil give much life and spirit to mock-epic poetry. The parodies of the speech of Sarpedon in Homer, and of the description of Achille's sceptre, together with the scales of Jupiter from Homer and Virgil are judiciously introduced in their several places. The mind of the reader is engaged by novelty, when it so unexpectedly finds a thought or object it had been accustomed to survey in another form, suddenly arrayed in a ridiculous garb. A mixture of ridiculous and comic images, with serious and important ones, add also no small beauty to this kind of poetry, as in the passage where real and imaginary misfortunes are coupled together with reference to captured kings, frustrated lovers, aged ladies, fierce dictators, and the moon-goddess.

In the same Canto (IV), the Cave of Spleen, the pictures of the attendants, Ill-nature and Affectation, the effects of the vapour that hangs over the palace of Spleen, the imaginary diseases she occasions, the speech of Umbriel to this malignant deity, the phial of female sorrows, the breaking of the phial with its direful effects, and the speech of the disconsolate Belinda—all these circumstances are poetically imagined, and are far superior to any of Boileaii and Garth. How natural it is for Belinda in her dismal and solitary situation to wish to be taken to some place where gilt chariots are never seen, where nobody plays Ombre, and where nobody tastes bohea (black tea). Nothing is

more common for poets than to introduce omens as preceding some important and dreadful event. Pope enumerates, with exquisite satire, the alarming prodigies which occur before the rape of Belinda's lock. The direfulness of the impending evil is aggravated by the muteness of Poll, and the unkindness of Shock.

The chief subject of the final Canto is the battle that ensues, and the efforts of the ladies to recover the hair. The battle is described, as it ought to be, in very lofty and pompous terms. The weapons used are the most proper imaginable in a mock epic—the lightning of the ladies' eyes, intolerable frowns, a pinch of snuff, and a bodkin. The machinery is not forgotten. Triumphant Umbriel claps his glad wings on viewing the fight. When the snuff is flung at the Baron, the gnomes carry it directly to the Baron's nose.

Then comes the grand catastrophe of the poem. The invaluable lock, which is so eagerly sought, is lost beyond recovery. And here the poet makes a judicious use of that famous fiction of Ariosto, that all things lost on earth are treasured on the moon. The denouement of this is well-conducted. What has become of this important lock of hair ? It is made a constellation with that of Berenice. As it rises to heaven, the sylphs behold it in its flight and feel pleased with its progress through the skies. The machinery of the poem is constantly kept in the readers view, to the very last. Even when the lock is transformed into a constellation, the sylphs, who had so carefully guarded it, are here once again artfully mentioned, as finally rejoicing in its honourable transformation.

John Dennis was, however, not much impressed by the construction of this poem. According to him, the machinery of the poem renders the action extravagant, absurd and incredible instead of making it wonderful and delightful. The machines, he says, do not in the least influence that action; they neither prevent the danger of Belinda, nor promote it, nor retard it, unless perhaps for one moment, which is ridiculous. There is no opposition of the machines to one another in the poem. Umbriel, the gnome, is not introduced till the action is over, and till Ariel and the spirits under him have quitted Belinda.

Dennis is of the view that there is no such thing as the fable or characters in the poem. The sentiments, according to him, are both trivial and extravagant. Dennis considers Umbriel's journey to the Cave of Spleen to be irrelevant: "How absurd was it then for this to take a journey down to the central earth, for no other purpose than to give Belinda the spleen, whom he left and found in the height of it."

The Character of Belinda in "The Rape of the Lock"

There are several aspects of the personality of Belinda as portrayed by Pope in The Rape of the Lock. She is a coquette, an injured innocent, a sweet charmer, a society belle, a rival of the sun, and a murderer of millions. She has, indeed, a Cleopatra-like variety.

The primary quality of Belinda is **spiritual shallowness** and an **incapacity for moral awareness**. Ariel acquaints us with her flirtatious character when he says that it is not known whether the beautiful Belinda will allow her chastity to be violated, or some delicate China-jar will break; whether she will stain her honour or her new brocade; whether she will lose her heart, or necklace, at a ball. The first possibility in each of these pairs of calamities shows that Belinda is not likely to exercise sufficient caution in protecting her maidenly purity. These lines show how easily a lady like Belinda might lose her chastity in a world of womanisers and how irreparably.

She has transformed all spi**ritual exercises and emblems into a coquette's self-display and self-adoration**. For instance, she wears a sparkling cross which is a religious symbol but which is put by her to the uses of ornamentation. For all her professed purity, Belinda is found to be secretly in love with Baron. There consists her "fall". When the sylphs warn her of the approaching scissors and the danger to her hair, she seems to be indifferent to the warning. A thousand spirits of the air rush to her to guard her lock. A thousand wings, by turns, blow back her hair. Thrice the sylphs jerk the diamond in her ear; thrice she looks back; and thrice the foe draws near. Her behaviour leads Ariel to make the surprising discovery that, in spite of all her pretence, she is amorously inclined toward a gallant:

Sudden he viewed, in spite of all her art,
An earthly lover lurking at her heart.

When Baron has clipped her lock, Belinda's reaction is described in a beautiful mocking vein.

Then flashed the living lightning from her eyes,
And screams of horror rend the affrighted skies.

We see Belinda as a true Fury. While lamenting the loss of her lock, she deplores the fact that she was attracted by the pleasures of court-life. She says that it would have been better if she had stayed and said her prayers at home instead of roaming with youthful lords. She recalls the omens which she witnessed in the morning but which she ignored. She would not have felt so hurt if, instead of the curl which lent such glory to her head, some other hair had been stolen by the Baron.

Belinda behaves like a **spoilt child**. At the outset we learn that she is a lazy woman who continues to sleep till the hour of twelve in the day and who, on waking up, at that hour, falls asleep again, to be awakened ultimately by the licking, tongue of her pet dog. When she finally rises from bed, she goes through a love-letter which is waiting for her and makes her forget the vision that she has seen. Soon she gets busy with her toilet. She regards her toilet as a religious ceremony to be scrupulously gone through. She begins her toilet with a prayer to the "cosmetic powers". Apart from her laziness and her excessive preoccupation with her toilet (including the pains that she takes to curl her hair), she has a **thirst for fame** which leads her to engage herself in an encounter with two adventurous knights at the game of Ombre. Having won a victory at Ombre, she feels jubilant and her exultant shouting fills the sky. She undoubtedly possesses a superb skill in playing the game of Ombre, but the manner in which she rejoices over her victory shows not only her vanity and superficiality but a childish temperament. The poet appropriately points out the **shallowness of human beings in becoming too quickly depressed and too quickly joyous**. Belinda does not realise that this day of victory would soon be converted into a day of disgrace for her, though the disgrace would be as trivial as the victory.

Belinda's outbursts, when a lock of her hair has been clipped, also show her as a spoiled child. A trivial incident fills her with an uncontrollable rage. She utters "louder shrieks" than those uttered by women who have lost their husbands or their lap dogs. She experiences greater resentment and anger over the "rape" of her hair than youthful kings who are captured alive in battle, scornful old maids who have lost their charms, passionate lovers, who have been deprived of the pleasures of love, and even aged ladies whose desire to be kissed has been frustrated. Later, when Umbriel pours over Belinda the contents of the bag which he has brought from the Cave of Spleen, Belinda

begins to burn with an inhuman wrath. When Umbriel breaks the bottle, Belinda feels grief-stricken. The sorrowful head sinks on her breast, and she begins to heave sighs. She now recalls with deep distress on the kind of life she has lived.

Pope's attitude to Belinda is very mixed and complicated: mocking and yet tender, admiring and yet critical. The paradoxical nature of Pope's attitude is intimately related to the paradox of Belinda's situation. If Belinda is to find her role of woman, she must lose the role of a virgin, and the more graceful her acceptance of loss the greater the victory she achieves through it. Because Pope is dealing with this paradox, his attitude must be mixed and complicated.

There is no doubt that Belinda undergoes a "fall", at least in the eyes of Ariel. Yet this fall is only a fall from the self-love. It is merely a fall into a more natural human condition and best regarded, perhaps, as a kind of fortunate fall: Belinda simply falls in love, and thus a situation is created whereby she can escape from the meaningless virginity and honour represented by the sylphs.

"The Rape of the Lock" : Relationship between Literature and Society

The Rape of the Lock is a poem in which Alexander Pope shows himself emphatically as the spokesman of his age. This poem pictures the artificial tone of the age and the frivolous aspect of femininity. "It is the epic of trifling’s; a page torn from the petty, pleasure-seeking life of fashionable beauty. In short, the veritable apotheosis in literary guise of scent patches and powder." We see in this poem the elegance and the emptiness, the meanness and the vanity, the jealousies, treacheries and intrigues of the social life of the aristocracy of the eighteenth century.

At the very outset we become acquainted with the idleness, late-rising, and fondness for domestic pets of the aristocratic ladies of the time. Belinda wakes up at the hour of twelve and then falls asleep again. We also become acquainted in the very beginning of the poem with the superficiality of the ladies who loved gilded chariots, and affected a love of the game of Ombre. Their ambition to marry peers and dukes, or men holding other high titles, is indicated, too, in the opening Canto:

> **Then gay ideas crowd the vacant brain,**
> **While peers and dukes, and all their sweeping train....**

The poem brings out the coquetry, the art, the artifice, and the “varying vanities” of the ladies of the time. These ladies learnt early in their life how to roll their eyes and to blush in an intriguing manner. Their hearts were like toy-shops which moved from one gallant to another:

> **With varying vanities, from every part,**
> **They shift the moving toy-shop of their heart.**

One gallant could drive put another gallant, and one coach could drive out another coach. "**Levity" was the hallmark of these women**. Their manners and behaviour were artificial and affected. They knew the art to lisp, to hang their heads aside, to faint into airs, and to languish with pride. They used to sink on their rich quilts and pretend sickness so that young gallant men should come to inquire after their health and in this way also see the costly gowns which they were wearing.

The women of the time **felt glad to receive love-letters**. When Belinda gets up from her bed her eyes first open on a love-letter. Another of the vanities of these ladies was to keep domestic pets such as dogs and parrots. Belinda has her Shock and her Poll. Among the ill-omens that Belinda recalls after losing a lock of her hair is the indifference of her two domestic pets: **"Nay, Poll sat mute, and Shock was most unkind!"**

Aristocratic ladies treated **toilet as their chief concern**. One important passage in The Rape of the Lock describes Belinda at her dressing-table. Before commencing her toilet operation, she offers a prayer to the "cosmetic powers". At her dressing-table are "the various offerings of the world"— India's glowing gems, Arabia's perfumes, speckled and white combs, files of pins, "puffs, powders, patches, bibles, billet-doux." Later in the poem, we are told how these ladies "take such constant care to prepare the bodkin, comb and essence!" They take special pains to curl their hair; they bind their locks in paper durance; and they strain their tender heads with fillets.

The ladies **lose their tempers over trifles**. Screams of horror from Belinda rend the affrighted skies, and a "living lightning" flashes from her eyes. Thalestris is described as the "fierce virago". The ladies in the poem are depicted as very aggressive, and it is they who start the battle. Women have been jealous of one another from time immemorial. Clarissa stealthily hands over a pair of scissors to Baron in order to assist him in his wicked design. It is in all probability Clarissa's jealousy of Belinda's beauty, and fame that prompts her to offer this assistance to Baron.

The ladies have **no moral scruples**. "Honour" is a word with little meaning for them; and "reputation" is more important to them than honour. The loss of "honour" does not matter if "reputation" is not lost. Several passages in the poem reveal the moral disarray of their lives. A lady's missing a dance-party is as serious a matter as her forgetting her prayers. A lady's losing her necklace is as serious as losing her heart. The death of a lap-dog or the breaking of a rich China-vessel is as serious a matter to the lady as the death of her husband. There is a complete confusion of moral values in their minds. Belinda herself has no real sense of feminine virtue or honour. She is in love with Baron, and for this reason Ariel gives her up when he sees "an earthly lover lurking at her heart". Her lament over the loss of a lock of her hair is sheer hypocrisy. Besides, she feels unhappy because the loss of this particular lock of hair was vital to her charm. She would not have been much hurt if Baron had stolen any other hair:

> **Oh, hadst thou, cruel, been content to seize**
> **Hairs less in sight, or any hairs but these !**

The **aristocratic young men** of the time were, like the ladies, **lacking in any serious purpose or** morality. Florio and Damon are representatives of those gallants and fops who vie with one another to capture the hearts of the ladies. There is a keen competition among them to win feminine favours. Wigs strive with wigs, and sword-knots strive with sword-knots. The attitude of these fops to love is amusingly described in the manner in which Baron tries to pacify heaven in order to win Belinda's heart. Baron builds an altar to Love. This altar consists of twelve vast French romances, three garters, and half a pair of gloves and all the trophies of his former loves. He lights a fire with the tender love-letters that he has received, and breathes three amorous sighs to raise the fire.

The **life of the fops** is as **empty and shallow** as the life of the ladies. This is emphasized by the role played by the empty-headed Sir Plume with bit "unthinking face". He is proud of his "amber snuff-box" and "the nice conduct of a clouded cane". He can hardly speak a dozen words without uttering half a dozen oaths. The manner in

which a "beau" or a "witling" perishes in the battle of the sexes shows the same thing . "One died in metaphor, and one in song." Taking snuff and wearing wigs were the foremost fashions among the men of that time.

Lastly, we are given a **satirical picture of judges, jury men, and merchants**. The judges are in a hurry to sign the judgment and the jury-men are in a hurry to pronounce a verdict of-"guilty" because they want to get back home for dinner. The merchants spend feverish hours at the Exchange. Other aspects of the life of the time which are mentioned in an amusing manner are the wits of heroes and of beaux, courtiers' promises, cages for gnats, chains to yoke a flea, dried butterflies, and heavy books of casuistry (excuse).

The Rape of the Lock : Treatment of Women

The Rape of the Lock has rightly been described as a representation of the petty pleasure-seeking life of a fashionable beauty. The poem is a satire on beautiful aristocratic women of the eighteenth century whose lives centred round petty interests and the quest of shallow pleasures. The principal target of attack is Belinda, a fashionable beautiful lady of the upper classes of the eighteenth-century English society. There can be no doubt about the beauty of this lady. Early in the poem, she is compared to the sun.

She wears a sparkling cross which even Jews and infidels would like to kiss. If she has any faults," they would be hidden by her graceful ease and her sweetness of temper. Her care-free disposition is expressed thus**: "Belinda smiled, and all the world was gay**." She nourishes two locks of hair which greatly enhance the already irresistible charm of this lady. Indeed, the poet invests her almost with the character of a divinity. At one point the praise of her attractions may be a mere mask for Pope's satiric attack on her personality as a coquette; at another it is praise which no irony can fully undermine. Nor can there be any doubt that she belongs to the fashionable world.

But, although Belinda is a woman of superb beauty and charm, the poet fully reveals to us her petty, pleasure-seeking nature. She suffers from all the **vanities, follies, and lack of moral scruple of the aristocratic ladies of the time**. She is a lazy woman who continues to sleep till the hour of twelve in the day and who, on waking up at that hour, falls asleep again, to be wakened subsequently by the licking tongue of her pet dog, Shock. When she does ultimately get up from bed, she goes through a love-letter which is waiting for her and which makes her forget the dream that she has seen. Next, she gets ready for her toilet. Thus we see that her day begins at noon, and that too when she is awakened by her lap-dog's licking her face. Keeping pets, encouraging and receiving love-letters, and self-embellishment were some of the principal interests of Belinda and the whole class of the society to which she belonged.

Wearing a white robe, the beautiful Belinda now addresses a prayer to the "cosmetic powers". Then she looks at her heavenly reflection in the mirror, and naturally feels pleased by her beauty. By her side stands Betty to assist her in the sacred ceremony of toilet. Numerous caskets are opened and they reveal their precious contents brought from different countries of the world. This description fully exposes Belinda's vanity and her love of fashion. But, of course, these were the characteristics of all aristocratic ladies of the eighteenth century. Nor have aristocratic women shed these characteristics in our times.

Belinda's emergence from her house is compared to the rising of the sun. The eyes of everyone are fixed on her because of her superior charm. She gives her smiles to everybody but shows no special favour to anyone. Men who look at her are captured by her locks of hair with their bright ringlets which embellish her ivory-white neck. The adventurous Baron, Lord Petre, is prepared to use force or fraud to rob her of these locks. The whole of this description shows **Belinda as the leading light of the fashionable world and as a woman whose chief desire is to win admiration**. The manner in which Ariel describes the nature of the calamity which might befall Belinda also shows her superficial nature and her lack of moral scruple. It is not known, says Ariel, whether she will allow her chastity to be violated, or some delicate China-jar will crack; whether she will stain her honour, or her new brocade; whether she will forget her prayers, or miss a masked ball; whether she will lose her heart or her necklace; or whether Heaven has decreed that Shock must fall.

The coach carrying Belinda and her party takes them to Hampton Court. The gallant young men and the beautiful young ladies come here to enjoy the pleasures of the royal court. Their conversation covers a wide range of trivialities, much of it attacking the moral character of various persons: "At every word a reputation dies." We next become acquainted with Belinda's **thirst for fame** which leads her to engage herself in an encounter with two adventurous Knights at the game of Ombre. Her breast expands with the pleasure of an anticipated victory in this contest. Having won, she feels jubilant and her exultant shouting fills the sky. She undoubtedly shows a splendid skill in playing the game of Ombre, but the manner in which she gloats over her victory shows not only her vanity but superficiality of mind. After the game of Ombre, Belinda participates in the ceremony of coffee-drinking. Toilet, gossip, Ombre, and coffee drinking— these occupy much of Belinda's time in the day. She does **not seem to have any intellectual interests** whatever.

For all her **professed purity**, Belinda is found to be **secretly in love** with Baron. When Ariel finds "an earthly lover lurking at her heart", he feels amazed and retires from the scene with a sigh. Ariel realises that he can no longer protect her, because spirits like him can protect only maidens who have pure minds and who have no room in their hearts for earthly lovers. Baron then cuts off a lock of Belinda's hair. Another side of Belinda's personality is exposed. She grows furious. While lamenting the loss of her lock, she deplores the fact that she was so attracted by the pleasures of the court-life. She recalls the omens which she witnessed in the morning and which she ignored. Thrice from her trembling hand the patch-box fell; the China-vessels shook without wind; Poll sat mute, and Shock was most unkind. Not only is the cause of Belinda's **lament trivial**, but the very **lament is hypocritical.** She would not have felt so hurt if, instead of the curl which lent such glory to her head, some other hair had been stolen by the Baron.

The **primary quality** of Belinda is **spiritual shallowness and an incapacity for moral awareness**. She has transformed all spiritual exercises and emblems into a coquette's self-display and self-adoration. Even the Cross, which is a religious symbol, is used as an ornament. And she does all this with a frivolous heedlessness. The part or rather parts, which Belinda plays in the poem, are at once contemptible, ridiculous, endearing, precarious, poignant, and petty. It is difficult even to believe that, in spite of all her attractions, she is a true lady. If she were, she would not act as she does over the clipping of her lock or exercise her spleen to such a vigorous degree. She **lacks the knowledge of the common fate of coquettes** like herself. Even so, her reaction to the rape is, from the point of view of her society, perfectly natural. Baron's act is a rude

breach of the rules of courtship. She is faced now with the necessity of making a much more serious and deliberate decision. Her immediate response had been marked by prudery, hypocrisy, and affectation.

In spite of the accessory elements pointed out above, the fact remains that the poem is chiefly and largely the picture of the life of a petty-minded, pleasure seeking fashionable beauty.

"The Rape of the Lock" as a source of perpetual delight

There is no finer gem than The Rape of the Lock in all the lighter treasures of English fancy. Compared with any other mock-heroic poem in the English language, it shines in pure supremacy for elegance, completeness, point, and playfulness. It diverts us by its mimicry of greatness, and astonishes by the beauty of its parts, and the fairy brightness of its ornaments. It is a jewel of many facets, each shining brilliantly. The poem takes us into an enchanted, brilliant world in which, keeping the Cave of Spleen well aside, almost nothing is dull.

The most striking quality of this poem is its sparkling wit. The poem is in effect a satire upon the fashionable world of the eighteenth century, and more especially upon feminine frivolity. The vanities of the women of the time are exquisitely ridiculed. Their pre-occupation with self-embellishment is satirised in the famous passage which describes Belinda's toilet. Their moral bankruptcy is exposed in the amusing lines in which we are told that, for a lady, staining her new brocade was as disastrous as staining her honour, and losing a necklace was as calamitous as losing her heart. The breaking of a China-vessel or the death of a lap-dog was as great a misfortune for a woman as the death of a husband. Some very amusing satire is to be found in the lines which describe the strange shapes in the Cave of Spleen: "And maids turned bottles, call aloud for corks." Virtue was not a prime consideration.

Almost every aspect of the fashionable society of the time is mocked at by Pope, and the mockery sends us into laughter. Much of the pleasure of this poem results from this mockery. Fun is the key-note of the poem.

Pope also gives us many pictures of the elegance and glitter of that society. These pictures are also a source of delight to the reader. Belinda is a woman of superb beauty and charm. She is certainly an object of mockery in the poem, but she also earns our homage and adoration. She is regarded as the rival of the beams of the sun. She wears a sparkling cross which even Jews and infidels would, kiss. She has a Cleopatra-like variety of appearance and character. Her beauty and charm are emphasised when she gets busy with her toilet. Robed in white, she sees her heavenly reflection in the mirror. Her beauty is greatly enhanced by the various decorative aids which she employs. We are fascinated by her beauty as described in this famous passage dealing with her toilet. Although the hint of satire here also is unmistakable, these lines possess great poetic charm which is a source of much pleasure to us:

Now awful beauty puts on all its arms;
The fair each moment rises in her charms,
Repairs her smiles, awakens every grace,
And calls forth all the wonders of her face;
Sees by degrees a purer blush arise,
And keener lightnings quicken in her eyes.

Belinda's cheerful temperament adds to her attractions. She is not only cheerful herself but "maintains thousands more in equal mirth." At the end of the poem, her beautiful lock is turned into a constellation in the sky, adding "new glory to the shining sphere." We see Belinda in many different lights— as coquette, injured innocent, sweet charmer, society belle, rival of the sun, and murderer of millions. The parts Belinda plays in the elaborate social drama of manners are certainly ridiculous and even contemptible, but they are also endearing. She outshines all her sex in divine attributes and importance. The dazzling personality of Belinda greatly contributes to the appeal of the poem.

Pope ridicules not only the ladies but also the fashionable young men of the time. The Baron's worship of Love is an example of the ridicule. No less amusing is the satire on gallants like Sir Plume, with his amber snuff-box, his spotted cane, and his "unthinking face".

The machinery of the poem is another source of the pleasure which this poem affords. Basically the machinery of the sylphs and gnomes is intended to heighten the mock-epic effect of the poem. But the sylphs have a beauty and charm of their own. The occupations and tasks of the sylphs are described in exquisitely witty lines, often of great poetic beauty. The sylphs illustrate the sensuous richness with which Belinda is surrounded. The myth of the sylphs enables the poet to show his awareness of the absurdities of a point of view which, nevertheless, is charming, delightful, and filled with a real poetry. The sylphs are exquisitely related to traditional beliefs, both trivial and profound. Probably the largest single way in which Pope imparted qualities of splendour and wonder to his actors and actions was through his brilliant adaptation of epic machinery. They really stand for feminine honour, flirtation, courtship, the necessary rivalry of man and woman and it is seen in its essence.

Lastly, It would, however, be wrong to regard this poem as a work of beauty and grace devoid of any substance. Its airy and fanciful character certainly predominates, but it also has a serious moral purpose which cannot be ignored. Dr. Johnson complimented Pope on having put a moral in this poem which may be regarded as a condemnation of the ill-humour, spleen, vanity, and intolerance of women, and a plea for good-humour and a sane, rational approach to things. Clarissa's speech is most vital in this connection. The glories of social position and privilege are, in Clarissa's view, achieved in vain "unless good sense preserves what beauty gains." The best course for women is to make good use of their power and "keep good humour still whatever we lose." The poem is also a condemnation of the mentality of fops and dandies. Certain moral reflections are found scattered in the poem. For instance:

> **O thoughtless mortals ! ever blind to fate,**
> **Too soon dejected, and too soon elate.**

JOHN DONNE, 1572-1631

A contemporary of Marlowe and Shakespeare, Donne (pronounced as "Dun") shares with them the spirit and the quality of the Renaissance. The contradictions of the age are reflected in the career and achievement of Donne. The inconsistency of the Elizabethans is mirrored in the complex personality of Donne, a poet of intellectual ingenuity and theological ingenuousness. It is not difficult to explain the versatility and the varied achievements of the poet, in the light of the age to which he belonged.

Birth, parentage, early life and marriage: - John Donne, born in 1572, was the eldest son of a London iron-merchant. His mother was the sister of John Heywood, the dramatist. After receiving education privately, Donne matriculated at Oxford in 1584. Probably he went to Cambridge for higher education, but obviously he could not take a degree on account of his opposition to the oath of thirty-nine articles. Of the years from 1584 to 1592, we know very little. He was admitted as a law student to Lincoln's Inn in May 1592. Like many young members of the Inns of Court, he was fond of pleasure and company: "Not dissolute but very neat, a great visitor of ladies, a great frequentor of plays, a great writer of conceited verses."

John Donne tells us that during that period, he "of study and play made strange hermaphrodites". During these formative years, Donne studied both law and religion. He also wrote a number of songs, elegies and satires before his twenty-fifth year. There is no doubt that he visited Italy in order to proceed to Jerusalem but prevented from doing so, he passed over into Spain, where he studied the laws, the language and the arts of Spain. His collection of books contained many Spanish writers. The earliest portrait of Donne, dated 1591, bears a Spanish motto. The spirit of Italian life and literature and influence of Spanish philosophers and theologians dominated his early poetry. He also came across other Catholics who, like him, felt terribly the harassment and persecution they were subject to. John Donne wrote of this period: "I had my first breeding and conversation with men of suppressed and afflicted religion (Catholicism), accustomed to the respite of death and hungry of an imagined martyrdom." These were the days of inner conflict. His soul was torn between Catholicism and Anglicanism. Ultimately, by 1597 he must have embraced the Church of England, when he entered the service of Sir Thomas Egerton. But before 1597, Donne enlisted as a volunteer in two combined military and naval expeditions. The Cadiz Expedition of 1556 and Azore Expedition of 1597 show that he was an adherent of the Earl of Essex His. The Storm and The Calm describe the experiences of his voyage. It was during the expedition that he came in contact with Thomas, the eldest son of Sir Thomas Egerton, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal. He served Egerton for four years as Secretary. He would have got promotion and advancement in public service had he not committed the indiscretion of contracting a run-away marriage with Anne More, daughter of Sir George More of Losely and niece of Egerton's second wife. Possibly Donne miscalculated, as he thought this marriage would strengthen his claims to promotion. On the contrary, Egerton dismissed him from service. The reconciliation with More, his father-in-law, saved him from a long imprisonment.

Donne's conversion of Anglicanism:- A word may be said about his conversion to Anglicanism. Brought up among the Catholics in early age, his belief in the old faith struggled against the impact of the Established Church. Donne was no hypocrite; he knew the shortcomings of the Church of Rome; his intellectual spirit detached itself from Catholicism. His conversion to Anglicanism was not due to opportunism or expediency but intellectual persuasion. Even then, in later life he felt, to some extent, a sort of spiritual unrest:

Show me, dear Christ, thy spouse so bright and clear...

Donne's hasty and imprudent marriage meant the loss of a promising and stable public career. The years from 1601 to 1609 were full of fluctuating fortunes, when Donne had to depend on the generosity of his patron, Sir Robert Drury, the Countess of Beford, Lord Hay, Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset, who helped him in different ways. The Pseudo Martyr (1610) shows him definitely on the Anglician side, trying to defend the oath of allegiance.

Two loves of Donne: - Donne had two loves—poetry, the mistress of his youth, and Divinity, the wife of his mature age. Equally remote he stood from the ascetic ideal. He believed in the joy of living and the seduction of poetry. Donne followed the middle path between blind faith and reformation.

To adore or scorn an image, or protest,
May all be bad; doubt wisely; in strange way
To stand inquiring right is not to stray;
To sleep or run wrong is.

Donne's satiric genius found expression in his satire on heresy and on women. In The Progress of the Soul (1601), he traces the progress of the soul of heresy from the fall of Eve to the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The career of Donne entered a prosperous phase by his entering the Ministry of the Church of England in 1615. His steps to the altar, had cost him much misery and anguish. His pursuits were now controversial but devout. His sermons and poems written during this period reflect the complexity of his character, his varied erudition and his alert mind. The letters in verse written to different persons reflect his moods and interests. These metaphysical compliments and hyperboles need not make us forget the intensification of religious feeling and inner experience which found expression in the Holy Sonets. His Divine Poems, likewise, show the conflict of faith and reason, of hope and despair, and the penitence of a soul which has undergone a purgation of emotional experience. And yet the last poems queerly blend harshness with a sonorous harmony.

Some of his poems are in the amorous Cavalier tradition; such is his celebrated song Go and Catch a Falling Star, which avers that no-where lives a woman true and fair. In something of the same tradition is the poem Love's Deity, beginning:

I long to talk with some old lover's ghost
Who died before the god of love was born.

In a somewhat different strain, one more like his religious poems, is A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning. It is for his religious poetry, however, that Donne is most admired. Among the best of these are masterful sonnet Death, with the inspired couplet:

One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And Death shall be no more, Death, thou shah die:

and the powerful A Hymn To God The Father, spun out of amazing puns on the poet's own name: 'When Thou hast done, Thou hast not done....".

Donne—the Dean of St Paul's

In 1619, Donne, the Chaplain, accompanied his friend the Earl of Doncaster to Germany. He was promoted to the post of Dean of St. Paul's in 1621. His sermons attracted large audiences. During his serious sickness he composed a few devotional poems including the hymns Since I am Coming and Wilt thou forgive. Donne felt greatly comforted by the first hymn: "The words of that hymn have restored me to the same thoughts of joy that possessed my soul in my sickness when I composed it". During his second sickness in 1630, he gave orders for his own monument which still stands in St. Paul's. He died in London on 31st March 1631.

Conclusion: - Donne left a deep and pervasive influence on English poetry. The metaphysical lyricists owed a great debt to him. Sometimes, his followers excelled him in happy conceit, passion and paradoxical reasoning. And yet he gave a sincere and passionate quality to the Elizabethan lyric. He interwove argument with poetry. In spite of its intellectual content, his poems attract us with a sense of vision, an intensity of feeling, and a felicity of expression. He is one of those great poets who have left a mark on the history of English poetry. Look at the compliments in verses below:

That never any one could before become,
So great a monarch, in so small a room,
He conquered rebel passions, ruled them so,
As under-spheres by the first Mover go,
Banished so far their working, that we can
But know he had some, for we knew him man.
Then let his last excuse his first extremes,
His age saw vision, though his youth dream'd dreams'
—Sir Lucius Carie

The Age of John Donne

The age of Donne was an age of transition, standing midway between the age of Shakespeare and the Jacobean age (1572-1631). The age of Donne would effectively and substantially cover the first thirty years of the seventeenth century. This age stands midway between the age of Shakespeare-and the age of Milton. There is, however, some over-lapping which cannot be avoided because literary periods or ages cannot be separated chronologically.

It was a period of remarkable literary activity, a sort of prolongation of the Elizabethan age. The revival of learning had influenced not only Italy and Germany but also England. The classics were studied minutely and from a new angle. The re-discovery of the literature and culture of the past-known as humanism-gave the writers a new outlook on life. Life was a gay game and not a sorry penance. The new ideal man was to be a perfect courtier, a perfect soldier, a perfect writer and, above all, a perfect gentleman. For this, he had to undergo comprehensive training and a rigorous discipline.

(A) Historical and Political Perspective

The age of Donne was a period of transition. Many changes in the political, social and economic domains were being effected. Colonial expansion and increase in industry and trade made people materialistic. The study of medieval literature developed the minds of the readers. Though education was not so widespread, the common man spared no opportunity of obtaining knowledge from any source. Medieval beliefs held their ground both in Donne and his contemporaries.

The Reformation was a direct challenge to Rome. Why should Pope be supreme in the matters of religion? Religion, after all, is a personal matter and no dictation should be tolerated from-outside. Nationalism in its wider connotation was responsible not only for a new literature, but also a new faith. The abuses and weaknesses of the Catholic religion were laid bare. The new Church of England came into being. Donne, like some of his contemporaries, felt within himself the conflict of faith. His scepticism, his humanism and his learning made him challenge the faith of his ancestors. The result was that after a good deal of heart-searching and vacillation, Donne embraced the Established Church of England by 1598. But it was not until he was ordained in 1615 that he became a confirmed Anglican.

Peace and prosperity of Queen Elizabeth: - The heritage of Queen Elizabeth, who died in 1603, was one of peace and prosperity. It was also one of centralization. Although her monarchy had not been an absolute one, she delegated her authority wisely, and patriotism was loyalty to the Queen. Religion and politics were closely linked. Elizabeth, as the supreme head of the Church of England, maintained religious tolerance as the Puritan and Catholic minorities strengthened. Elizabethan developments in science were great, and included new discoveries in navigation, astronomy, cartography and medicine. England came to accept the Copemican view of the earth instead of the Ptolemic system.

James I and disillusionment: - James I, formerly James V of the Scotland, took over the English throne in 1603 at the death of Elizabeth. Though widely hailed at first, Englishmen rapidly became disillusioned with him. James did not understand the people he ruled, nor the nature of his office. He allowed his favourites and the Spanish government to influence him; his failure to recognize the rising power of Parliament, his reversion to rigid views of absolute monarchy, and the luxury and the corruption of his rule, and religious schisms widened and Puritanism and Roman Catholicism became more militant in their fight against the established Church of England. Political strife, intermingled with growing religious dissension, was brought to a head by his insistence on the oneness of Church and state.

Pessimism and optimism in the age of Donne: - In such circumstances, the spirit of the age became one of doubt and scientific analysis. The stretching of space in astronomy and geography, and the recognition of the great, unexplored territories in an expanding world threw man's place in the scheme of things into doubt. Both pessimism and optimism were offshoots of this need and quest for authority, the former as a natural manifestation of man's insecurity in a world increasingly governed by scientific law indifferent to man's position in the universe; the latter, as a natural assertion of man's greater control of his environment and a better life. It was an age of psychology, of biography, and of self-analysis at all social levels, as the works of Izaak Walton, John Donne, or Robert Burton show; it was also an age of scientific materialism as the works of Bacon and Newton show.

The conflict between the Church and the State: - The conflict between Church and State led men to wonder which was superior, with the answer resting in man's own conscience. The questioning of civil authority, of where true sovereignty should lie, made it possible to rebel against a king. The growth of the middle class, the rise of political parties, and the estrangement of the Puritans led to a long civil war. Charles I, who began his rule in 1629, following the death of his father, was beheaded in 1649, whereupon a Commonwealth was begun by the Puritans, leading to the eventual military dictatorship of Oliver Cromwell, who, nevertheless, brought some measure of peace and stability to a turbulent England. Yet the idea of a military dictatorship was abhorrent to Englishmen and upon Cromwell's death in 1660, Parliament invited Charles II, in exile in France, to return to England and resume the rule of the Stuart kings.

The discovery of the physical world in the age of Donne: - The discovery of the physical world was another aspect of this age. Columbus discovered America and Vasco de Gama found a new route to India. The English ships sailed round the world and revealed the riches and the glories of ancient but hitherto-unknown lands. Donne was intensely interested in the extension of the limits and the knowledge of the physical world. His comparisons, references and allusions to different lands and the maps of new regions show conclusively that he was inspired by the wonder and the expanding horizon of the world he lived in:

Let sea-discoverers to new worlds have gone
Let maps to other, worlds on worlds have shown.
Let us possess one world, each hath one, and is one.

The creative faculty of writers was encouraged to imagine new worlds and islands on the basis of the new discoveries.

(B) Social, Economic and Intellectual Perspective

The seventeenth century was fundamentally an age of transition and revolution. The old medieval world of ideas was undergoing rapid transformation. But there was an element of underlying continuity of tradition. So, one of the basic features of this age is the presence of a tension between the old and the new. The medieval thinker was religious. His outlook on science was theological and metaphysical. He was interested in the origin and the final end of man.

The approach of the new science was quite different The scientific thinker was interested in the world itself. He expressed a concern with the sequence of phenomena. He, therefore, appealed to observation and experiment. Thus, there was far-reaching repercussion on the creative minds of the age. For example, John Donne indicated the scepticism of the conflict between the old and the new. In his poem, The First Anniversary, he indicated that the earth was shaking under his feet. His central problem was the relation of man to God. Previous explanations of this problem had already been displaced by the new trend in scientific thinking. The dichotomy between religion and science, reason and faith, in no small measure affected the intellectual altitude of the seventeenth century. Jacobean pessimism had its origin in this dichotomy. If we consider the representative minds of the seventeenth century, we might say that "normality consists in incongruity".

In domains of human experience, we note the medieval and the Renaissance attitude co-existing in the seventeenth century. This is especially evident in many of the attitudes of the seventeenth century life. The Petrarchans praised love and in the Elizabethan lyrics we find the influence of Petrarch. But the medieval attitude to love was ambiguous. On the one hand, it condemned all love of created beings; on the other hand, love had to be tolerated as a necessary passion. Courtly love represented this evil aspect of love. But the attitude of the church was modified partly by Neo-Platonism. The Neo-Platonics were acutely aware of the love of God, through the world of the senses. They saw in human love a reflection of the divine love. According to Neo-Platonics, love held the world together.

Typical Renaissance poets apply these philosophical conceptions to the realm of erotic love. Beauty was the divine idea in the material object and love was the perception of that idea. The Renaissance Neo-Platonist found ideal truth in the beauty of his mistress and he could transcend into higher things by his love for her. The lover loved with a religious fervour. Thus, in the period of Renaissance, Neo-Platonism gavel to the conception of love a totally different significance than the one which medieval religion had given to it. An attitude of lyrical irony towards this new significance, is the essence of Donne's love lyrics. Donne expresses both attitudes to love. In fact, John Donne sums up the intellectual situation of the seventeenth century in his poem The First Anniversary:

And new philosophy calls all in doubt.
The element of fire is put out;
The sun is lost, and the earth, and no man's wit
Can well direct him when to look for it.

And freely men confess that this world is spent
When in the planets and the firmament
They seek so many new; they seek that this
Is crumbled out again to his atomies,
It is all in pieces, all coherence gone;
All just supply and all relation.

Empirical science: - Empirical science was a new development bringing about rapid changes in the sphere of science. There was unfettered exercise of reason and judgement. Copernicus gave a new view of astronomy. His views were further supported by Galileo with his telescope. This development gave a rude set-back to the old Ptolemic cosmology which changed the whole mental horizon of Europe. Its pressure did not attract so far literary figures of the day. Donne did not refute the old Ptolemic cosmology.

Habit of reading: - Habit of reading was increasing gradually in this period. There was considerable increase in the number of books printed annually. But many of the books were yet circulated in manuscripts among the authors, friends and acquaintances. The poems of Donne and Herbert were read chiefly in manuscript. But Browne's Religio Medici was printed. The writers of this period reveal an astonishing versatility and range of knowledge.

University education: - There was no change in the pattern of University education. The under-graduates used to study the traditional subjects like logic and metaphysics. The aim of education was for imparting theological knowledge and thus producing priests. There were theological contro-versies at Cambridge.

(C) Literary Perspective

Donne, the founder of a new school of poetry: - A wave of romance swept the minds of creative writers. There was a spirit of adventure in literary output, in the efforts to create new literary forms and metres, the desire to reject the old traditions and conventions of theme and expression in literary writing. Donne was wholly unconventional in theme and expression. His independent spirit refused to submit to Petrarchan convention and Platonic idealism. His love poetry is fresh and original; he goes deep into his heart and dissects his own Elizabethan feelings. Donne's revolt against the sweetness and harmony of verse is illustrated by the ruggedness and dissonance of his lines. He went to the colloquial, to that which was nearest to the speech of men, for revealing his feelings. And yet he did not abandon the Elizabethan conceit. He gave it a new form, a new vitality. He made his poetry dramatic and rhetorical. For example, he asserted:

For God's sake, hold your tongue and let me love.

Donne is original not only in the matter of love but also in the concept of woman. Except his beloved, all women are false and faithless:

Nor can you more judge woman's thoughts by tears,
Than by her shadow, what she wears,
O perverse sex, where none is true but she,
Who's therefore true, because her truth kills me.

Probably in his early youth, he had known many women inside out. He knew love as sex attraction, as an impulse for physical gratifica-tion. He boasted of his conquests and ridiculed jealous husbands in his poems. But at the same time, he was not oblivious of love as the marriage of true minds, as the merging of one soul into another. His

passionate pleas to his beloved for union in Love's infiniteness is a case in point. True love is neither subject to time nor decay :

All other things to their destruction draw,
Only our love hath no decay.

Conclusion: - Every great writer is both a creature and creator of the age. In certain aspects, he is influenced by his times; in certain ways, he gives a new ideal to the age in which, he is born. Donne reflects in his poetry the aspiration, the adventure and the conflict of the age. He reacts to the humanism and the religious fervour of his time. He also gives a new direction to the literary activity of his age. He, in a sense, founded—the "metaphysical lyric" which was practised by a score of writers. He also set up new traditions in versification. By and large, Donne must be regarded as an original poet, a poet who gave much more than what he borrowed from his age:

So the fire,
That fills with spirit and heat the Delphic quire,
Which kindled first by the Promethean breath,
Glow'd here a while, lies quench't now in the death;
The Muse's garden with Pedantic weeds
O'rspred was purg'd by thee; the lazie seeds
Of servile imitation thrown away;
And fresh invention planted, thou did pay
The debts of our penurious bankrupt age.

An intellectuality of temper made Donne grapple with his sensations and emotions and transform them into intellectual moulds. In this lies his unification of sensibility, otherwise his thinking is unsystematic. There is an indiscriminate mixing of the old and the new, and he arrives at no synthesis as scientific thinker, although it is with him that the new temper of the Renaissance culture, and the scientific temper, enters poetry. Of all the poets of the Jacobean age, he most successfully articulated the scientific ideas of his time. It was an age of intellectual and cultural transition and Donne was analytically concerned with the forces shaping contemporary thought and sensibility. It was this duality of his mind which, more than anything else, made him the founder of a new school of poetry.

The English Metaphysical Poets and Poetry

Introduction: - The term "metaphysical" as applied to Donne and his followers is, more or less, a misnomer. However, it has come to stick. It was Dryden who first applied the term in relation to Donne's poetry. "He affected," complained Dryden, "the metaphysics, not only in his satires but in his amorous verses." Dr. Johnson borrowed Dryden's ideas, and in his "Life of Cowley" called Cowley a poet of the metaphysical school of Donne.

He derided Cowley's pedantic exhibition of his learning and vocabulary in his poems. But the exhibition of their learning was only one of the many characteristics of the metaphysical poets. Their love of daring imagery, enigmatic expression, and a peculiar sensualism uneasily wedded to a mystical conception of religion, their intellectualism and taste for the expression of novel ideas in a novel manner, were some other qualities. The term "metaphysical" denotes, according to Saintsbury, "the habit, common to this school of poets, of always seeking to express something after, something behind, the simple, obvious first sense and suggestion of a subject." In this way Donne and his followers strike a note of variance from Spenser and the Spenserians and Elizabethan poetry in general.

Composite Quality: - According to Grierson, metaphysical poetry, in the full sense of the term, is a poetry which like Dante's Divine Comedy and Goethe's Faust "has been inspired by a philosophical conception of the universe and of the role assigned to the human spirit in the great drama of existence." It arises when the physical world loses its stability, and the people lose faith in the orthodox patterns of thought and belief. At such times sensitive poets turn their attention inwards, and through self-analysis aim at better understanding of themselves, their situation in the world, and their relation to a philosophic or idealised "otherworld." The age in which Donne lived witnessed a gradual crumbling ?: the old order of things, the disturbing progress of science, and the scepticism which went with it. "The new philosophy", said Donne, "calls all in doubt". The realisation that the earth is not the centre of the universe, and the inference that man is not the greatest of all :reatures, dealt a rude blow to the orthodox Christian complacency. Donne's search for some principle of coherence in a world of chaos led ~.im to the reconciliation of opposites-resolution of doubts and the :-.tegration of the world of reality with the world of the imagination, of sensual cynicism and highflown mysticism, and even of carnal and spiritual longings. This led him surely to the employment of what have been dubbed "metaphysical conceits" and an occasional display of rot-of-the-way, recondite learning. The subtler points of his feeling found outlet quite often in obscure and enigmatic expression which has been the delight of some, and the despair of many readers. In spite of Donne's obscurity and persistent intellectualism it may be said to his credit as a love poet that he imported into English love poetry a vigorous element of hard realism (which sometimes amounts even to cynicism). In this respect he scored a big advance over Spenser and his school who glorified Platonic love and celebrated almost unearthly and highly conventional mistresses of the Petrarchan tradition. Donne's "ead was accepted by a large number of poets succeeding him. Among them may be mentioned Herbert, Vaughan, Carew, Crashaw, Trasherne, early Milton, and Cowley. These poets are often classed together as "metaphysicals" or "metaphysical poets". Apart from them the influence of Donne and his school may also be discerned in the work of a sizable number of poets who flourished in the Caroline period. In fact the metaphysical vein was in evidence as a major current in the stream of English poetry till the age of Dryden, when it gave place to nee-classicism ushered in by him.

Now let us consider some salient characteristics of the poetry of the metaphysical school.

"Undissociated Sensibility": - The most important characteristic of the metaphysicals is their possession of, or striving after, what T. S. Eliot calls "undissociated sensibility" (the combination of thought and feeling) which Milton was to "split" later. However, Prof. L. C. Knights in his essay "Bacon and the Dissociation of Sensibility" in Explorations puts forward the view that sensibility came to be dissociated much earlier by Bacon. The metaphysicals are "constantly amalgamating disparate experiences" and forming new wholes out of materials so diverse as "reading Spinoza, falling in love and smelling the dinner cooking." Donne has the knack of presenting together different objects which have between them a quite remote though undeniable similarity. He connects the abstract with the concrete, the remote with the near, the physical with the spiritual, and the sublime with the commonplace and sometimes during moments of the most serious meditation breaks into a note of sardonic humour or pathetic frivolity. This juxtaposition and, sometimes, interfusion of apparently dissimilar or exactly opposite objects often pleasantly thrills us into a new perception of reality. And Donne, says Hayward, is a "thrilling poet." Donne wrote :

Oh, to vex me, contraries meet in one,
Inconstancy naturally hath begot

A constant habit.

These "contraries" meeting in Donne's poetry "vex" not only the poet but also, sometimes, his readers. His successors handled these contraries rather crudely, with very unpleasant effects.

Metaphysical Wit and Conceits: - Dr. Johnson was the first critic to point out the tendency of the metaphysical poets to yoke radically different images forcibly together. This tendency arose, according to T. S. Eliot, from their undissociated sensibility. But it may be objected that Donne and his followers do not really seem to be serious and spontaneous in the tendency noted by Dr. Johnson. When Donne compares a pair of lovers to a pair of compasses, is he not speaking with his tongue in cheek? Such a tendency is a true manifest ation of the metaphysical wit. Hobbes in his Leviathan defined wit as the capability to find out similarities between things which may look very dissimilar. When Carew said that Donne

ruled, as he thought fit,
The universal monarchy of wit

He was most probably referring to wit in this sense. All the metaphysicals have an incorrigible aptitude for witty comparisons, juxtaposition, and imagery, and what may be called "the metaphysical conceit"'....some strained or far-fetched comparison or figure of speech. Dr. Johnson defined the wit of the metaphysicals as a kind of discordia concors, combination of dissimilar images. Let us consider some instances of this discordia concors. In Donne's Twicknam Garden we meet with the expression "spider love." Now, we are used to splendid, decorative, or moving images in connexion with the subject of love; but the word "spider" is quite contrary to our expectation. In the same poem the lover's tears are called the wine of love. The poet invites lovers to come equipped with phials to collect his tears! In another poem we have the very quaint line:

A holy, thirsty dropsy melts me yet.

The word "holy" is highly serious, "thirsty" stands for a simple revsical need, and "dropsy"...the name of a disease...has a clinical tKcTig. Again, consider the lines :

Go tell court-huntsmen, that the king will ride;
Call country 'ants to harvest offices.
See how the king and country ants are juxtaposed.

Learnedness: - The poetry of the metaphysicals has the impress of very vast learning. Whatever be the demerits of the metaphysical poets, even Dr. "rhnson had to admit that for writing such poetry it was at least -ecessary to think and read. However, it may be said that this poetry is r-ain-sprung, mot heart-felt. It is intellectual and witty to a fault. Dr. "onnson noted, that the metaphysical poets sometimes drew their conceits from "recesses of learning not very much frequented by common readers rf poetry." Learning is an asset for a poet. Our quarrel with the -netaphysicals is not that they are learned but that, sometimes, they show off their learning just to impress the reader. An imaginative and learned writer, says Edmund Blunden, "calls for annotation, but the object of his difficult a'llusions is to give shape to his ideas of the world, of the soul, not to de/cide matters of astronomy, physics, geography and natural history/' Many of Donne's followers do not always prove so "imagin ative."

Paradoxical Ratiocination: - According to Grierson, the hallmarks of metapjhysical poetry are pftssionate feeling and paradoxical ratiocination. The same critic observes that the metaphysicals "exhibited deductive reasoning carried to a high pitch." Too often does Donne state at the beginning of a poem a hopelessly insupportable proposition, which he defends soon after. Consider the poem "The Indifferent" which opens as below:

I can love both fair and brown.

Whatever qualities a woman has are made into so many reasons for loving her! Again, note this in his poem "The Broken Heart":

He is stark mad, who ever says,
That he hath been in love one hour.

With his tremendous ratiocinative ability Donne defends this proposition. In "The Flea" the proposition presented to his mistress is:

This flea is you and I, and this
Our marriage bed. and marriage temple is.

It seems an unpromising subject, but there are twenty-seven lines of packed argument to drive it home. This excessive intellectualism not unoften makes for obscurity. See, for instance, the following clever lines:

You that are she and you, that's doubk she,
In her dead face half of yourself shall see.

Commenting on these, Tucker Brooke says: 'Tte meaning can be made out, but the satisfaction of his mental ingenuity in so doing is the only reward the reader will receive." Lucas compla'ns: "Donne treats poetry as a trapeze for mental frisks." Clay Hunt disapproves such "pyrotechnics of wit."

Diction and Versification: - In style and versification Donne and his followeis reacted against the cloying sweetness and harmony of the school of Spenser. The metaphysicals deliberately avoided conventional poetic expressions as they had lost their meaning through O'eruse. According to Wordsworth the language of poetry should "the natural language of impassioned feeling." The metaphysicals employed very "prosaic" words as if they were scientists or shopkeepers. The result is that in'their work we often stumble against ragged and unpoetic words we seldom expect in serious poetry. The versification of the metaphysicals is also, like their diction, coirse and jerky in contrast to the honeyed smoothness of much of Elizabethan poetry. Their revolt, according to Grierson, is due to two motives:

(i) The desire to startle; and
(ii) The desire to approximate poetic to direct, unconventional colloquial speech.

Donne could "sing" whenever he liked, but often he seems to be bending and cracking the metrical pattern to the rhetoric of direct and vehement utterance." He very often throws all prosodic considerations to the winds and distributes his stresses not according to the metre but according to the sense. "In his work", say Tucker Brooke, "the Pierian flood is no clear spring: it is more like a Yellowstone geyser: overheated, turbid, explosive, and far from pure." Donne and other metaphysicals' metrical infelicity has been adversely commented upon by all.-But, to be fair, we may say that Donne writes as one who will say what he has to say without regard to the conventions of poetic diction or smooth verse; but what he has to say is subtle and surprising and so are often the metrical effects with which it is presented.

Religious Poetry of the Metaphysicals: - Most of the metaphysical poets wrote on religion. Indeed, we owe most of our good religious poetry to them. It must be emphasised that all the metaphysicals do not write exactly alike. All of them are strongly marked individuals. The English metaphysical poetry from Donne to Traherne should be treated not as a type but as a movement. Donne's religious poetry has all the qualities we have detailed above. Herbert followed Donne in most respects. He has been called the "saint" of the metaphysical school. His approach to God and Christ is full of, what

Edmund Gosse calls, "intimate tenderness." But he does use the imagery and conceits of the Donnean type. His Temple was the most popular Anglican poem of the age. Herbert had two distinguished followers— Vaughan and Crashaw. They acknowledged their debts to Herbert, but they had tempers fundamentally their own. Vaughan is temperamentally a mystic though he uses conceits after the manner of Donne and Herbert-conceits such as "stars shut up shop" when the arrival of the morning is described. He is at his best while dealing with such themes as childhood, communion with nature, and eternity. His thoughts concerning childhood, in his poem The Retreat are largely echoed by Wordsworth in the Ode on the Intimations of Immortality in Childhood. His poem The World has a daring image:

I saw eternity the other night,
Like a great ring of pure and endless light.
All calm as it was bright.

Crashaw's poetry is uneven work. Whereas Herbert is a gentle stream, Crashaw is an impetuous torrent. He is quite undisciplined and given to moods of religious exaltation and excitement. He has a taste for daiing images and metaphysical conceits. The eyes of Mary Magdalene in The Weeper are described as

Two walking baths; two weeping motions;
Potable and compendious oceans.

"He sings", says a critic, "the raptures of soul visited by divine love in terms as concrete and glowing as any human lover has ever used to celebrate an earthly passion." Herein, again, his debt to Donne is discernible. It is the mystic vein in Thomas Traherne which tempts a critic to classify him with Vaughan among the metaphysicals. Traherne is not a great poet, however. He contemplates the beauty of God's universe till it stirs in him a mystic response. Like Vaughan he idealises childhood as the age in which a human being is nearest God. Crashaw was the only Roman Catholic among the metaphysical poets; and Andrew Marvell, Milton's secretary, the only Puritan. Unlike most Puritans. Marvell was not a hide-bound fanatic; rather he appears in the colour of a Christian humanist dating from the Elizabethan age. He as a poet has been assigned a quite high status by the school o modern critics led by F. R. Leavis. But in him we find English poetry already on its way to the neo-classicism of Dryden's school. His greatest poem "To His Coy Mistress" is secular (and not religious) in theme and execution. He urges his "coy" mistress to shed her coyness and make the best of the opportunity granted by Time to them to make merry.

Had we but world enough, and time,
This coyness, lady, were no crime...
But at my back I always hear
Time's winged chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.

The following lines have tragic pathos wedded to a metaphysical conceit:

The grave's a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace.

The Contribution of the Metaphysical Poets to English Literature:

(1) The metaphysical poets have given to the English language its best religious poetry. The moods of incisive introspection and mysticism could best be expressed not through commonplace, conventional poetic images and language but unconventional and bold imagery which would jolt the mind and spirit of the reader into an intimate rapport

with the mood of the poet. Herbert, Donne, Vaughan, Crashaw, and Traherne are the most important among the religious English poets of all ages.

(2) In the field of love poetry, too, the contribution of the metaphysicals is considerable and quite important from the historical point of view. When Donne appeared on the stage, Spenser and his followers were following the Petrarchan tradition of highly sentimental and idealised love poetry which had not much to do with reality. Donne demolished this claptrap and started a vein of highly realistic, frankly sensual, and sometimes, downright cynical, amatory verse. He was critical of the Elizabethan sonneteers and lyricists who put their mistresses, real or imaginary, on the pedestal of a deity, and pretended to woo them as their "servants,"' dying or living in accordance with their moods of rejection or acceptance of their supplications. Donne was frank enough.

Love's not so pure and abstract as they use
To say which have no mistress but their Muse.
Love sometimes would contemplate, sometimes do

(3) Even in the ruggedness and occasional vulgarity of their r-ction and versification the metaphysical did some service to English poetry in that they made the poets realise that the "smoothness of rrmbers" alone does not make for great poetry. What was needed was a hard core of sense and deft handling of experience related to the poet himself who reserved for himself the liberty to employ whatever diction and style he thought was eminently suitable for his purpose. After Donne and his followers the mere music of poetry could not capture for it any appreciative audience.

(4) The intellectualism of the metaphysical poetry and the compositeness of its imagery, and even the crabbed nature of its style, secured for it a continuous stream of readers from generation to generation. In the modern times all these qualities appear agreeable to a large number of readers. The modern poets, particularly T. S. Eliot, living in an age of crumbling values (like the age of Donne), have found a guide and a source of inspiration in Donne. It is not surprising, then, that in the modern critical canon Donne is rated as one of the best English poets.

John Donne: a love poet

Donne was the first English poet to challenge and break the supremacy of Petrarchan tradition. Though at times he adopts the Petrarchan devices, yet his imagery and rhythm, texture and colour of his love poetry is different. There are three distinct strains of his love poetry – Cynical, Platonic and Conjugal love.

Giving an allusion to Donne's originality as the poet of love, Grierson makes the following observation: "His genius temperament and learning gave a certain qualities to his love poems … which arrest our attention immediately. His love poems, for instance, do have a power which is at once realistic and distracting."

Donne's greatness as a love-poet arises from the fact that this poetry covers a wider range of emotions than that of any previous poet. His poetry is not bookish but is rooted in his personal experiences. Is love experience were wide and varied and so is the emotional range of his love-poetry. He had love affairs with a number of women. Some of them were lasting and permanent, other were only of a short duration.

Donne is quite original in presenting the love situations and moods. The "experience of love" must produce a "sense of connection" in both the lovers. This "sense of connection" must be based on equal urge and longing on both the sides.

"The room of love" must be shared equally by the two partners.

Donne magnifies the ideal of "Sense of connection" into the physical fulfillment of love.

"My face in thine eyes thine in mime appears"

This aspect of love helps him in the virtual analysis of the experience of love. Donne was a shrewd observer who had first hand knowledge of "love and related affairs. That is why in almost all his poems, he has a deep insight.

His love as expressed in his poetry was based not on conventions but on his own experiences. He experienced all phase of love – platonic, sensuous, serene, cynical, conjugal, illicit, lusty, picturesque and sensual. He could also be grotesque blending thought with passion.

Another peculiar quality of Donne's love lyrics is its "metaphysical strain". His poems are sensuous and fantastic. Donne's metaphysical strain made his reader confused his sincerity.

Donne's genius temperament and learning gave to his love poems power and fascination. There is a depth and rang of feeling unknown to the majority of Elizabethan poets. Donne's poetry is startlingly unconventional even when he dallies, half ironically, with the hyperboles of petrarch.

Donne is realistic not an idealistic. He knows the weakness of Flesh, the pleasure of sex, the joy of secret meeting. However he tries to establish a relationship between the body and the soul. Donne is very realistic poet.

Grierson distinguished three distinct strains in it. First there is the cynical strain. Secondly, there is the strain f conjugal love to be noticed in poems like "valediction: forbidding mourning". Thirdly, there is platonic strain. The platonic strain is to b found in poems like "Twicknam Garden", "The Funeral", "The Blossoms", and "The Primroses". These poems were probably addressed to the high-born lady friends. Towards them he adopts the helpless pose of flirtations and in high platonic vein boasts that:

Different of sex no more we know
Than our Guardian Anglles doe

In between the cynical realistic strain and the highest spiritual strain, there are a number of poems which show an endless variety of mood and tone. Thus thee are poems in which the tone is harsh, others which are coarse and brutal, still other in which he holds out a making threat to his faithless mistress and still others in which he is in a reflective mood. More often that not, a number of strains and moods are mixed up in the same poem. This makes Donne as a love poet singularly, original, unconventional and realistic.

Whatever may be the tone or mood of a particular poem, it is always an expression of some personal experience and is, therefore, presented with remarkable force, sincerity and seriousness. Each poem deals with a love situation which is intellectually analyzed with the skill of an experienced lawyer.

Hence the difficult nature of his poetry and the charge of obscurity have been brought against him. The difficulty of the readers is further increased by the extreme condensation and destiny of Donne's poetry.

The fantastic nature of the metaphysical conceits and poetry would become clear even we examine a few examples. In "Valediction: Forbidden Mourning" true lovers now parted are likened to the legs of a compass. The image is elaborated at length. The lovers are spiritually one, just as the head of the compass is one even when the legs are apart. One leg remains fixed and the other moves round it. The lover cannot forget the

beloved even when separated from her. The two loves meet together in the end just as the two legs of the compass are together again, as soon as circle has been drawn.

At other times, he uses equally extravagated hyperboles. For example, he mistakes his beloved to an angel, for to imagine her less than an angle would be profanity.

In Donne's poetry, there is always an "intellectual analysis" of emotion. Like a clever lawyer, Donne gives arguments after arguments in support of his points of view. Thus in "Valediction: Forbidden Mourning" he proves that true lovers need not mourn at the time of parting. In "Canonization" he establishes that lovers are saints of love and in "The Blossome" he argues against the petrarchan love tradition. In all this Donne is a realistic love poet.

John Donne as a metaphysical poet

Metaphysical poetry, in an etymological sense, is poetry on subjects which exist beyond the physical world. In other words, it is a type of poetry dealing with abstract or philosophical subjects such as love, religion, God, beauty, faith and so on. But in reality the poetry which comprises the ideas or aspects that – physical love leading to spiritual union or religious, argumentative presentation of emotion, terseness of expression, use of conceit and wit in profusion, skillful use of colloquial language instead of Elizabethan lucid diction with the abrupt opening can be considered to be metaphysical. Originally the term 'Metaphysical Poetry' was coined by John Dryden and later popularised by Samuel Johnson and the features of the school which unite the various authors are quite numerous. As well as making widespread use of conceit, paradox and punning, the metaphysical poets drew their imagery from all sources of knowledge particularly from science, theology, geography and philosophy. However, John Donne is the founder of the school of metaphysical poetry and the other practitioners of the type of poetry are Crashaw, Cowley, Denham, Davenant, Herbert, Marvell, Vaughan and Waller.

The most striking quality of Donne's poetry is the use of metaphysical conceit which is a figure of speech in which two far-fetched objects or images of very different nature are compared. It surprises its readers by its ingenious discovery and delights them by its intellectual quality. Such conceits are available in his poetry. Such a famous conceit occurs in the poem titled "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning". The conceit reads as:

> **"If they be two, they are two so**
> **A stiff twin compasses are two;**
> **They soul, the fixed foot, makes no show**
> **To move, but doth, if th' other do."**

Here in the poem the two lovers are compared to the two feet of a compass. The lover is compared to the moving foot and the beloved to the fixed foot consecutively to show the ideal relationship between them. It is made clear that in this relationship the woman's part is passive and her place is in the home, while the man's duty is to move in the world of affairs. She stays in the centre apparently unmoving, but certainly as the outer foot moves around describing the circle, the inner foot moves too, revolving on the point which is the centre. The two, in fact, move in harmony and neither is unaffected by the movement of the other. At first sight such a comparison seems to be impossible but after the discovery of the underlying meaning it delights the readers.

Another leading feature of Donne's poetry is his dramatic presentation that arrests the attention of the readers very quickly. Like other famous poets, Donne has the capacity of opening a poem abruptly adding a dramatic quality to the poem. As we find such abruptness in opening the poem "The Canonization". The line goes as:

"For God's sake hold your tongue, and let me love,
Or chide my palsy, or my gout,"

Upon reading or hearing those opening lines, we can easily understand that the poem begins somewhat in the middle of a conversation. Now the more we advance, the more clear it becomes that why the speaker of the poem makes such a request to the unidentified listener.

Closely related to the dramatic directness and abruptness of opening is Donne's dexterous use of colloquial speech. This dramatic quality is strengthened by its colloquial tone. In the song: "Go and Catch a Falling Star" we can trace such a quality:

"Go, and catch a falling star,
Get with child a mandrake root,"

On perusing the two lines we will see that like many other poems Donne has employed colloquial language to make the poem more lifelike. From the lines it is clear that a conversation is going on between two people.

Through all the love poems of Donne, there runs a belief that physical passion is a good thing and he recognises the claim of body side by side with the souls. His love poems enhance its attraction and novelty by blending physical, spiritual and mystical love. Although there is a complexity in the poem, "The Ecstasy" Donne deals twin aspects of love - physical and spiritual; love here is concretised through physical enjoyment of sex and then turns in its pure essence, spiritual. The setting of the two lovers provides the physical closeness by their love is enriched by the mutual understanding of their souls and like heavenly beings that influence the actions of men through manifestation. The soul must express themselves through the bodies. The greatness of the poem lies in reconciling the opposites – physical love and spiritual love, the physical aspects of love must precede the spiritual union. Donne's poetry lies far reconciling dichotomy between psychical and spiritual shifting quickly from the physical to the spiritual fashion.

"The Sun Rising" is another poem illustrating the peculiar blend of passion and thought, feeling and ratiocination. The delight of satisfied love is the feeling in the poem, but it is expressed in intellectual terms and not merely in an emotional tone. How well the fusion of feeling and thought is expressed in the finality of:

"She is all States, and all Princes, I
Nothing else is."

Passion is conveyed in images which are erudite, logical and of an intellectual nature. In the poem, we again see Donne's ratiocinative style, reasoning step by step towards his conclusion, which in this case, is that love is self-sufficient and unaffected by outside force.

Terseness is another characteristic of all the metaphysical poets. It is true in the case of Donne in particular. And the use of such terseness results in obscurity. Such compactness is traceable in "Go and Catch a Falling Star".

"No where
Lives a woman true, and fair."

In the compact idea Donne wants to show that just as it is impossible to catch a falling star in the sky, so a woman with both honesty and fairness is rare to find out as they first seem to be honest but later they are found to be different.

In addition to that, the poems "The Canonization", "Twicknam Garden", "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning", "Go and Catch a Falling Star" and "The Sun Rising" in one or other

way deal with the abstract idea which is most dominating feature of the metaphysical poetry and is a must for this type of poetry.

Donne was the greatest of the metaphysical poets. In some of their poems he was equalled by Vaughan and Marvell and in religious poetry by Herbert. But the body of his work is poetry of a quality which, when compared with that of any other of these poets, is unsurpassed. When his images are understood in their function of communicating a state of mind, and his ideas in their power to give expression to emotion, Donne's poetry is appreciated for its wit, beauty and perception. In conclusion, considering all the characteristics of Donne's poetry as discussed above, Donne can be regarded as a true metaphysical poet. Although he was considered a minor poet till the 20th century, he is regarded as one of the major English poets by T.S. Eliot and other major modern poets.

Conceit in Donne's poetry

Many of John Donne's poems contain metaphysical conceits and intellectual reasoning to build a deeper understanding of the speaker's emotional state. A conceit can be defined as an extended, unconventional metaphor between objects that appear to be unrelated. Metaphysical conceit is a highly ingenious kind of conceit widely used by the metaphysical poets. It often exploits verbal logic to the point of the grotesque and sometimes creates such extravagant turns on meaning that they become absurd. The metaphysical conceit is characteristic of seventeenth century writers influence by John Donne, and became popular again in this century after the revival of the metaphysical poets. However, Donne is exceptionally good at creating unusual unions between different elements in order to illustrate his point and form a persuasive argument in his poems.

By using metaphysical conceits in "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning", Donne attempts to convince his beloved (presumably his wife) that parting is a positive experience which should not be looked upon with sadness. In the first stanza, Donne compares the speaker's departure to the mild death of virtuous men who pass on so peacefully that their loved ones find it difficult to detect the exact moment of their death. Their separation must be a calm transition like this form of death which Donne describes. The poet writes,

> **"Let us melt, and make no noise"**

Then we find another example of conceit which was not found in any poems of any poets before. Here he compares the two lovers to the pair of legs of compass. Like the compass they have one central point (love) and two sides (bodies) which note in a circle. Here he says,

> **"If they be two, they are two so**
> **As stiff twin compasses are two,**
> **Thy soule the fix foot, makes no show**
> **To move, but doth, if the 'other doe"**

Similarly, in the poem, "The Good-Morrow", we find some startling and shocking or fantastic conceits which had never before found. Here he says, the lover is a whole world to his beloved and she is a whole world to him, not only that they are two better hemispheres who constitute the whole world. Here the poet says,

> **"Where can we finde two better hemispheres,**
> **Without sharpe North, without declining West?"**

Again he says that as the four elements, earth, air, fire and water were supposed to combine to form new substance, so two souls mix to form a new unity. The strength and

durability of this new unit is dependent upon how well the elements of the two souls are balanced, as we see from these lines from The Good-Morrow:

> **What ever dyes, was not mixt equally;**
> **It our two loves be one, or, thou and I**
> **Love so alike, that none doe slacken, none can die.**

In the poem "The sunne Rising" there are a lot of conceits in almost every stanza. The poet says that the lover can eclipse and cloud the sun with a wink . He says,

> **"I could eclipse and cloud them with a winke"**

Again he says that the beloved lying in the bed by the lover's side is to his both west and East Indies; the beloved is all states and the lover is all princes. He says,

> **She's all states, and all Princes, I,**
> **Nothing else is"**

In the poem, "The Canonization", we find the use of conceit. Organic imagery is a strong point of this poem. In the second stanza, the poet says,

> **"Alas, alas. who's injur'd by my love?**
> **What merchant's ships have my sighs drown'd?"**

The poet assumes that a lover. ship have the power to drown ships, that his tears may flood the grounds, that his "colds" may bring about the season of winter, and that his "heats" may bed to the list of deaths by plague. (These are all fantastic hyperboles. The poet is, of course, mocking at the Petrarchan exaggeration). Then he says,

> **"We' are Tapers too and at our own cost die"**

The beloved is one fly, the lover is another fly. And they are tapers too. In then are to be found the Eagle and the Dove. They provide a clue to the riddle of the phoenix because they are one representing both sexes. These are all fantastic conceits.

In the poem "The Extasie", we find conceits. Here he says that the souls of the lovers have left their bodies temporarily and are communicating with each other (like two armies facing each other). And the images of the two lovers in each other's eyes are regarded as the lovers "propagation" or the issue which they have produced. And the two souls of the lovers have become one and the resultant soul is abler or finer than each taken singly. Moreover, the bodies are spheres, and the lovers' minds or souls the intelligences which move the sphere.

In the poem "The Flea", we find another use of conceit where the Flea is thought to be their marriage temple as well as their marriage bed because it sucks a tiny drop of blood from the lover's and the beloved's body. And according to the poet it means that they two have got married. Here he says,

> **"Marke but this flea ,and marke in this,**
> **Low little that which thou deny'st me is;**
> **Mee it suck'd first, and now sucks thee,**
> **And in this flea, our two bloods mingled bee;"**

The killing of the flea will mean destroying three lives- those of the poet, his beloved and the insect. It will also be an act of sacrilege because a temple will be destroyed. He says that the beloved should surrender her body to the poet because she will, by doing so, lose just as little honour as the life she has lost by a drop of her blood having been sucked by the flea.

In summing up we can say that John Donne's poetry is abound with metaphysical conceits. Conceits are the effortless creation of John Donne. To him, conceits come to his

poetry as leaves come to the tree. And for the use of conceits he stands supreme and mostly for such uses of conceit, he becomes the best metaphysical poet.

Donne: A Religious Poet

The intensity of Donne's feeling and the inner conflict is reflected in his religious poetry. His religious sonnets and songs are intensely personal and sincere. Donne was a Catholic by birth. He felt humbled and persecuted like other Catholics of his age. Religion, for most of the people, was a matter of accident.

Those who liked antiquity and tradition turned to Rome, those who disliked formality and ritual turned to Geneva. But, religion should be, according to Donne, a matter of deliberate choice, made after careful study and consideration. Many of the principles Rome did not stand his intellectual inquiry. It is difficult to fix the precise date of his conversion. It is, however, Convenient to assume that by 1598, when Donne entered Sir Thomas Egerton's service, he must have embraced the Church of England. Egerton, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, could never have employed a distinguished Catholic for important public duty.

Donne's conversion to Anglicanism greatly influenced his poetry. Grierson calls this conversion, a "reconciliation, an acquiescence in the faith of his country—the established religion of his legal sovereign". Probably, the Renaissance spirit, leaning towards nationalism, was partly responsible for Donne's change of faith. But the conversion caused Donne some pangs and heart-searching. Dr. Johnson says: "A convert from Popery to Protestantism gives up so much of what he has held as sacred as anything that he retains; there is so much laceration of mind in such a conversion, that it can hardly be sincere and lasting". Undoubtedly, Donne felt this laceration of the mind and this conflict between the old and the new faith. "Show me dear Christ thy spouse so bright and clear". There was also the other conflict in Donne—the conflict between ambition and asceticism, between the prospects of civil service and the claims of a religious life. But after a number of years, Donne continued to retain a soft corner for Catholics.

MAIN ASPECTS OF DONNE'S RELIGIOUS POETRY

Donne was essentially a religious man, though he moved from one denomination to another. His spirit of rational faith continued throughout his life. The following are the main aspects of Donne's religious poetry:

Conflict and doubt: - As a man of the Renaissance, he could not but question the assumptions and beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church. Being born in a particular religion is one proposition and being convinced of the Tightness of one's faith, is quite another. As he was sceptical of the religious dogmas of the Catholic Church, he adopted the Anglican faith, but even so his mind was not at peace. He could not reconcile the inner conflicts and as such he prayed for God's mercy and grace, so that he might be able to build his faith on a sound foundation. In his A Hymn to God the Father, he ultimately arrives at a firm faith. It is perhaps the culmination of his spiritual quest.

Note of introspection: - The metaphysical clement which is so evident in his love poems, finds expression of an inner heart searching. He digs deep within himself in order to measure his sincerity and devotion to God and above all his consciousness of sin and the need of penitence. His fear of death—Donne must have seen many of his friends on their death-beds and their last struggles—makes him repent for his past follies and hence his prayer to God for His mercy and compassion. The Holy Sonets particularly maybe regarded as poems of repentance, and supplications for divine grace. Donne's

intention is not to preach morality or to turn men to virtue. Grierson writes in this connection: "To be didactic is never the first intention of Donne's religious poems, but rather, to express himself, to analyse and lay bare his own moods of agitation, of aspiration and of humiliation, in the quest of God, and the surrender of his soul to Him. The same erudite and surprising imagery, the same passionate, and reasoning strain, meet us in both".

The themes of his religious poetry: - Donne found the contemporary world dry and corrupt. He felt that its degeneration would lead to untold human misery. The main theme of his religious poems is the transitoriness of this world, the fleeting nature of physical joys and earthly happiness, the sufferings of the soul imprisoned in the body and the pettiness and insignificance of man. Above all, the shadow of death is all pervasiveand this makes him turn to Christ as the Saviour. Even so, his metaphysical craftsmanship treats God as 'ravisher' who saves him from the clutches of the Devil. Though Donne regarded the world a vanity of vanities, he could not completely detach himself from the joys of the world and there is a turn from other-worldliness to worldliness. However, we cannot doubt the sincerity of his religious feelings and his earnest prayer to God for deliverance. His moral earnestness is reflected in his consciousness of sin and unworthiness for deserving the grace of Christ He uses the images of Christ as a lover who will woo his soul.

Parallelism with love poetry: - There is a great similarity of thought and treatment between the love poems and holy sonnets, though the theme is different. The spirit behind the two categories of poems is the same. There is the same subtle spirit which analyses the inner experiences like the experiences of love. The same kind of learned and shocking imagery is found in the love poems:

Is the Pacific sea my home? or are
The Eastern riches? Is Jerusalem?
Anyan, and Magellan, and Gibraltar.
All straits (and none but straits) are ways to them.
Whether where Japhet dwelt, or Ham, or Shem.

Similarly in his treatment of divine love, the poet uses sexual images in holy situations. As for example:

Betray kind husband thy spouse to cur sights,
And let mine amorous soul court thy mild Dove
Who is most true, and pleasing to thee then
When she's embraced and open to most men.

CRITICAL SURVEY OF DONNE'S RELIGIOUS POETRY

There are two notes in Donne's religious poems—the Catholic and the Anglican. The Progress of the Soul leans towards Catholicism and it records the doubts and longings of a troubled subtle soul. The following lines show the working of the mind and are full of bold and echoing vowel sounds:

O might those sights and tears return again
Into my breast and eyes, which I have spent.
That I might in this holy discontent
Mourn with some fruit, as I have mourned in vain;
In mine Idolatory what showers of rain
Mine eyes did waste? What griefs my heart did vent?
That sufferance was my sin; now I repent.
Cause I 'did suffer I must suffer pain.

The Progress of the Soul, though written in 1601 was published after his death, in 1633. Ben Jonson called it "the conceit of Donne's transformation." Donne describes his theme in the very first stanza.

I sing the progress of a deathless soul
Whom Fate, which God made, but doth not control
Pla'd in most shapes; all lines before the low
Yok'd us, and when; and since, in this I sing.

He describes the soul of heresy which began in paradise (in the apple) and roamed through souls of Luther, Mahomed and Calvin and is now at rest in England:

The great soul which here among us now
Doth dwell, and moves that hand, and tongue and brow,
Which as the moon the sea moves us.

Donne moves from the aesthetic to the ethical plane of existence. His curiosity about the microcosm and his scepticism find expression here:

There's nothing simply good, nor all alone,
Of every quality comparison,
The only measure is, and judge, opinion.

The poem was written soon after the inner crisis and his conversion:

For though through many straits and lands I roam,
I launch at Paradise and I sail towards home.

The psychological problem finds its solution in a spiritual reintegration.

The Divine Poems include 'La Corona' and six holy sonnets on Annunciation, Nativity, Temple Crucifying, Ressurrection and Ascenstion. Donne seeks divine grace to crown his efforts:

But do not with a vile crown of frail bays,
Reward my muses white sincerity,
But what thy thorny crown gain'd, that gives me
A crown of glory, which doth flower always.

The other, group of sonnets also entitled Holy Sonnets contains 19 sacred poems. They belong to the period of doubt and intense inner struggle which preceded Donne's entry into the Church of England. Here is a mood of melancholy and despair.

This is my play's last scene here heavens appoint.
My pilgrimage's last mile. (Sonnet VI)
Despair behind and death before doth caste
Such terror and my feeble flesh doth waste.

In sonnet II, Christ appears as a lover and Donne as a temple usurped by the Devil.

Myself a temple of thy spirit divine

Why doth the devil then usurp on me…

In Sonnet III, Donne is sincerely repentant for his past sins:

That I might in this holy discontent
Mourn with some fruit, as I have moum'd in vain….
No ease, for long, yet vehement grief hath been
The effect and cause, the punishment and sin.

In Sonnet IV, Donne compares himself to a felon charged with treason, and yet he cannot resist conceits.

Christ's blood, though red, will whiten the souls stained and polluted with sin.
Oh make thyself with holy mourning black
And red with blushing, as them an with sin;
Or wash thee in Christ's blood, which hath this might
That being red, it dyes red souls to white.

Sonnet V shows Donne's Renaissance-spirit–his wander-lust:

You which beyond that heaven which was most high
Have found new spheres, and of new lands, can write,
Power new seas in ruined eyes, that so I might
Drown my world with my weeping earnestly.

Donne prays sincerely for pardon for his misdeeds:

Teach me how to repent; for that's as good
As if thou hadst seal'd my pardon, with thy blood.
The pilgrim-soul is not afraid of death.
Death be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so.

In Sonnet XIII, Donne brings forward the argument that because beautiful women have liked him in his youth, so Christ, the Incarnation of Beauty, should be kind to him:

No, no; but as in my idolatry,
I said to all my profane mistresses,
Beauty, of pity, foulness only is
A sign of rigour: so 1 say to thee.

In Sonnet XVII, Donne refers to the death of his wife which has now made him turn his attention to spiritual attainment:

Since she whom I lov'd hath paid her last debt
To Nature, and to hers, and my good is dead.

In Sonnet XVIII, Donne expresses his desire to see the true church (England, Rome, Geneva) undivided, because it is indivisible. The bride of Christ is the mistress of the whole world.

Who is most true, and pleasing to thee then

When she is embrac'd and open to most men.

The Hymn to God, written during his serious illness in 1623, is a sincere prayer to God to receive him in His grace:

So, in his purple wrapp'd receive me Lord,
By these his thorns give me his other Crown,
And as to others' souls I preach'd thy word
Be this my Text my sermon to mine own,
Therefore that he may arise the lord throws down.

The Divine Poems contain a vivid and moving record of a brilliant mind struggling towards God. Truth, is the goal but there are hurdles and temptations in the way. Donne is not afraid of analysing the appalling difficulties of faith. The vacillations, the doubts, of this imperfect but sincere man are reflected in all their passion. Donne's aim is not didactic or moral; he wishes to lay bare his own moods, his aspirations, his sins, his humiliation in the quest of God. He is the most sincere and introspective Anglican poet of the seventeenth century. He had experienced the intensification of religious feeling mentioned in the holy sonnets. Walton writes: "His aspect was cheerful and such as gave a silent testimony of a clear knowing soul, of a conscience at peace with itself. His melting eye showed that he had a soft heart full of noble compassion, of too brave a soul

to offer injuries and too much a Christian not to pardon them in others." W.B. Yeats, a mystic poet, writes of Donne, "his pedantries and his obscenities, the rock and loam of his Eden, but make us the more certain that one who is but a man like us all has seen God!"

Conclusion: - Some critics question use of the metaphysical method in holy sonnets and religious poems. Grierson, however, justifies use of the metaphysical method in these serious poems. He writes: "Here, he recaptures the peculiar charm of his early love verse their best, the unique blend of passionate feelings and rapid subtle thinking, the strange sense that his verse gives of a certain conflict between the passionate thought and the varied and often elaborate pattern into which he moulds its expression, resulting in a strange blend of harshness and constraint with reverberating and penetrating harmony. No poems give more…the sense of conflict of soul, of faith and hope snatched and held desperately…."

Donne's religious poetry cannot be called mystical poetry. Donne does not forget his self as the mystics do. His is always conscious of his environment, of the world in which he lives and of his passionate friendships. As such his religious poetry lacks the transparent ecstacy found in great religious poetry. Helen White writes in this connection: "There was something in Donne's imagination that drove it out in those magnificent figures that sweep earth and sky, but whatever emotion such passages arouse in us, Donne was not the man to lose himself. In another world beyond the release of death, he hoped to see his God face to face, and without end. But he was not disposed to anticipate the privileges of that world in this, nor even in general try to do so… The result is that in most of the mystical passages in both his poetry and his prose, the marvellous thrust into the ineffable is followed by a quick pull-back into the world of there-and-now with its lucid sense-detail and its ineluctable common sense."

Donne's holy sonnets are deservedly famous and are remarkable. They embody his deeply felt emotions in a language reflecting conscious craftsmanship.

The Wit of John Donne

What is wit: - It is difficult to give a satisfactory definition of wit. The dictionary definition mentions a keen perception and cleverly apt expression of amusing words or ideas or of those connections between ideas which awaken amusement and pleasure. Wit is revealed in the unusual or ingenious use of words rather than in the subject-matter.

Inferior wit lies in the use of paradox, pun, oxymoron and word-play. Higher wit is the discovery of conceits and the assembly and synthesis of ideas which appear dissimilar or incongruous.

> **In a true piece of wit, all things must be**
> **Yet all these things agree**
> **As in the Ark join'd without force or strife**
> **All creatures dwelt, all creatures that had life** (Cowley)

Donne is remarkable as much for his metaphysical element as for his wit. Hartley Coleridge, however, pokes fun at Donne's wit:

> **Twist iron pokers into true love knots**
> **Coining hard words not found in polyglots.**

Peculiar wit: - Donne has been called "the monarch of wit'. Dryden wrote: "If we are not so great wits as Donne, we are certainly better poets." Pope echoed the same thought: "Donne had no imagination, but as much wit, I think, as any writer can possibly

have." Dr. Johnson felt that Donne's wit lay in the discovery of hidden resemblances in dissimilar things.

Donne's wit is deliberate and peculiar. It impresses us with its intellectual vigour and force and does not merely lie in the dexterous or ingenious use of words. Secondly, it comes naturally from the author's expansive knowledge and deep scholarship. According to Leishman, Donne's wit lies in his imprudent and shocking language. T.S. Eliot, however, finds his wit in the fusion of opposites—the blend of thought and feeling, what he calls 'sensuous apprehension of thought'.

The wit of Donne stands in a class by itself. Though his wit has points in common with Caroline poets, it has certain points which are peculiarly its own. Moreover, there is a world of difference between the wit of Shakespeare and Pope and the wit of the metaphysical poets. T.S. Eliot remarks: "The wit of the Caroline poets is not the wit of Shakespeare, and it is not the wit of Dryden, the great master of contempt, or of Pope, the great master of disgust." In Elizabethan poets, wit is decorative and ornamental. It is a result of light-hearted fancy or strange setting. In Donne, wit is the result of weighty thought and brooding imagination. It is a living image, and a subtle conceit, coloured with the quality of his thought:

I saw Eternity on the other night.

Donne's wit is grave and full of significance and sometimes pregnant with strange ideas.

Its complexity: - Donne's wit is a compound of many similes extracted from many objects and sources. His wit has certain distinct qualities. Donne's wit is scholastic or dialectical rather than metaphysical. He is fond of a logical sequence, ingenious and far-fetched analysis. In his poem entitled, The Anagram, Donne by a series of dialectical paradoxes defends the preposterous proposition that an old and ugly woman will make a better wife than a young and handsome one.

Similarly Donne defends his apparent gaiety during the absence of his beloved in his own paradoxical manner:

That Love's a bitter sweet, I never conceive
Till the sour minute comes of taking leave
Another I taste it. But as men drink up
In haste the bottom of a next civned cup
And take some syrup after, so do I.
To put all relish from my memory
Of parting, drown it in the hope to meet
Shortly, again and make our absence sweet.

Variety of moods: -Donne's wit expresses all moods from the gay to the serious, and from the happy to the pessimistic. Sometimes he is flippant and irreverent. In the Flea, he deifies a flea and calls it a marriage temple. In many poems, the poet debunks the customary vows of lovers and the Petrarchan conventions. Sometimes there is self-mockery and the poet plunges from the sublime to the ludicrous. The variety of poems on love like Love's War, Love's Diet, Love's Exchange, Love's Usury, and Love's Alchemy shows the range of his passion and wit.

Mental vigour: - The secret of Donne's wit lies in its mental strength and intellectual power. It is an expression of his rational outlook on life, an embodiment of his poetic sensibility, and a reflection of his vision of life. One critic observes in this connection that it is "the outward projection of his sense of the many-sidedness of things, of his manifold possibility, and ultimately a recognition of the multiplicity of experience." Donne could afford to laugh at established practices and convictions because he disliked humbug and pretence. A critic remarks: "What one sees all the time are established certainties being

crumbled, positive pretensions denied or mocked, the very affirmations of the poem doubted or discredited before it ends, and a few certitudes won by hard proof in the face of contingent circumstance”.

Irony: - The secret of Donne’s wit lies in his use of irony. Irony is a literary device by which words express a meaning that is often the direct opposite of the intended meaning. In this manner, the poet by implication comments on the situation. Donne’s irony is noticed in his attitude to love which can, to an extent, be summed up in the phrase: “What fools these mortals be!” The indignation and mockery takes on a literary phraseology and the intention of the poet is obvious. A.J. Smith writes in this connection: “The outright mockery of people and sects, and the impugning of motives in general, certainly isn’t cynical. It expresses a perspective which takes the world’s activities as ludicrous feverishncss in respect of bedrock human certainties; not however occasion for despair but, diverting by their own zestful life. The overturning of accepted evaluations seems the more convincing because it is the reverse of solemn: and because it emphatically doesn’t imply any rejection of experience, but rather a delight in it.”

Comparisons: - Donne’s analogies are apt and full-blooded. In Love’s War,Donne compares the qualities of a good lover and a good soldier; as for instance, the capacity to keep awake for nights together, the courage to face an enemy (rival) boldly, to besiege and take by storm, to elude watchmen and sentries. Donne’s analogies are compressed syllogisms. Just look at this syllogism:

All that is lovable is wonderful
The mistress is wonderful,
Therefore the mistress is lovable.

Donne compresses the above argument in the following two lines:

All love is wonder; if we justly do
Account her wonderful, why not lovely too?
At times, Donne’s wit takes the form of epigram:
If things of sight such Heaven be
What Heavens are those we cannot see.

Donne makes a sort of pattern of thought, of a mind moving from the contemplation of a fact to a deduction from a fact, and thence to a conclusion. Oliver Elton notes the endless ‘teasing of words and thoughts’. Prof. Croft observes: “Thus the brain-sick fancies are piled up, twaddle upon twaddle, until the whole thing explodes with a passionate contrary or a familiar image.” The notable thing about his comparisons is their novelty and freshness, their references to unlikely things and places. For example, the poet compares the two lovers to the Phoenix and to both the eagle and the dove. The lovers will be ressurected after death like the Phoenix. Joan Bennett observes: “They evoke severe sense memories of a literary heritage. If they evoke memories, they are of large draughts of intellectual drink, imbibed from science rather than poetry. ”Donne is in the habit of elaborating a figure to the furthest stage to which ingenuity can carry it.

Exaggeration: - Exaggeration is an important element in Donne’s wit. This exaggeration appears to be outrageous in its high spiritedness:

Go and catch a falling star
Get with child a mandrake root....

Donne being an anti-traditionalist, is keen on shocking people. His wit takes a kind of moral holiday by flouting traditional ideals and morals in several relationships. Dr. Johnson takes exception to Donne’s wit on two grounds, aesthetic and moral. Dr. Johnson is offended by its lack of proportion and decorum, its “fundamental unseriousness, its detachment, and its immorality”

To teach thee, I am naked first, why then
What needst thou have more covering than a man

Dr. Johnson applies Pope's definition to the works of Donne:" That which had been often thought, but was never before so well expressed". Donne does not conform to this concept of wit. According to Dr. Johnson, wit is both conventional and new, but the wit of Donne is a combination of dissimilar images, a discovery of the occult resemblances in things unlike. The most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together, nature and art are ransacked for illustrations, comparisons and allusions; their learning instructs and their subtlety surprises, but the reader commonly thinks his improvement dearly bought and though he sometimes admires, is seldom pleased. If they frequently threw their wit upon false conceits, they likewise sometimes struck at unexpected truth; if their conceits were far-fetched, they were often worth the carriage.

Paradox: - Dr. Johnson compares Donne's paradoxes to remarks made by epicurean deities on the actions of men, devoid of interest or emotion. T.S. Eliot is also struck by the "telescoping of images and multiplied associations, constantly amalgamating disparate experiences always forming new wholes out of matter so diverse as reading of Spinoza, falling in love and smelling the dinner cooking". In one of his satires, Donne emphasises his companion's inconsistency and absurdity in hating naked virtue, although he loves his naked whore. Leishman dwells on the outrageous hyperbole and perversity of Donne's wit—"wit, often deliberately outrageous and impudent and coat-trailing, often breath-takingly ingenious in the discovery of comparisons and analogies, but nearly always, in one way or another, argumentative, sagacious, rigid, scholastically argumentative, whether in the defence of preposterous paradoxes or in the mock-serious devising of hyperbolical compliments."

She is all States and all Princes, I,
Nothing else is.
Countries, Towns, Camps, beg of from above
A pattern of your love.

What can be more dramatic and hypothetical than:

I wonder, by my troth what thou and I
Did, till we lov'd?

When the lover is dead on account of disappointment in love, ghost of the lover will haunt and harass the beloved.

Donne is not merely witty but passionately witty or wittily passionate, in the two poems entitled The Anagram and The Bracelet. The words in themselves are not difficult, but the structure of sentences is far from simple.

Conclusion: - To some critics, Donne's wit is one of the means of escape, an escape from boredom and depression which constantly afflicted him during the years of his creative activity. Through wit and intellectual ingenuity, Donne avoids both self-pity and Hamlet-like frustration. Drummond rightly calls him "the best epigrammatist we have found in English".

In the ultimate reckoning, Donne's wit may be regarded not only symbolic of his spirit of interrogation and discovery but also the embodiment of introspection and intellectualism, the rebellion and conflict in the mind of Donne.

Donne's Contribution to English Style and Language

Donne has made a remarkable contribution to English poetic diction and versification. In this respect his status is like that of Dryden, Wordsworth and T.S. Eliot. We understand

that the English language became too poetic in the age of Wordsworth, and in that of T.S. Eliot. It lost its touch with the language of everyday life, with the result that it became weak and enervated. Donne endeavoured to re-vitalise and invigorate English language by making it flexible. He imparted to it sinewy strength, energy and vigour.

Donne's poetry is based on an individual technique. His poetic diction and style is unconventional. The 'Donne-poem' is an argument in which a mind living in analogy exploits a chosen situation with a new and elaborate set of inter-connected images. His poems are like voyages of discovery, exploring new worlds of life, love and spirits. They are voyages of the mind which

Cerates, transcending these, and other seas.
Matter more important than words

To Donne, matter was more important than words and the management of the thoughts dictated the form of the poem. De Quincey thought that Donne laid principal stress on the management of thought and secondly on the ornaments of style. Here is a poet who argues in verse accompanied by music. As T.S. Eliot puts it, "A thought to Donne was an experience; it modified his sensibility."

His love-poems are explorations of the types of love and friendship, from the man's point of view. They are not so obviously "poetic", as those of Marvell and Herrick. Excess of intellectual satires and complexity prevent the luminosity and certainty of statement. This partly accounts for his occasional inequality, violence and obscurity. His style stands in a class by itself. Cazamian writes: "Donne will have nothing to do with the easy and familiar, the mythological imagery. At the risk of being enigmatic, he takes pleasure only in the subtle. Passion, feeling, sensuousness—all are subjected to wit. This play of wit sometimes results in astounding hyperbole; sometimes he ingeniously brings together ideas as remote from each other as the antipodes, mingling the lofty and the mean, the sublime and the trivial. He often prefers to a smoothly flowering line, the lines that are freely divided, and in which he accents have an effect of shock, and pull the reader up and awaken his attention".

Donne's world of ideas: - The basis of the 'Donne-poem' is neither music nor imagery but the idea. There is a basic idea underlying each poem. The idea may be real or fantastic but it is never artificial or affected. Donne is modern in his psychological realism; he believed in the realism of a world of ideas. Donne told his friends that he described "the idea of a woman and not as she was." He rejected the courtly idea of woman as an angel or a goddess. To him, woman was essentially fickle and inconstant in love. The song beginning, "Go and catch a falling star" is based on the faithlessness of women in love. Nowhere can you find a woman who is faithful to her lover—"Fraility, thy name is woman." His important poem—The Anniversary—is a record of domestic bliss. The love of Donne and his wife is eternal and immortal and is not subject to decay or death:

All other things, to their destruction draw,
Only our love hath no decay;
This no tomorrow hath, nor yesterday....

His poem—The Sun Rising—is a stern warning to the sun not to disturb the lovers in their bed-chamber. The proper duty of the sun is to call on schoolboys, apprentices and courtiers who must attend to their work in time. His song—"Sweetest Love"—is based on the idea that parting is no doubt sad and painful, but those who love each other sincerely and deeply can never be really parted. This poem was addressed by Donne to his wife when he wanted to go to foreign countries for about six months. He bids her farewell cheerfully, till he meets her again.

Both structural and decorative peculiarities of Donne's poems: -The 'Donne-poem' possesses both structural and decorative peculiarities. Firstly, the metre is not a matter of chance but of choice. The metre is a part and parcel of the fused whole; it is not an ornament super-added. S.T. Coleridge writes: "To read Dryden and Pope, you need only count syllables; but to read Donne you must measure Time and discover Time of each word by the sense of Passion." You must hear his silences and his eloquence. Examine the following lines of the poem The Relic:

When my grave is broke up again
Some second ghost to entertain,
(For graves have learned that woman-head
To be more than one a bed)
And he that digs it, spies
A bracelet of bright hair about the bone
Will not he let us alone,
And think that there a loving couple lies,
Who thought that this device might be some way,
To make their souls, at the last busy day,
Meet at this grave, and make a little stay?

Donne's interest in music: - Moreover, the greatest metrical variety in the form of syllables and stanzas shows not only the fertility of his genius but also his interest in and ear for music, Let us analyse The Relic and study its metrical effects. The Relic, a love poem, contains three stanzas. Let us read loudly the first stanza to grasp the movement. Each stanza contains eleven lines, of which the first four are octosyllabic or four-footed lines, the fifth and seventh are three footed, and the remainder of the length are—of the blank. verse line i.e. decasyllabic. "In reading the first stanza aloud, one sees that the first two lines, regular and equal, broach the theme with a typical Donnian startlingness and boldness, lines three and four have the same length as one and two but their being enclosed in brackets and the dig at woman's inconstancy which they offer, the meaning is, graves have learnt the feminine trick of being a bed to more than one person; old graves were often dug up to make room for new tenants."

Donne's use of simple and colloquial language: - Dryden appreciated Donne for fusing and combining complexity of substance with simplicity of expression. According to Legouis, he did not feel any necessity of mentioning gods and goddesses in his poetry. He rejected all the conventional and traditional poetic devices. He used the different vocabulary and imagery which was quite popular among the masses of his time. In his time, medieval scholastic learning and science was quite popular, although it appears very dull and boring to the modem reader. Donne used all the current phrases and diction of his age. He even expresses complex emotions by means of simple and colloquial diction and phraseology. Thus, he revolted against the Petrarchan, Spenserian and pastoral poetry. The poet expressed "Petrarchan sighs in Petrarchan language". The language, diction and imagery of poets had become too poetic, hackneyed and stereotyped. The conceits and images, metaphors and similes bear resemblance to one poet or another. Donne's constitution is considered remarkable because of infusing into English language energy and sinewy strength. Due to the invigorating influence of his poetic diction, his language brought new lustre to English literature.

Harmony of English verse: - Donne tries to lend metrical pattern to the rhetoric of utterance. Yet his verse has no note of jarring disharmony; on the contrary, it has a haunting harmony of its own. He is successful in finding the rhythm that will express his passionate argument, and his mood: that is why his verses are as startling as his phrasing.

Donne master of poetic rhetoric: - What Jonson called the 'wrenching of accent' in Donne, can be amply justified. He plays with rhythm as he plays with conceits and phrases. Fletcher Melton has analysed his verse to show two metrical effects, the "troubling of the regular fall of verse-stress by the intrusion of rhetorical stress on syllables which the metrical pattern leaves unstressed, and secondly, an echoing and re-echoing of similar sounds parallel to his fondness for resemblances in thoughts and things." He apparently uses an individual poetic diction, in the same way, he chooses metrical effects which are new and original. Prof. Grierson writes: "Donne is perhaps our first great master of poetic rhetoric, of poetry used, as Dryden and Pope were to use it, for effects of oratory rather than of song, and the advance which Dryden achieved was secured by subordinating to oratory the more passionate and imaginative qualities which troubled the balance and movement of Donne's packed out imaginative rhetoric."

Bold, original and startling use of figures of speech: - The other important feature of his poetry is the bold, original and startling use of figures of speech. Comparisons are useful in communicating sensations, feelings and states of mind. Donne relies on his scholasticism for new and far-fetched comparisons, and yet they are real, credible and meaningful. Donne, in Love's Progress,draws on geography and science of navigation in praising his mistress. The simile refers to the beloved's eyes as sun, and the nose as the meridian.

The nose (like to the first meridian runs)
Not 'twixt an East and West but 'twixt two suns

The tears of lovers are always of great poetic account but Donne handles them in different ways. In A Valediction of Weeping, he calls his tears coins; they bear her stamp because they reflect her image; the tear acts as a mirror. Then be compares the tear to a blank globe before a cartographer. In Witchcraft by a Picture, the poet's eye is reflected in his beloved's eye. As his tears fall, her image also falls and so her love. In another poem, Donne compares a good man to a telescope because just as a telescope enables us to see distant things nearer and clearer, in the same way a good man exemplifies virtue in his life in a practical manner. A highly developed simile is found in A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning written on the poet's temporary separation from his wife. The leave-taking should be quiet and peaceful as the dying of virtuous men. During absence, the lovers' two souls are not separated but undergo,

An expansion
Like gold to airy thinness beat.

Then the poet remarks that the two souls are like the two legs of a compasses:

If they be two, are two so
As stiff twin compasses are two;
Thy soul the fix'd foot makes no show
To move but doth if th' other do.

The wife's soul is the fixed foot of the compass, the foot with the pin that remains in the centre of the circle. It moves only when the other foot—the husband's soul—moves and then only by leaning in the direction of the return to the centre—symbolically—the journey to Europe and return—are accomplished because the other foot—the wife's soul—remains fixed. The journey is realised in terms of the completion of the circle.

Contribution of conceits to English versification style: - Donne's conceits are peculiar and novel. A conceit means a strained or far-fetched comparison or literary figure. The Elizabethan conceits were decorative and ornamental, while metaphysical conceits were the products of the intellectual process of thinking in figures. Donne's poems abound in conceits. Here are a few examples:

The spider lover, which unsubstantiates all
And can convert manna to gall,
Love, all alike, no reason knows, nor clime,
Nor hours, days, months, which are the rags of time.
If, as in water stir'd more circles be
Produc'd by one love such additions take,
Those like so many spheres but one heaven make
For they are all concentric unto thee

For Donne, the flea who has sucked their blood is the blessed go-between who has united the lovers.

This flea is you and I and this
Our marriage bed and marriage temple is

In Twicknam Garden, Donne desires to measure the love of other lovers by the taste of his own tears:

Hither with crystal vials, lovers come,
And take my tears which are love's wine
And try your mistress tears at home
For all are false that taste not just like mine.

Donne combines two figures of speech in The Sun Rising; here is apostrophe coupled with personification:

Busy old fool unruly sun,
Why dost thou thus
Through windows and through curtains, call on us?

Here is a hyperbole in Song to describe the speed of a lover's journey:

Yestemight the sun went hence,
And yet is here today,
He hath no desire nor sense,
Nor half so short a way;
Then fear not me,
But believe that I shall make
Speedier journeys, since I take
More wings and spurs than he.

Donne's irony: - Donne is fond of irony. A faithful woman will be false even while you inform others of her virtue:

Yet she
Will be
False, ere I come, to two or there.

In Woman's Constancy, Donne shifts irony from the beloved to himself:

Now thou hast lov'd me one whole day
Tomorrow when thou leav'st what will thou say?
Will thou then antedate soon new made vow?
Or say that now.
We are not just those persons which we were?
For by tomorrow I may think so too.

The poet is afraid that the beloved will break off their relationship in one way or another. He changes his own idea, and thinks that even if she does nothing, he himself may end their relationship. Donne does not spare himself when he engages in pun.

In A Hymn to God the Father, he writes, "When thou hast done, thou has not done, For, I have more."

Donne is fond of paradox. Here is one from A Burnt Ship with all its grim humour:

Out of a fired ship which by no way rescued
But drowning could be rescued from the flame
Some men leap'd forth and even as they came
Near the foe's ships did by their shot decay
So all were lost which in the ship were found,
They in the sea being burnt they in the burnt ship drowned.

The abundant use of poetic devices and metres shows that Donne is intellectual to the finger-tip. He plays not only with words but also with ideas. His mind is full of medieval theology, science, mathematics and jurisprudence. His imagination is as complex as his intellect. His ingenuity finds expression in hyperbole, wit and conceit. His poetry may not be harmonious or musical at times, but we cannot deny that it always poses both sincerity and strength—elements necessary for greatness in poetry. The strength of Donne lies in his being an inimitable poet, one whom it is very difficult to emulate. Donne in the Holy Sonets writes: "Show me dear Christ, thy spouse so bright and clear." The Church is certainly the bride but she is open to most men which is hardly complimentary to any married woman. Here he is both paradoxical and ironical.

Donne's use of Diction in a Peculiar Manner: - Simple words are used in unexpected way. Although diction is simple, yet simple words are combined in unexpected ways and thus strange compounds are formed. For example:

(i) A she-sigh from my mistress' heart….
(ii) No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move;…

Donne, sometimes, uses puns which are simple but effective; for example son/sun; done/Donne. Thus his use of words is often subtle and suggestive. He suggests much more than he narrates or describes.

Tone generally colloquial and flexible: - Love-songs are highly admired because of the general tone of the language which are usually colloquial. They have liveliness of spoken language and thus they are flexible. The first lines are often colloquial in tone. They immediately startle the readers and capture their attention. For example, note the opening of The Canonization.

Donne's symbols are intellectual: - Helen Gardner commends the verbal craftsmanship of Donne which has an attraction and magic of its own. It arouses memories and associations in the minds of the readers. Such associations have an intellectual, not an emotional content. Though Donne deals with love, yet he borrows ideas from geometry and hydraulics to explain a gamut of emotions. In this connection, Helen Gardner writes: "Donne's words bring with them the memory of abstract ideas. The magical lines in his poetry are those which evoke such conceptions as those of space, time, nothingness, and eternity. The words which strike the keynote of a poem are circles, spheres, concentrique, etc. They are the symbols of that infinity in love which underlies the human ebb and flow. The circle occurs again and again in Donne's verse and in his prose as the symbol of infinity, insensibility to such intellectual symbolism has caused not only Dr. Johnson but even so modern a critic as Miss Sackville-West to cite the compass image in A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning, as an example of metaphysical inaptitude."

Variety of versification: - Donne is a great experimenter in verse. He uses a large number of metres and different types of forms. However, he sees to it that his versification suits the subject matter and is in harmony with the ideas expressed in the poems. In this connection, Redpath remarks: "Some of the stanza forms are very attractive in themselves. Much play is made with variations of lines length. Stanzas of

more than six lines seem to give Donne the scope he so often needs to develop the complex interplay of thought and feeling which is so typical of him. With exceptions, the poems in shorter stanzas tend to be thin or slight."

In the song, Go and Catch a Falling Star, the short lines offer a contrast to the long line at the tail of each stanza. Similarly, the change of line length in A Valediction: of Weeping, echoes the turbulent passion expressed in the poem.

Donne's ruggedness: - His ruggedness has been condemned by Ben Jonson who said that for not keeping of accent, Donne deserved hanging. It is true that Donne disregarded the simple rhythms of Elizabethan Age and introduced complicated rhythm patterns in order to convey the intellectual gymnastic and metaphysical conceits. One critic observes that every twist and turn of the sound pattern corresponds with the twist and turn of thought process. In the satire specially, his language is harsh and coarse. In this connection, Grierson remarks: "If there is one thing more distinctive than another of Donne's best work it is the closeness with which the verse echoes the sense and soul of the poem. And so it is in the satires. Their abrupt and harsh verse reflects the spirit in which they are written. Horace, quite as much as Persius, is Donne's teacher in satire and it is Horace he believes himself to be following in adopting a verse in harmony with the unpoetic temper of his work."

Grierson points out: "Donne was no conscious reviver of Dante's mataphysics, but to the game of elaborating fantastic conceits and hyperboles which was the fashion throughout Europe, he brought not only a full-blooded temperament and acute mind, but a vast and growing store of the same scholastic learning, the same Catholic theology, as controlled Dante's thoughts, but jostling already with the new learning of Copernicus and Paracleus."

"His vivid, simple, and realistic touches are too quickly merged in, learned and fantastic elaborations and the final effect of almost every poem of Donne's is bizarre, if it be the expression of a strangely blended temperament, an intense emotion, a vivid imagination."

Donne is bizarre and wayward in his style. He is "a maker of conceits for their own sake, a grafter of tasteless and irrelevant ornaments upon the body of his thought There are poems which undoubtedly support these accusations, and I shall be the last to deny that Donne relished the play of "wit' for its own sake; but I am convinced that in general his style is admirably fitted to express his own thought and temperament, and in all probability grew out of the need of such expression. The element of dissonance is no exception. No doubt, it expresses his spirit of revolt against poetic custom…..in this case the poetic ideal of harmony. But the expression of revolt is only a superficial function. With its union of disparate suggestions dissonance is most serviceable instrument, in fact a prime necessity of expressing Donne's multiple sensibility, his complex modes, and the discords of his temperament. In short, the dissonance; of style reflects a dissonance inwardly experienced."

"What is true", writes Grierson, "of Donne's imagery is true of the other disconcerting element in his poetry, its harsh and rugged verse. It, is an outcome of the same double motive, the desire to startle and the desire to approximate poetic to direct, and unconventional colloquial speech."

"Donne's verse has a powerful harmony of its own, for he is striving to find a rhythm that will express the passionate fulness of his mind, the fluxes and refluxes of his moods, and the felicities of his verse are as frequent and startling as those of his phrasing. He is one of the first, perhaps the first, writers, of the elaborate stanza or paragraph in which

the discords of individual lines or phrases are resolved in the complex and rhetorically effective harmony of the whole group of lines…."

"Donne secures two effects; firstly the trebling of the regular fall of the verse stresses by the introduction of rhetorical stresses on syllables which the metrical pattern leaves unstressed; and secondly, an echoing and re-echoing of similar sounds parallel to his fondness for resemblances in thoughts and things apparently the most remote from one another."

"He writes as one who will say what he has to say with regard to conventions of poetic diction or smooth verse; but what he has to say is subtle and surprising and so are the metrical effects with which it is presented…It was not indeed in lyrical verse that Dryden followed and developed Donne, but in his eulogistic satirical and epistolary poems."

Donne's dramatic flexibility, rhetorical touches and poetic rhythms: - Donne is quite dramatic in offering catchy opening lines. He almost catches the reader by his arms and give him a jolt. This dramatic rhythm gives the illusion of talk in a state of excitement. Donne is original in his innovation of poetic rhythm. As Legouis asserts: "John Donne is perhaps the most singular of English poets. His verses offer examples of everything castigated by classical writers as bad taste and eccentricity, all pushed to such an extreme that the critic's head swims as he condemns…At the outset of Donne's career, Spenser had already won his glory, and the Petrarchan sonneteers were producing collection upon collection. The independent young poet reacted against these schools. He despised highly regular metres and monotonous and harmonious cadences. He violated the rhythm in his Satires, Songs and Sonets and in hisElegies. His friend and admirer Ben Jonson said of him that he esteemed him 'the first poet in the world for some things' but also that, 'Donne, for not keeping of accent deserved hanging'. Closely examined, this crime, for such it is, derives from his subordination of melody to meaning, his refusal to submit to the reigning hierarchy of words, sometimes from his lapses into the expressive spoken tongue, in defiance of the convention of poetic rhythm."

Helen Gardner further remarks: "Donne deliberately deprived himself of the hypnotic power with which a regularly recurring beat plays upon the nerves. He needed rhythm for another purpose; his rhythms arrest and goad the reader, never quite fulfilling his expectations but forcing him to pause here and to rush on there, governing pace and emphasis so as to bring out the full force of the meaning. Traditional imagery and traditional rhythms are associated with traditional attitudes; but Donne wanted to express the complexity of his own moods, rude or subtle, harmonious or discordant. He had to find a more personal imagery and a more flexible rhythm. He made demands on his reader that no lyric poet had hitherto made."

Conclusion: - The memorable nature of Donne's verses will strike any casual reader. Such verses haunt our memory and return to us again and again. Grierson has beautifully summed up the salient characteristics of John Donne's style and versification. As he remarks: "Donne's verse has a powerful and haunting harmony of its own. For Donne is not simply, no poet could be, willing to force his accent, to strain and crack a prescribed pattern; he is striving to find a rhythm that will express the passionate fulness of his mind, the fluxes and refluxes of his moods; and the felicities of verse are as frequent and startling as those of phrasing. He is one of the first masters, perhaps the first, of the elaborate stanza or paragraph in which the discords of individual lines or phrases are resolved in the complex and rhetorically effective harmony of the whole group of lines…The wrenching of accent which Jonson complained of is not entirely due to carelessness or indifference. It has often both a rhetorical and a harmonious justification. Donne plays with rhythmical effects as with conceits and words and often in

much the same way…There is, that is to say, in his verse the same blend as in his diction of the colloquial and the bizarre. He writes as one who will say what he has to say without regard to conventions of poetic diction or smooth verse, but what he has to say is subtle and surprising, and so are the metrical effects with which it is presented. There is nothing of unconscious or merely careless harshness in his poetry. Donne is perhaps our first great master of poetic rhetoric, of poetry used, as Dryden and Pope were to use it, for effects of oratory rather than of song, and the advance which Dryden achieved was secured by subordinating to oratory the more passionate and imaginative qualities which troubled the balance and movement of Donne's packed, but imaginative rhetoric."

BATTER MY HEART, THREE-PERSONED GOD

CRITICAL APPRECIATION

As the very title of the sonnet suggests, it is a passionate and forceful appeal to God to take possession of the poet's heart. The intensity of the poet's feeling is conveyed by the word 'batter'. To batter means to pound repeatedly, to deal heavy repeated blows, to beat persistently and hard.

The poet vehemently prays to the Christian Trinity—God the Father, God the Son (Christ) and God the Holy Ghost to take possession of his heart by force. According to Leishman, it reveals the poet's "agonised striving" to be possessed by God and gives expression to it through the analogy of an usurped town during war and then of a beloved under the forcible possession of the adversary of the lover. "Any mild and persuasive action will not help in the transformation of the poet. The poet is a confirmed sinner and only drastic action against him will change him. A total regeneration is not possible without a powerful and violent action of God." According to F.W. Payne, the sonnet expresses adequately "in its striking metaphor and its forceful diction, his burning desire for an assurance of forgiveness" R.G. Cox feels that in the 'Holy Sonnets' of which this poem is one, the method of expression and style is the same as that of love poems. "As in love poetry here too, is a considerable variety of tone and method ranging from mere casuistry and debating tricks to a profound urgency and conviction and sometimes both may be found together." In this sonnet, the poet treats God as a conqueror or a ravisher. This is rather an unusual comparison. The plea of the poet is that unless God acts with force and vigour, He will not mend his ways. The way down-hill is quick and easy, the way uphill is difficult and strenuous. Only God's might may push him up on the spiritual path.

DEVELOPMENT OF THOUGHT

The poet appeals to God to transform his inner being. As he is a great sinner, mild methods will not succeed with him. God the Tinker, need not use gentle methods like 'knock, breathe, shine and seek to amend'. He must use harsh and rough methods. Just as the tinker, in order to reshape the pot, must 'break, blow and burn' the metal to give it a new shape, in the same way God must overpower him and use violent methods to reshape and remould him.

Usurped town: - The poet compares himself to a usurped town. His soul belongs to God, but has been taken away by the Devil. He himself is willing to pay his homage to God, but he cannot do so because he is under the power of the Devil. Reason is God's Viceroy, but even Reason is unable to oppose the might of the Devil. Therefore, God should use force and release him from the horrible clutches of evil forces. Thus alone he can be saved from damnation.

Usurped beloved: -The poet clarifies his position through the metaphor of lover-beloved relationship. The poet is the beloved while God is the lover. According to tradition, God is the man, while human beings are all females. The poet's soul loves God and desires to be united with Him. However, she has been forcibly betrothed to the Devil. He is a slave of the Devil and God alone can rescue him. God should sever his connection with evil and redeem him from wickedness. God should accept him as a beloved and take him into His arms. Now he is a slave of the Devil but let God make a slave of him. The poet feels that he can never be purified till God consummates his union with him. Then alone he will be free from sin and evil.

CRITICAL COMMENTS

This use of sensual relationship for holy transformation need not be objected to: 'Imprison me, enthrall me, ravish me' only show the intensity of the poet's feeling who wishes to be totally owned and possessed by God. There is a great use of paradox in the poem. Donne's relation with God is expressed through several paradoxes. Donne can only rise if he is once thrown by God; he can be free only if he is imprisoned by God and he can be chaste only if he is ravished by the Almighty. Another paradox is based on the maxim: preparedness for war is the best guarantee of peace. The poet can gain peace of mind only when God uses violence and snatches him away from the Devil. The tinker must use harsh and violent methods to break the vessel and then reshape it. Similarly, God should burn the impurities in him through the fire of the bellows. The metaphor of the usurped town to be taken by the lawful owner is quite appropriate. Similarly, the usurped body who is in the possession of the Devil should be rescued by God. Freedom and purity can come only through divine consummation.

The idea of violence runs throughout the poem like an undercurrent. The hammering of the tinker or the blacksmith is followed by the siege and capture of the besieged town. The marriage is followed by ravishment. There is a continuous comparison of secular love to divine love. Donne's artistry is evident in his expression of physical love which is used to advantage in portraying holy love. The use of sensual imagery cannot be regarded as incongruous because in the final analysis, it conveys the sincerity and confessional frankness of the poet as a true slave of God.

DEATH BE NOT PROUD

CRITICAL APPRECIATION

The poem is included as Sonnet X in the volume of Holy Sonnets: Divine Meditations. Donne demolishes two popular concepts: firstly death is dreadful and secondly death is mighty. He personifies Death and addresses him directly. Death has a certain power over man and it gives temporary sleep. If death and sleep are like brothers, greater rest and relaxation must come from death.

Death releases the soul from the body's prison. Opium and narcotics can induce sleep like death. Why then should death boast of its great power? The poet therefore calls it "poor death". Moreover, man does not die; his soul lives forever; it is, therefore, death which becomes superfluous and meaningless. The victory of Christian resurrection over death is the last nail in the coffin of death. The poem proves the thesis that death is neither terrible nor powerful.

DEVELOPMENT OF THOUGHT

The poet argues that death is not dreadful because those whom death claims to have killed have a long and peaceful sleep. Sleep resembles death, but just as sleep resembles and invigorates, similarly death would provide more comfort and pleasure. This is the reason for the virtuous dying young. Death brings rest and peace and therefore it is not dreadful.

Death: a slave: - Death is not powerful, as men think. It is not a powerful king but a miserable slave. It is an agent of fate, chance, and actions of wicked people, poison, wars and sickness. Death is a servant of sickness and old age. It induces sleep, but there are various other means like opium and drugs which give a better and gentler sleep. Death has no reason to be proud. It can only make people sleep for some time. After sleep in the grave, people shall wake up on the day of resurrection and live forever. Then death will have absolutely no power over human beings. Thus death's jurisdiction comes to an end. In fact, death does not kill human beings; it is death which itself dies.

The immortality of the soul ensures the survival of man. So, the poem ends on a paradox: Man is immortal; death is mortal.

CRITICAL COMMENTS

Apart from the debating skill and the plausible argument of the poet, there is a lurking fear of death. The allusion to resurrection and immortality does not in any way reduce the fear of death. One is reminded of Bacon's words: "Men fear death, as children fear to go in the dark". The comparisons are common—death as sleep, death as opium, body as prison of the soul. This poem is similar to the sonnet entitled. At the round earth's imagined corners where Donne speaks of death's woe, and the triumph of souls over death on Doomsday. Here Donne emphasizes the impotence of Death.

The structure of the poem facilitates the division of the theme into two parts. The octet proves that death is neither dreadful nor mighty.-The sestet brings the argument to a personal level and regards death as a slave and a door through which the soul passes to immortality. The last line hits the nail on the head. It is not the poet who dies. The poet declares happily: "Death, thou shall die".

TWICKNAM GARDEN

CRITICAL APPRECIATION

"Twicknam Garden" is a sonorous (resonant; high-sounding) and thoughtful lyric. It was most probably addressed to the Countess Lucy of Bedford for whom Donne had a profound admiration. The lyric is distinguished by highly condensed feelings of sadness. The poet is obviously in a mood of dejection. He gives vent to the anguish of his heart which neither nature can soothe nor poetry. Only Donne's emotion is the subject of this lyric. There is a sort of sting in the tail or in the last two lines. Donne calls the fair sex as the perverted sex but excepting this no scornful or bitter comments are made on women.

DEVELOPMENT OF THOUGHT

It is remarkable that the lady to whom the poem is addressed was never in love with Donne. The poet probably mistook her friendly regard for him for love. The poet feels irresistibly drawn toward this "one of the most accomplished and cultured ladies" of the seventeenth century. Her truth kills him, because he is deeply involved in her charm and personality.

The most distinguishing feature of the poem is the atmosphere of sombre desolation that pervades it. This cold, bleak and cheerless atmosphere is in perfect harmony with the anguish of the poet. The poem reminds us of Keats's La Belle Dame Sans Merci and Shelley's song, A Widow Bird Sat Mourning. We find the same bleakness, loneliness, and dry unrelenting aspect of a leaden skied winter. The poem is steeped in grim and overwhelming despair. The poet strikes a piercing note of sadness with the very first line.

Blasted with sighs, and surrounded with tears, the well defined and concrete images drive home the utter despair and incurable pain of a love-lorn heart. For example the cold hardness of a "stone fountain weeping out my tears" and "crystal phials" leave on the mind an unforgettable impression of poignant sorrow. The frigid expression of tears gives a unifying effect to the poem. The poet refers to tears in all the three stanzas. Tears, in fact, control the diversity of imagery that we find in the poem.

The poem contains some of most marvellous of Donne's "conceits". In the first stanza we have the startling conceit of "spider love":

The spider Love, which transubstantiates all,
And can convert manna to gall.

Again, we have an equally brilliant conceit when Donne compares sad and poignant memories of love to the serpent in the garden of Eden:

And that this place may thoroughly be thought,
True paradise, I have the serpent brought.

In the second stanza, the love-lorn poet yearns to be converted into the stone fountain which would be shedding tears throughout the year. In the last stanza, 'tears' are called "Love's wine". All these 'conceits' lend a peculiar charm to the lyric.

"Twicknam Garden" is a short poem, but it is one of the greatest expressions in literature of poignant sorrow and piercing sadness.

Inspired by Lucy: - This poem was perhaps inspired by Donne's passion for the Countess Lucy of Bedford, a highly cultured and accomplished lady who did not feel anything stronger than friendship for the poet. The poet has given a most powerful expression to his frustrated (baffled) passion. His art which we can analyse to some extent, deserves admiration.

An expression of disappointed love: - He comes to Twicknam garden in order that the beautiful sights and sounds around him, might ease his anguish. But no, he finds that his bleak and desolate mood does not yield to the soothing influence of the atmosphere. On the contrary, the trees seemed to be laughing and mocking him to his face. If the garden were as beautiful as the garden of Eden, the thought of love within him was like the serpent to spoil the beauty of the place.

Contrast between the natural atmosphere and the poet's mood: - Donne expresses his mental state in a series of attractive conceits. He is a self-traitor, as he cherishes in his bosom the spider love, which transforms everything, even the heavenly manna can be turned into poison by it. If the garden is paradise, then his passion is the serpent. He wishes to be a mandrake and grow there in the garden (for the mandrake is a plant that feels pain) or a stone fountain, for he is always weeping,

Donne's intellectual contempt for women: - In the third stanza, his intellectual contempt for women is expressed in an intricate series of images. He is the stone fountain and his tears are the true tears of love. Lovers should come and take away in crystal phials these tears and compare them with those shed by their mistresses at home. If those do not taste as Donne's do, then they are not true tears of love. Thus he implores lovers not to be misled by the tears their mistresses shed, for you can no more judge woman's thoughts by their tears than you can judge their dresses by their shadow.

Paradoxical thought in the closing lines: - Donne ends his poem with a paradox (anything that goes against the accepted opinion). The woman, he loves, is true and chaste; she is quite honest, that is why Donne cannot enjoy her love. And it is the perversity of the female sex that the only woman who is honest and true should be the one whose honesty and truth kill the poet, otherwise, perhaps she would not be so chaste and true. In Donne's view, woman is a kind of plague devised by God for man.

CRITICAL COMMENTS

This poem was addressed to the Countess Lucy of Bedford—a cultured and accomplished lady of the seventeenth century. She entertained a friendly affection for Donne the poet, which could hardly be given the name of "love"'. The poet, a sad and forlorn lover, finds himself in a mood of dejection. Even nature fails to soothe his tormented soul. It is a

song of sorrow pervaded by nothing except the bleakness of despair. It expresses the anguish of a lover's heart who has fallen a prey to sorrow and who cannot drown it even in nature. For its sombre atmosphere and intensity of grief, the poem has not been surpassed by any lyric in English poetry. It is a passionate outburst of sorrow expressing yearnings of unfulfilled love. The lady to whom it is addressed was never in love with Donne. It is possible that Donne misconstrued her friendly regard for him. In its poignancy of sorrow, the poem reminds us of Keats's La Belle Dame Sans Merci and Shelley's lyric, A Widow Bird Sat Mourning.

SONG—SWEETEST LOVE

CRITICAL APPRECIATION

This lyric was addressed by the poet to his wife Anne More when he had to take leave of her on the occasion of his undertaking a journey to a foreign country. It is brilliant and unconventional love-lyric which stands out in the entire love-poetry of Donne. It is written in a tripping metre. There, is a freshness and naturalness about this poem which is missing from the honeyed verses of the Elizabethan lyricists and song writers.

DEVELOPMENT OF THOUGHT

It is a singularly frank, realistic and sincere song of parting. The reason is obvious. There is a perfect equality of love between the lover-and the sweet-heart. The lover takes for granted his love for his beloved and vice versa. The artificial fears and sighs of the lover are after the fashion of the poet Petrarch. They are kept at bay because they are so cheap, boring and tiresome. Donne's love-song expresses mutual human, love. Both the lover and his lady-love are grieved at the parting, but the lover being a mail and scholar can deduce some higher thoughts from even this experience, which soothe and calm both of them. Though it is a, simple love-song, there is the development of an intellectual design. The lover feels the sorrow of parting, and even grows some-what pessimistic in stanzas I and III. But abruptly he turns away from thoughts of death and pessimism and begins to dwell upon their mutual relationship. She must not grieve, for that would hurt him, since he is a part of her. In the last stanza sorrow is cast away, and the very idea of parting is dismissed as something irrelevant, since

They who one another keep
Alive, ne'er parted be.

CRITICAL COMMENTS

Love triumphs over the idea of parting. The final stanza is a typical example of Donne's habit to charge emotions with thought Deane is at his best when he allows fullest scope to love, so that it embraces both the body and the spirit.

The lyric contains two beautiful conceits in the last but one stanza, viz.

When thou sigh'st them sigh'st not wind,
But sigh'st my soul away;
When thou weep'st, unkindly kind,
My life's blood doth decay.

AIR AND ANGELS

CRITICAL APPRECIATION

This is a poem of love and has little to do with air and angels. The poet is fed up with the Platonic idea of love—love as something holy and spiritual. He is also not happy with the worship of the beloved and the admiration of her beauty which the Petrarchan poets did.

He realizes the hollowness and hypocrisy of the idealization of love. Love demands something concrete. It must have a physical base. Love can grow only by mutuality and co-operation.

DEVELOPMENT OF THOUGHT

The poet discusses the soul-body relationship. Just as the angels manifest themselves in the air by a voice or light, in the same way love which is something idealistic, must express itself through some concrete medium. In the beginning he thought love was like a spirit or an angel, but subsequently he realised that love must be expressed through a medium, namely the human body. The beloved is the body of the soul of love. Love has now been concretized in the beloved and as such she has become the cynosure of his eyes. He appreciates the beauty of her lips, eyes and brow.

The steadiness of love: - Love cannot exist in a vacuum. It must have a concrete expression. Just as a ballast (heavy load) is necessary to steady the movement of a ship, in the same way, something more important than the appreciation of the bodily beauty is necessary to stabilise love. Mere admiration of her hair or some aspect of her beamy is not enough. There must be a substantial and objective expression of love. What Donne wants is physical union which can give both continuity and stability to man-woman relationship.

Man's active love: - Just as angels need the cover of air in order to be recognisable, so the lover must have the love of the beloved as a sphere for his love. There is, however, a difference between man's love, and woman's love. Man's love may be compared to an angel and woman's love to air. This implies that man is generally more active than woman in the game of love-making. The traditional concept of woman's coyness and modesty does make one feel that she plays the second fiddle in the orchestra of love. But just as there is harmony in the angel-air relationship, there should be mutuality and response in man-woman relationship.

CRITICAL COMMENTS

This is one of the 'highly intellectualised' of Donne's love poems. The title does not suggest the subject of love. Even so, the poet describes divine love in terms of the flesh. He borrows images and concepts from metaphysics, navigation and scholasticism in order to prove the point that both physical base and mutuality ate essential for the experience of love. The idea of using ballast to the ship of love for its smooth sailing is original and so is the concept of the disparity between man's passion and woman's response. That man's love is an angel and woman's love the air, and the harmony of the two is necessary for the concretization and consummation of love provides a sane and fitting conclusion to the poem.

SONG: (GO AND CATCH A FALLING STAR)

CRITICAL APPRECIATION

This song was posthumously published in 1633 in the volume entitled 'Songs and Sonnets'. It was written by Donne in his youth when he saw a good deal of London life. The subject of woman's inconstancy was a stock subject but Donne enlivened it with his personal experience. His gay life in London and his association with different women in London only confirmed his view about woman's faithlessness.

In this poem, the poet, through a series of images, shows the impossibility of discovering a true and faithful woman. While the poets following the Petrarchan tradition made of woman a heroine and a goddess, worthy of love and admiration, the

metaphysical poets poked fun at woman's fashions, weakness and faithlessness. Shakespeare's maxim—"Frailty thy name is woman" —was quite popular in the age of Donne. The fickleness of woman could be more easily experienced than described. The cynical attitude to the fair sex in the early poems of Donne, is in contrast with the rational attitude to love and sex to be found in his later poems.

DEVELOPMENT OF THOUGHT

According to Donne, it is impossible to fins; a loyal and chaste woman. Woman's inconstancy proved a popular subject with the Elizabethan and the Metaphysical poets. The poet, through irony and exaggeration suggests the impossibility of the undertaking to discover a true and fair woman. Fair women will have lovers and therefore it is not possible for them to be faithful to any of them. (Faithfulness on the part of an ugly and uninviting woman can be a possibility because she will not be able to attract lovers). The poet mentions a number of impossible tasks—catching a falling star or meteor, begetting a child on a mandrake root, memory of past years, finding the name of the person who clove the Devil's foot, listening to the music of the fabulous mermaids, changing human nature so as to make it indifferent to envy and jealousy or finding out the climate which would promote man's honesty. Just as it is impossible to do these jobs, in the same way it is impossible to find a faithful woman. Even if a man were to travel throughout the world for ten thousand days and nights—this would cover more than twenty-seven years—till his hair grew grey, he would not come across a faithful woman. He might have seen many wonderful scenes and sights, but he would not have seen the most wonderful sight of all—that of a true and fair woman.

A real pilgrimage: - The poet is very keen on discovering a true and fair woman if there be any such in the world. If any one tells the poet that there is such a woman, he would go on a pilgrimage to see her. She would really deserve his admiration and worship. The poet, however, feels that the journey will be futile, for even such woman's faithfulness will be temporary. By the time one writes a letter to her, she would have enjoyed with two or three lovers. Hence the poet despairs about seeing any constant woman.

CRITICAL COMMENTS

Though technically the poem is a 'song' which should have sweetness, lilt and smoothness, it has a lot of argument. The colloquial form of the poem—the speaking voice in a real situation—deserves attention. The rhythm is similar to that of speech rhythm which changes according to the needs of the argument. 'The breaking of the tetrameter form in lines seven and eight (with two syllables each) is a dramatic device that projects tension rather than irregularity, and indicates the stress that one would use in a dramatic reading. "The poet constantly indulges in dislocating the accepted rhythms, dropping his lines most unexpectedly (though always giving us pleasant surprises) but the final impression is not one of confession but of an inner logic of the poet's experience". The use of hyperbole is understandable: "Ten thousand days and nights till age snow white hairs on thee". The witty ironic reversal in the last stanza is a device commonly used by Donne. All his journey and trouble in finding a true and fair woman would result in 'love's labour lost'. The poet draws images from a wide field of knowledge—mythology, Christianity and legendary love. He proves his thesis with a masculine gusto and youthful vivacity.

A VALEDICTION: OF WEEPING

CRITICAL APPRECIATION

The poem A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning was written practically at the same time, when the poet was about to leave for a visit to a foreign country. The poet wants to tell his wife to take this temporary separation in her stride and neither to lament or weep, for after all, this will only disturb the peace of mind of both staying at different places. How to take a separation with tears or sighs or with patience and resignation, this is the theme of the poem. Playing on the image of floods and tides, the poet ultimately comes to the conclusion that mutual understanding and forebearance are necessary, for romantic lamenting and sighing will only increase their sorrow and frustration.

DEVELOPMENT OF THOUGHT

In the beginning, the poet wants to weep out his heart—just to give an outlet to his pent-up feeling for his wife—because he is going out and this separation is intolerable. Of course, the poet's wife is as unhappy as the poet himself at the prospect of separation and loneliness. The poet's tears are worth something because they bear his wife's stamp—"thy face coins, them," but with copious tears, the two are reduced to nothing. It is therefore better that they should weep no more.

The poet compares the tear to a globe and the tears shed by his wife will overflow the world. His tears combined with hers, will cause a deluge and much unhappiness. In fact, the deluge will destroy both of them though they never intended that both of them should die thus

Tides and storms: - The poet's wife, like the moon, is capable of causing high tides capable of drowning the poet. Similarly, her sighs are powerful enough to cause sea-storms which may hasten his death. So at the end, the poet suggests that they should desist from sighing 'one another's death' because it would be mutually destructive. The poet feels that weeping at the time of separation is natural, but it has to be reduced to the minimum because it will destroy the peace of mind of both of them.

CRITICAL COMMENTS

There is an organic development of imagery. One image leads to the other. For example the tear is first compared to a coin and this leads to the 'stamp', and the 'mint' and the 'sovereign' and the 'worth'. The tear is round like a globe; the globe has a number of continents; their profuse tears will drown the creation, the universe and thereby destroy it like the Deluge. The beloved is like the moon. She will cause 'tides' and 'storms' and subsequent 'death'. All these images are interlinked, and convey a sense of unified sensibility. There is another image of round and 'pregnant' tears. The tears are round and large like pregnancy, because they hold a reflection of the beloved inside them. Similarly, the falling of tears indicates the falling of the beloved, and thus being reduced to 'nothing'. The poet draws images from geography, theology and astronomy. Even so he does not lose his grip on reality. The situation of the impending separation is faced boldly and the need of poise and patience is stressed. William Empson writes in this connection: "Its passion exhausts itself; it achieves at the end the sense of reality he was looking for, and for some calm of mind."

A VALEDICTION: FORBIDDING MOURNING

CRITICAL APPRECIATION

This is a personal poem showing the pure love and devotion of the poet to his beloved. Some persons feel that the poem is addressed to his wife Anne More.

The poet is about to leave in the end of 1611 for a short visit to France but this absence of a few weeks may not be taken as an occasion of separation and lamentation. The

poet's wife was in a bad state of health. The poet shows the uniqueness of true love and that it can stand separation on account of mutual confidence and affection. This separation may be deemed like death, but as good men are not afraid of death, true lovers are not afraid of separation. This is not a farewell to love, but an exposition of true and devoted love which can stand the shock of temporary separation, because it is not based on sex or physical attraction.

The critics differ about the quality and type of argument used by Donne to console his partner. Helen Gardner thinks that this is 'not an argument to use to a wife who has no need to hide her grief at her husband's absence', and therefore the poem may be regarded as an address of a lover to his lady friend. Coleridge, however, remarked: "It is an admirable poem which none but Donne could have written. Nothing was ever more admirably made than the figure of the compass" Dr. Johnson disliked the image of the compass and observed: "To the comparsion of a man that travels and his wife stays at home with a pair of compasses, it may be doubted whether absurdity or ingenuity has the better claim". Grierson, however, admired it as 'the tenderest of Donne's love poems'. In spite of the differences of opinion there is no doubt that the love mentioned in the poem is pure and realistic.

DEVELOPMENT OF THOUGHT

The poet addresses his beloved to offer her consolation for his short absence. Just as virtuous men are not afraid of death, in the same way true lovers are not afraid of separation. Separation only tests their loyalty and devotion. Ordinary lovers who are addicted to sex may not be able to stand separation. Therefore, his beloved should neither shed tears nor heave sighs. This absence is a sort of touch-stone to test their mutual love.

Men are afraid of earthquakes and the damage caused by them. However, the movement of the heavenly bodies, though much greater and more violent, is quiet and harmless. Similarly, ordinary lovers may lament a separation but their love is so holy and pure that in spite of separation, they have no feeling of loneliness. Their love is so chaste and refined that physical absence does not matter to them at all. Their love is not based on physical enjoyment.

Pure love: - The lovers cannot define the nature and essence of their pure love. It is a refined love of the mind and has nothing to do with the joys of sex. Their souls are one. Temporary separation cannot cause a breach of love. Absence extends the domain and expanse of love. Just as gold is beaten to thinness and its purity is in no way affected, in the same way their pure love will expand and in no way lose its essence. The lovers are like a lump of gold and the quality of their love cannot change. The frontiers of their love will extend and their mutual confidence and loyalty will in no way be affected.

A pair of compasses: - Donne employs the conceit of 'twin compasses'. Their souls may be two but they are united at a centre like the two sides of a compass. The soul of the beloved is like the fixed foot of the compass as she stays at home. The poet's soul is like the other foot of the compass which moves, so to say in a circle. The fixed foot leans towards the moving foot, and afterwards, the moving foot rejoins the fixed foot. The rejoining of the encircling foot suggests the return of the poet to his beloved and their union—in spite of their separate identities—is the very consummation and joy of love. The poet proves that in spite of separation, the lovers are united in mutual affection and loyalty. James Reeves writes in this connection: "We are like the two legs of a pair of compasses, you are the fixed one in the centre. Further my soul goes from yours, the more yours leans towards mine; and as mine comes home, so yours revives. Your soul is the centre of my being, and keeps mine constant as it circles round you."

CRITICAL COMMENTS

The poem consists of nine quartrains and is quite smooth in its rhythm. However, its images and conceits enrich its significance. The comparison of separation to death is obvious. Just as good people face death patiently and quietly, in the same way, true lovers face separation willingly. Ordinary lovers may view separation as an earthquake because their love is based on the physical relationship. True lovers are like the heavenly bodies, the movement of which is greater and violent but causes no injury or harm. Holy love is not affected by movement or change of environment. There is another conceit of the gold beaten to thinness. The quality of the gold remains unaffected though its area and its dimensions increase. In the same way, the quality of love remains constant in spite of the extension of the gambit of love. The best conceit of the stiff twin compasses is extremely appropriate and fits the theme like a glove. The individuality of the lover is maintained while their basic unity, is symbolised by the screw which fixes the two sides of the compass. This fixed foot rotates while the moving foot revolves in a circle and then gets rejoined to the fixed foot. While moving foot circumscribes, the fixed foot leaves it, showing the mutuality and interdependence of the two. In this connection A. J. Smith writes:

"The subject of this poem is a metaphysical problem; that of the union of the lovers even when they are separated…It is in the very respect in which they are separated, that he wishes to show his lovers are united. The souls are one substance, which has the invisibility of air, but also the obvious unity of a lump of gold. It is to stress this last point that the compasses are brought in. For gold, though originally solid enough, falls under suspicion of being likely to vanish away, once it has been compared to air. Compasses do not vanish; they have not the remotest connection either with physical or metaphysical subtlety. Hence, once the needful subtlety has been expanded, they close the poem and symbolize it—not, however, by their oddity."

The strength of the poem lies in its argument and the use of appropriate conceits and images. Sometimes hyperbole is used to emphasise a point that "tears" are floods and 'sighs' are tempests. The poet has been able to prove his point that his absence is no cause for mourning for his beloved because their love is pure and constant.

THE RELIC

CRITICAL APPRECIATION

This is one of the important poems addressed to Mrs. Magdelen Herbert who was the poet's friend and benefactor. It would be difficult to imagine as some people feel that this poem might refer to some other woman whom Donne knew in his youth.

Moreover, some other poems also connected with Herbert, like The Blossom, and The Funeral, make one feel that this poem too refers to the poet's same friend. There was nothing wrong in writing about a married woman. One of the Petrarchan ways of courtship was the poet's addressing and worshipping the lady from a distance and deriving a sort of vicious satisfaction from holy love. His Platonic love for the lady is reflected in the poem 'Relic' means a part or momento of some holy person or some souvenir or keep-sake worshipped after his death and which is supposed to have miraculous powers. The lover has got a relic—a bracelet of bright hair from his beloved and he keeps it tied round his wrist. After his death, this relic will continue to remain on his body and this will be an object of adoration or worship for the later generation of lovers. It is not only a symbol of love but also a sort of miracle because it shows that love is independent of physical wish. This sort of holy or sex-less love is indeed a miracle. It represents a mirror of souls where even the difference of sex is obliterated.

Moreover, in this kind of pure love, the lovers did not know what they loved and why they loved. This nuptial and Platonic love defies description and is beyond the powers of language and communication.

DEVELOPMENT OF THOUGHT

The poem begins with a horrible situation—some persons are digging the poet's grave in order to bury some other dead body. There is a dig at woman's constancy because a grave can accommodate more than one corpse at a time. The person digging his grave will find a 'bracelet of bright hair about the bone'. How it is possible to find 'bright hair' when the grave is full of dust and insects, is not explained by the poet. The digger will think that it is the grave of a loving couple and the bracelet of hair is a device to make the souls meet at the grave on the Day of Judgement and stay for a little while together.

Wishful adoration: - If the grave is dug in some heathen age or land, the bracelet will be brought to the king or the Bishop to be blessed and recognized as a Relic. The hair shall perhaps be regarded as a relic of Mary Magdalen and the poet's bones as those of Christ or some other saint. Such relics will be worshipped by the lovers for its miraculous powers. The later lovers will feel that their love will be rewarded with success if they worship the relic.

Miracles of love: - The poet and his beloved were engaged in a sort of Platonic love-relationship. They did not know what they loved in each other and why, though they loved 'well and faithfully'. Moreover, their love was not dependent on sexual relationship. Their love was 'independent of the difference of sex just as the love of guardian angels is not physical but spiritual. Their love was based on a close affinity between the two souls. The lovers may have exchanged formal courtesies of kissing at the time of meeting or separation, but there was nothing more than that Donne seems to suggest that the state of nature permitted free physical sex while our human laws have restricted sexual freedom. This may have a reference to the marriage of his lady-friend to Mr. Herbert. His love has been restricted by the lady's marriage and as such his love can now only be 'Platonic', such a love cannot be described in words. The greatest miracle is that this was a sexless and pure love arid the beauty of the beloved is almost unsurpassed. She is a miracle of beauty and object of holy devotion.

CRITICAL COMMENTS

In spite of the poet's adoration of his beloved in a mood of Platonic love, he cannot help satirising the sex in general. In the lines three and four he has a fling at the inconstancy of woman because his beloved, like any woman, can have more than one man in her bed. Secondly, he lashes at women for their superstition in worshipping the bracelet of bright hair as a relic—"All women shall adore us." He thinks that men are not so foolish or superstitious as women. Therefore, the relic will be adored by 'some men'.

Three-fold theme: - The poem deals with love, death and religion. Pure love, as presented in this poem defies death. At the same time, this love lives through a momento or souvenir—'the bracelet of bright hair'. There is a kind of contradiction as this pure love is dependent on a small bit of hair. If it were a true union of souls it would not need such a flimsy token. The idea of death is emphasised by the grave and the Day of Judgment. Religion is brought in through the Bishop, "the last busy day', 'Mary Magdalen' and 'guardian angels'. The worship of the poet and his beloved as saints of love alter their death is a great tribute to their holy love. In fact, love becomes as sacred as religion. The three topics are intimately related to one another.

Philosophy of love: - Here, the poet deals with a higher and spiritual love. It is based on 'feelings' and mutual understanidng. This kind of spiritual love is seldom found in the world. This sort of holy love is a sort of miracle both for man and woman.

Style: - The poem consists of three stanzas, each of eleven lines. The fifth and seventh lines are shorter than the rest. This is a poem of fancy where the miracle of hair in the grave sets the ball rolling. The unusual comparisons—grave and woman, lovers and guardian-angels, the beloved and Mary Magdalen add to the charm of the poem. The laws injuring the otherwise seals of nature set free is also a fanciful figure of speech. All in all, we must admire the originality of the poem and the fancies which are enriched by Donne's sallies against woman.

THE FLEA

CRITICAL APPRECIATION

The flea has been the subject of love-poetry. The argument used by the poet is that the flea has a free access to the body of the beloved which is denied to the lover. Donne, however, makes a plea for physical union, which is necessary for spiritual love. Donne's originality and intensity makes it a powerful lyric. Grierson observes: "It is a strange choice to our mind, but apparently the poem was greatly admired as a masterpiece." Coleridge paid a tribute in a poem:

> **Thrice-honoured fleas; great you all as Donne**
> **In Phoebus archives registered are ye,**
> **And this your patent of nobility.**

DEVELOPMENT OF THOUGHT

The flea is a symbol of the poet's passionate plea for physical and sensuous love. The lover speaks to his beloved as he points to the flea which has sucked her blood. The flea has also sucked his blood and therefore the bloods of the lover and the beloved have mixed in its body. It has brought about a union of two bloods. The flea has enjoyed union with the beloved without any courtship or marriage. This is not considered as a matter of sin or shame or loss of virginity. The flea is superior to the lover because it can enjoy physical union without the formality of marriage.

Triple murder: - Donne goes a step further. He compares the flea to a temple and to a marriage bed. Just as the two lovers are united in the temple in a bond of marriage, so the two bloods have been united in the body of the flea. Its body is a sacred temple where their marriage has taken place. Similarly, their blood has mingled in the body of the flea and so its (flea's) body is like their marriage bed. The two have mixed up in the body of the flea in spite of her objections and those of her parents. Her killing the flea would be an act of triple murder—murder of the flea, murder of the lover and her own murder. This is a sin and so she must spare the flea.

No loss of honour: - The beloved kills the flea and the poet feels unhappy. He chides her for her cruelty. What, after all, was the crime of the flea? She sucked the blood of both. Sucking a drop of her blood has not made her weak; she has also not lost her honour or chastity. Just as she has felt no weaker and lost no honour by the sucking of the blood by the flea, in the same way, her physical union with the lover will not affect either her health or her honour. She should, therefore, willingly surrender herself to her lover. The poet has rejected the notions of honour or chastity which are generally held out as arguments against sexual indulgence. Even spiritual love has its prelude in physical love. Why should his beloved object to his overtures?

CRITICAL COMMENTS

Donne uses new images and conceits to advantage through the flea-bite. First, the mingling of the bloods of the lover and the beloved in the body of the flea is no matter of sin or shame. The flea has brought about the mingling of the blood of the two and therefore there should be no objection to their sex-relationship. The conceit of the flea as a temple and as a marriage-bed is original, so also the sin of triple-murder by the proposed crushing of the flea by the beloved. When the beloved has killed the flea with her nails, the poet regards it as shedding blood of innocence. Her victory over the flea is imaginary rather than real. She will lose as much honour by sexual relationship with the poet as the honour lost by the flea-bite.

Donne believes in physical relationship between the lovers. Sex is above fear or shame. The world of the lovers is different from the ordinary world. However, critics differ about the justification of sex-relationship. James Keeve calls the poem "cynical and unpleasant", while A.J. Smith regards it anti-courtly and anti-Petrarchan. There is no doubt that the poet's plea for physical union is both personal and original. The poem is remarkable for its emotional intensity and vigour.

THE GOOD MORROW

CRITICAL APPRECIATION

This is one of the finest poems of Donne explaining the complex nature of love. Initially, love has an element of fun and sex. It is like the dark night—an experience which is hot quite clear. But with the dawn, the true nature of things is revealed. The title suggests the dawn of the true love, its essential quality and the mutual understanding and confidence between the souls of the lover and the beloved. This kind of pure love provides a complete world to the lovers—a world without coldness, fear and decay. It is much better than the physical world. This perfect love is neither subject to time nor death.

DEVELOPMENT OF THOUGHT

In the beginning, the poet examines the nature of the first experiences of love. The first set of experiences is childish—the physical joys of love. The second set of experiences is much richer—it is the experience of spiritual love in which the voices of one soul are echoed by the other soul. The mature experiences of love make one disregard the first foolish acts of love, when so to say, the souls were asleep in the den of seven sleepers. The poet can only dream of true love in the first stage. The atmosphere of sleep, stupor and dream shows the fleeting and unstable nature of this kind of immature love.

The dawn of true love: - The past life spent in childish love was a sort of dream and blank. The night of oblivion and unreality is about to end. The dawn of true love is imminent and it awakens the soul of lovers to the meaning of true love. This true love makes them open out their hearts to each other, without any fear or inhibition. Their love for each other is all-absorbing and all-satisfying. They have no delight in other scenes or places. Each is like a world to the other. This world of love is everywhere. The poet is happy with the world of love. Let sailors discover new worlds and make charts and maps of the lands they have discovered. On the other hand, the lovers are content in their own worlds. Each of them has a world, but the two worlds of the two lovers put together, make one world of love.

The two hemispheres: - As the lovers look at each other, each of them sees his own image in the other's eyes. Their looks reflect the simplicity, purity and honesty of their hearts. Their two faces may be compared to two hemispheres which together make up a whole world. The two hemispheres of the faces of lovers are better than the geographical

hemispheres, because they do not have the 'sharp North' and the 'declining West'. The 'sharp North' implies coldness and indifference—to which their love is not subject—and the 'declining West' symbolises decay and death from which the lovers are free. According to certain philosophers, when different elements, which go into the making of a thing, are not harmoniously mixed, the thing is liable to decay and death. This is not true of their love because their love is harmonious, and is sweet-blooded. As such their love is immortal and beyond the vagaries of time and clime.

CRITICAL COMMENTS

In his inimitable way, Donne begins the poem with a question—what thou and I did till we loved? This rhetoric easily captures the attention of the reader. The poet compares the first stage of love—sex and enjoyment—with the mature type of love, the harmonious relationship of two souls. There is a lot of difference between the two types of love. The poet's wit is seen in his contrast between the two worlds—the worlds of the lovers and the geographical world. There is no 'sharp North' or 'declining West' in the world of lovers. It is a mutual love equal in quality and spirit—balanced and harmonised in such a manner that it is not subject to time or decay. The poet proceeds from the night-scene and the experience of sleepy love to the morning of pure love which gives him a new life and makes him discover a world in their little room. No navigator has ever found a world as wonderful as the world of love. This discovery of true love is as welcome as the greeting of a new day.

Donne's manner is that of 'concentration' advancing the argument in stages, reasoning till he is able to prove his point and drive it home to the reader. Like an able lawyer he presses his point in such a manner that it is very hard to refute it. Moreover, hemarshalls his images from different sources in such a way that the cumulative effect is irresistible. Grierson rightly points out that the imagery has been drawn from a variety of sources, i.e. myths of everyday life, e.g. 'the seven sleepers' den, 'suck'd on country pleasures' and 'wishing in the morning', 'one-little room'; the geographical world, 'sea-discoveries', 'Maps', 'hemispheres'; and lastly, the scholastic philosophy 'what-ever dyes, was not mixt equally'. The relation between one object and the other is made intellectually rather than verbally.

Donne's method in spite of his scholarly references is not pedantic and appeals to the lay reader by its sincerity and sharp reasoning.

THE CANONIZATION

CRITICAL APPRECIATION

Love has been an object of fun and hair-splitting with the metaphysical poets. Donne has also dealt with different moods of love and has played with its several fancies and visions. In this poem, however, he has taken a positive and serious view of love. It is a selfless and saintly affection as worthy of respect as worship. Here we find his great devotion to Anne Moore—his beloved—though the marriage marred his career and brought him into disrepute. The main idea is that his love does not interfere with the lives of others and so why should they take exception to it. Donne's passion is physical and the lovers really believe in sexual indulgence. Their bodies become one and so do their souls, as in a religious mystery.'

The paradox: - Donne treats physical love as if it were divine love. Saints are canonized for their renunciation of the world and its comforts. In the same way, the lovers have renounced the material world. The love of Donne for his beloved causes no damage or injury to the society or to the world. Other people continue to carry on their

normal daily chores and duties. The lovers have lost the world but gained more in the world of each other. The lovers are, so to say, dead to the world. They have, therefore, deserved the status of saints. They are the saints whose blessings other lovers will invoke. The lovers are devoted to each other as a saint is devoted to God. Some people may regard it as paradox of Christian Canonization, but there is no doubt that the tone of the poem is both serious and convincing.

DEVELOPMENT OF THOUGHT

The debate: - Donne begins his argument with a friend who dissuades him from love-making. He tells him to stop his nonsensical talk and allow him to love. Let his friend regard his love as a natural or hereditary disease. Let his friend mind his own business and look after his own career and fortune.

Love is harmless: - After all, the poet's love does not cause any harm or damage to anyone. It does not disturb the even flow of social life. His sighs and tears have caused no offence to anyone. People are busy in their own affairs. His profession is love and so why should anyone take objection to it

Secret of love: - The poet deals with the secret of love. Love is an association or union of two persons. Human isolation is awful; the lovers find mutual satisfaction in love. They are like flies and tapers which enjoy being consumed to extinction. Like the Phoenix, the lovers are resurrected from their ashes. Both are consumed by the fire of passion and out of this consummation emanates their resurrection. Physical love is elevated to the plane of spiritual love.

Life beyond death: - The poet and his beloved are prepared to die for love if they cannot live by love. The tale of their death will form the subject of love poets. Their love will be commemorated in lyric and sonnets. They will attain the status of saints of love. People will copy their love and regard it as a model.

Martyr-saints: - Lovers will worship the poet and his beloved as the martyrs to love. Lovers will invoke the blessings of these martyr saints. Love will bring them both peace and solace. Like them other lovers will devote themselves entirely to their respective beloveds. Each will find in his beloved the whole soul of the world. The lovers will pray to God to grant them the same kind of true love which the poet and the beloved enjoyed while living in the world.

CRITICAL COMMENTS

Mark the sudden and dramatic opening line of the poem. The first two stanzas are rhetorical full of contempt and rebuff for those who argue against love. There is a lot of hyperbole. Can 'sighs' turn into 'sea storms' or 'tears' cause floods or the 'heat of passion' cause plagues. Donne uses these metaphors to laugh at the Petrarchan paraphernalia of love. Donne also laughs at two good professions—soldiering and litigation which make fun of love.

Organic imagery is a strong point of the poem. The two lovers moving round each other like flies or again consuming themselves like tapers; or again the images of the eagle and the dove—the violent one preying on the weak, and ultimately the riddle of the Phoenix indicate the whole process of love from courtship to consummation of love. Though they are two, they are one, of the neutral sex like the Phoenix. As the Phoenix is reborn from its ashes, the lovers are reborn (revitalised) after sexual indulgence. In fact, Donne treats physical love like divine love. The canonization which leads to the lovers being regarded as the martyr saints of love will make them a model of love. The 'rage' of love will be transformed into peace. The lovers need no mention in history-books or any

monuments or inscriptions. Donne's wit is seen in his mention of the King's face—the real one in the court, the fake one stamped on coins. The lovers' eyes are the mirrors in which each sees the reflection or the image of the other. Each eye contains the whole world with its countries, towns and courts. In short, the poem shows the craftsmanship of Donne at its best.

THE FUNERAL

CRITICAL APPRECIATION

This poem is a mixture of light-heartedness and seriousness. The poet has been rejected by his beloved. In sheer desperation and agony he wishes to sacrifice his life as a martyr on the altar of the god of love.

But in the meantime, he has secured a token of love from his beloved. This is a lock of her hair which he has worn round his arm. He thinks that the beloved's hair will preserve his dead body and prevent it from decay and disintegration. It is a kind of charm or rather an embodiment of the outward soul which will give him immortality. The poet ultimately wishes to die as a martyr but fearing that the hair may be worshipped as a relic, he wants it to be buried in the grave along with him. This will be a sort of revenge on the cruel beloved, because some part of her body will be in the grave while she is still alive.

DEVELOPMENT OF THOUGHT

The idea of the bracelet of the beloved's hair worn by the poet is the central theme of another, poem called The Relic. There the poet mentions that the hair is a sort of device which will make the souls of the lover and the beloved meet at the grave and spend some time together before the Day of Judgment. The bracelet of hair will also be regarded as a relic, sought by all men and women in need of love. This relic will be expected to perform miracles and bring success to lovers. In this poem, however, the hair is supposed to save the lover's dead body from disintegration. Secondly, the hair is a sort of a hand-cuff or fetter for causing pain to lover. The poet wants the hair buried with him as a sort of revenge on his beloved for his rejection. So, the bracelet of hair worn by the lover leads to an entirely different situation in this poem.

The poet wants no one to take away or destroy the bracelet of hair on his arm because it is a kind of charm which will preserve the limbs of the body. Just as the brain controls all the parts of the body, in the same way, her hair will hold together the limbs of his body in an organic whole. Perhaps the beloved never thought of this. She thought that her hair was a kind of charm or manacle to cause suffering to the lover. The poet, however, feels that he must punish the beloved for rejecting his love. He will commit suicide and thereby become love's martyr. He will have the satisfaction of carrying a part of the beloved to the grave. If she could not save him from dying, he could not help burying a part of her body.

CRITICAL COMMENTS

The poem contains three stanzas of eight lines each. Lines two, five and seven are comparatively short. This is a typical poem which uses the conceit of the hair which first causes some satisfaction and then some justification and anguish. The poet uses the image of the soul and the brain for the function performed by the hair. Then he compares the hair to manacles and as such a source of pain and suffering. Finally, the hair may become a relic and a piece of idolatry. All these fanciful images are used by the poet in order to express his anger and frustration. All in all, the poem records a series of

moods or attitudes of the rejected lover centred on the subtle wreath of the beloved's hair on his arm.

THE SUN RISING

CRITICAL APPRECIATION

"The Sun Rising" is a typical poem by Donne, characterised by his usual vigour, sprightliness and freshness. It is a "saucy, muscular poem". It expresses a lover's vexation against sun-rising. The dawn is regarded as an impertinence which comes to disturb the lovers. The poet is delightfully out-spoken and defiant. He ridicules the sun as a "saucy pedantic wretch" and calls in question his right to peep through windows and curtains of a lover's bed-room. There is defiance, contempt, perfect love and the deftly moving shuttle of metaphysical conceit. The supremacy of love which transcends both time and space, for it knows 'no season and no climes' is established with a daring jugglery of words.

DEVELOPMENT OF THOUGHT

This poem, like most of Donne's love-poems is inspired by the poet's love for his wife, Anne Moore. Donne's love amounts to a passion. It is a perfect synthesis of the spiritual and physical love. There are brilliant metaphysical conceits in the second and third stanzas of the poem. For example, the beloved is supposed to be combining in herself all the fragrance and the gold of East and West Indies:

> **Look and to-morrow late tell me,**
> **Whether both th' Indias of spice and mine,**
> **Be where though left'st them, or lie here with me.**

The lover and the beloved are compared to all the states and all the princes of the world, rolled into one:

> **She's all slates, and all princes I;**
> **Nothing else is;**

The lover's bed room is considered to be the epitome of the whole world.

> **Shine here on us and thou art everywhere.**

The poem is singularly free from the conventional and sentimental clap trap of love that was such a marked feature of Elizabethan love poetry. Donne's beloved rises superior to all the Elizabethan sweet-hearts in-as-much as she is an exalted being—she is all the states of the world rolied into one, she combines in herself all the fragrance of spices and all the gold of rich mine.

CRITICAL COMMENTS

A successful love poem: -The Sun Rising is one of the most successful love—poems of Donne. As a poet of love he can be an extreme realist and deals with the physical side of it as also its spiritual side. Here he treats of a situation very significant for wedded lovers, but unusual in the poetry of love—two lovers in bed who refuse to get up when the sun shines on them in the morning.

Language—bold and extravagant: - The poet chides the sun in language which for its boldness is unmatched in lyric poetry. The sun is a busy, and old fool; it is a saucy, and pedantic wretch. It can go and chide late school boys and apprentices, but has no jurisdiction over the poet and his wife. Lover's seasons do not run to the motions of the sun:

> **Love, all alike, no season knows nor clime,**

Nor hours, days, months, which are the rags of time.

Full or metaphysical conceits: - In expressing his contempt for the sun, the poet displays all his learning and metaphysical wit, and extravagant conceit and employed in glorifying his beloved. Recent geographical discoveries supply him with the image of "both the Indias of spice and mine" (India and the West Indies and America). His wife is to him these two Indias in one.

Extravagant fancy: - The poet's extravagant fancy discovers that he and his beloved in their secure possession of each other, are like all states and princes to each other. Princes only imitate them. She is all the world contracted into one feminine form and hence, by shining on her, the sun performs his duty towards the whole earth. Following up this conceit, the poet says that if the sun shines on him and his wife, it is, in a sense, shining everywhere—the bed becomes its centre and the walls of the bed room its sphere.

Conclusion: - The poem is remarkable for its boldness of thought and originality of execution. The way in which the sun is made to appear as an unwelcome guest and the way in which he is finally allowed to stay in the bedroom of the lovers, are the most striking examples of Donne's poetic inventiveness and ingenuity. The poet after establishing the supremacy of love, permits the sun, (in a very patronising manner, of course) to stay in his bed-room.

In this poem, the lover chides (rebukes) sun-rising because it disturbs the lovers. Love is above the sense of time. It knows no hours, days or months. The sun should not call on lovers; it should call on school apprentices, courtiers and country ants. Love knows no season nor clime. The whole world has contracted into the lover's bed-room. Thus the sun need not go round the earth, it should only pay a visit to the lover's bedroom and it would meet the whole world there.

THE ECSTASY

CRITICAL APPRECIATION

It is a complex and metaphysical poem dealing with the twin aspects of love—physical and spiritual. Some critics like Legouis find in it a plan for seduction with emphasis on the physical nature of love, while others like Helen Gardner find in it an affirmation of spiritual love. In fact, it deals with the relationship of the body and the soul in love.

What is 'extasie'? : - 'Extasie' is essentially a religous experience in which the individual soul, ignoring the body, holds converse with Divinity. It is a feeling of trance, of spiritual exaltation, and of Samadhi where the individual has a vision of the divine. Donne applies the feeling to the experience of the lovers and finds that the essence of love is not sex but an overpowering feeling of unity in diversity. In fact, true love is an activity of the soul. A new soul emanates from the two individual souls and makes the lover realise that love is, in its pure essence, spiritual. Donne has also interpreted love in a philosophic way. Love is an idea or a concept concretized through physical enjoyment of sex. He has also interpreted it according to the Platonic concept the desire of the moth for the star, longing of one soul to seek communication with another. Another idea introduced in the poem has been borrowed from astronomy. Just as heavenly bodies are moved by "intelligences" i.e., angelic spirits, in the same way souls are the motivating forces in human love, though they have no existence of their own. They are linked with the body, which is the overt and apparent machinery for love-making. The soul expresses itself through the body. In other words, the body is a medium used by the soul to achieve the consummation of love. Thus the poem uses a religious and mystical experience to interpret the complexity and depth of secular love.

DEVELOPMENT OF THOUGHT

The physical setting: - The first stanza provides the physical setting of the two lovers. On the bank of a river over grown with violet flowers, the lovers sit quiet, looking into each other's eyes and holding hands firmly. This physical closeness offers a romantic and pastoral setting—their hands cemented in mutual confidence and the eyes as if strung on a thread. This sensually exciting scene is a forerunner to the actual physical union.

The poet compares the two lovers to the two armies. The souls are like the negotiators. They are not committed to either side. Only those who are gifted can understand the dialogue of the two souls, and realize the true nature of love.

True nature of love: - The communication of the souls of lovers reveals the true essence of love. Love is not sex-experience. It is rather a union of two souls. Each soul appears to keep its identity and as in horticulture, by transplantation the plant grows stronger and better, the new soul has a great strength and vitality. The fusion of the two souls is the real consummation of love. The new soul is composed of 'atoms' which are beyond decay. Just as the essence of the individual is not the body but the soul, in the same way, the essence of love is not sex but mutual dependence and affection. The body is no dross, but an alloy necessary for pure metals to become stronger. The body is the channel for the souls to inter-communicate with each other.

Is love physical or spiritual? : - To this old and complex question, Donne has a satisfactory answer. Love is dependent both on the soul and body. Love has to be concretized. This is possible only through the physical play of love. Donne feels that physical love is enriched by the mutual understanding of the souls of the two lovers. Spiritual love is not possible in a vacuum. Like heavenly beings who influence the actions of men through manifestation, the souls must express themselves through the bodies. The poet feels that an isolated soul is like a captive prince. Souls must return to the bodies and manifest the mystery of love. As from the blood comes strength and vigour which acts as an agent of the soul and binds together elements which go into the making of man, so the body and the sense organs are at the disposal and service of the lovers' souls, otherwise the soul cannot express themselves. The body is the book of the love. Great mystics have also pleaded for the evolution of physical love towards holy or divine love.

Finally, the poet feels that love ripens in the soul. As such, physical love and holy love are complementary. If some lover observes the poet and his beloved, he will hardly find any change in their behaviour when the lovers return to their bodies.

CRITICAL REMARKS

The poet employs an unusual desire through 'extasie' which means 'to stand out". The souls of the poet and his beloved as it were, stand out of their respective bodies and hold a dialogue revealing the true nature of their love. In a religious 'extasie' the soul holds a communication with God. Here the conversation is not between the soul and God but between two souls. Donne has artistically explained the religious and philosophical belief to throw light on physical and sensuous love. The greatness of the poem lies in reconciling the opposites—physical love with spiritual love, metaphysical belief with the scientific, the abstract with the concrete, the human element with the non-human. The images and the conceits are carefully selected to support the poet's views. The romantic setting in the beginning of the poem sets the mood of physical love—the violet flowers, the holding of hands and the cementing of the balms and the threading of the eye beams. The physical aspect of love must precede the spiritual union. Then comes the image of two armies and the soul acting as negotiator. Then, there are the images of the

new soul—emanating out of the two souls — stronger and abler because it is made out of 'atoms'. The inter-dependence of the body and the soul is expressed through metaphors. The souls are moving spirits, while the bodies are the 'sphere' in which the 'intelligences' move. Just as the stars and planets give rise to natural phenomena which affect the fortunes of human beings, in the same way the soul must find expression through the body. Just as the spirits of blood unite the physical and metaphysical in love, so souls express themselves through the five senses in the body. The image of the body as lovers, is very vivid and convincing.

The poet shifts quickly from the physical to the spiritual and therefore this poem has an edge over other metaphysical poems. The very fact that critics disagree about the objective of the poem—seduction or spiritual transport—shows the complexity and the diversity of possible interpretations. On the whole, the critics praise the poet for his excellent performance. Coleridge said: "I would never find fault with metaphysical poems, were they all like this(Extasie) or just half as excellent." James Smith commended the poem in the following words: "Donne does not write about many things; he is content with the identity of lovers as lovers, and their diversity as the human beings in which love manifests itself, the stability and self sufficiency of love, contrasted with the mutability and dependence of human beings; with the presence of lovers to each other, their physical unity, though they are separated by travel and death, the spirit demanding the succour of the flesh hampering the spirit, the shortcoming of this life, summarised by decay and death, contrasted with the divine to which it aspires."

For reconciling the dichotomy between the flesh and the sensuous and the sublime, particularly in this poem, Donne deserves credit.

Oedipus Rex

Introduction to drama

Drama is a literary form involving parts written for actors to perform; it is a Greek word which means action. The origin of Western theatre is supposed to be found in Ancient Greece. Drama probably developed in Ancient Greece from the festivals, honouring Dionysus, the Greek god of fertility and wine. In the Middle Ages, drama in Europe dealt with religious characterizations. The plays were mainly Biblical, thus had substantial relevance to Christian elements. Although the Christian church did much to suppress the performance of plays, it is actually in the church that medieval drama began. Mystery plays, the most famous of which is The Second Shepherd's Play, depicted Biblical episodes from the Creation to Judgment Day. Another important type that developed from church liturgy was the miracle play, based on the lives of saints rather than on Bible. The miracle play reached its peak in France and the mystery play in England. However, both types gradually became secularized. The Second Shepherds' Play, despite its religious seriousness, is most notable for its elements of realism and farce, while the miracle plays in France often emphasize comedy and adventure. A third type of religious drama is the morality play. The morality plays, which were mainly religious allegories, appeared early in the 15th century, the most famous being Everyman.

Drama has always been a target of the government and society. The reason why drama was criticized in Middle Ages was probably because actors were considered to be persons who were taking on other people's personalities, and were therefore thought either to be insane or possibly possessed by evil spirits. A second reason why drama was so often criticized might have been because theatre was considered immoral, blasphemous or subversive - we must note that theatrical performances were sometimes used as criticism of the government, able to awaken people. A third reason might have been religious since many of the medieval dramas were based on Christian church. Many of the plays were Biblical and were applicable to the Church.

Drama in England reached its peak during Queen Elizabeth's reign. Elizabethan drama ". . . has been called a great national utterance because in it spoke the spirit of England, despite all its imitations and borrowings from alien sources" and ". . . there has never been an age which so immediately responded to an artistic appeal" (Schelling xiii). We should notice the fact that ". . . [n]o plays closely resembling those of the great Elizabethans appeared before the last quarter of the sixteenth century, before the tragedies of Kyd and Marlowe and the comedies of Lyly and Greene" The public theatres were being built in 1576; and "the first powerful plays appeared about 1587" (Wells 4).

Queen Elizabeth died in 1603. In 1642 The English Civil War broke out between the Parliamentarians (Puritans) and the Royalists in England and theatres were closed to prevent public disorder. In 1644 The Globe Theatre was demolished by the Puritans. From 1642 onward for eighteen years, the theatres of England remained closed. They probably illegally performed plays but those performances were given in secrecy. Neither actors nor spectators were safe during those days of the Puritan rule. The dramatists were not allowed to be inspired during this time. The Puritans led by Oliver Cromwell opposed theatrical performances. "Puritanism declared [theatre] an ungodly and frivolous thing and decreed that it should be no more" (Schelling 274). In 1649, the

English Civil War resulted in the execution of King CharlesI and the establishment of a commonwealth under Oliver Cromwell. Finally in 1660 the Stuart dynasty was restored to the throne of England and the theatres were reopened.

Charles's death marked the beginning of the eleven-year Interregnum in which Oliver Cromwell ruled as Lord Protector. After Cromwell's death, England turned to Charles's son and acknowledged him as Charles II. The exhumed heads of Cromwell, his son-in law, and the High Court's President were placed on public display atop Westminster Hall. The anniversary of Charles's execution became a date of commemoration on the liturgical calendar of the Anglican Church. (Sirico 51)

Charles II, the king, had been in France and he naturally brought with him some French fashions. That French influence was felt particularly in the theatre since "Charles returned from his exile with a very definite love of the drama and of literature in general (Nicoll 8). The drama of the Restoration, Thorndike states, ". . . was separated from the earlier periods by sixteen years of closed theatres and a virtual cessation of all dramatic composition;" ". . . the Restoration brought not only a revival but also a revolution - new fashions, new models, new foreign influence, a new age, and a changed society" (Thorndike 243).

Although the Puritans had lost their authority in political power, they had not lost courage in abusing the stage. The most violent attack was made by Jeremy Collier, a clergyman, in 1698, in a pamphlet called A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage, Collier's attack on drama has three points: the so-called obscenity of the plays, the frequent references to the Bible and biblical characters, and the criticism, "slander and abuse flung from the stage upon the clergy". He criticized Shakespeare's Desdemona showing her love and chastity; he was opposed to any reference to anything connected to the Church or religion; and he was against any portrayal of the clergy. Collier even accused playwrights of glorifying all the sins, passions which they portrayed in their characters.

The Puritan Revolution was fought not only against the King, but also against theatre; but the theatre was never so finally and roundly defeated as the King. The skirmishes and battles were equally protracted and bitter, but the growth of the Elizabethan--Jacobean drama was so hardy and so dear to so many Englishmen that it never completely died. Ordinance after ordinance was passed against stage plays, but there was hardly a year in London from 1842 to 1660 when plays were not being given. The records are full of recurrent raids by the soldiers of Parliament, the seizure of players and their goods, the ransacking of playhouses and their forcible demolition, and the jailing of theatre people. But these very records show that the Puritans had not succeeded in destroying theatrical activity. (Roberts 228)

With the accession of Queen Anne in 1702, drama was again a target of criticism since Queen Anne "was completely disinterested in the arts, literature, and theatre" (Roberts 250). The beginning of the reign of Queen Anne in 1702 ". . . marked the final withdrawal of court interest in drama" Thus English theatre was no longer for the court but "the property of citizens (Roberts 252). The Age of Reason valued science, logic, and rationality; denied emotionalism and wanted an ordered society. In the area of literature, authors declared their independence of patrons, and writing became a form of

earning one's living. Prices for theatres were higher than today, and considerably higher than under Elizabeth I. Since drama became a commercial field, there had been innovations on the theatre buildings as well as stage props and costumes of the actors.

In the political turmoil of the nineteenth century in Europe, drama was sometimes abused. The ruling classes tended to use theatre as a propaganda instrument during the French Revolution (Roberts 350). In the twentieth century, on the other hand, drama consisted of realist settings true to life. The growing popularity of the motion picture affected drama. Soon radio and television increased in popularity, which foreshadowed the possible end of live theatre; yet it did not end.

Despite all the attacks and difficulties, theatre has always been alive. It has survived since the fifth century B.C. In its long history, theatre has always had rivals. However it has never been defeated; on the contrary, it has accomplished glorification. Theatre is not only an important part of a particular society that is depicted in plays; it is also the most human form of art that has ever existed.

The Contributions of Greek Theatre to Drama

The ancient Greeks are famous for their many contributions to the world. Among these contributions is one that has changed culture and the arts permanently. This contribution is theatre.

Greek theatre is considered the beginning of theatre as we know it. Theatre began in Athens, circa 600 BC, developing out of rituals at the Dionysia. The Dionysia was a festival for followers of the cult of Dionysus, god of wine and festivities. Greek theatre really began to take shape, however, around 400 BC. The first actor was named Thespis, and it is from his name that the word "thespian" originated. Thespis was born in Attica, in 534 BC. He began performing speeches from epic poems and stories of the day, speaking from that character's point of view. His shows were also interactive, as he often spoke with the audience. Since no theater really existed at the time, he traveled from place to place with a handcart. He used masks, makeup, and costumes to make his monologues more realistic.

Over time, theatre was changed and developed by forward-thinking playwrights. One such playwright, Aeschylus, introduced the concept of using a second character, so that dialogue and the interaction of the characters could be used as a plot device. Years later, another playwright, Sophocles, added another actor, steadily decreasing the importance of the chorus while increasing character interactions. Around the same time, Euripides gradually made theatre more natural and realistic, rather than the rigid, structured form of acting.

The theater itself was outdoors and known as an Amphitheater. It was semi-circular in shape, and terraced, allowing for each visitor to have perfect view. These seats were called the theatron, literally meaning the viewing area. On average, the Amphitheater was able to fit 1,500 viewers and was designed to have near perfect acoustics. There was usually a theater in each town, as theaters were also used for religious rituals and processions as well as entertainment. In the center was a circular platform called the orchestra. On the orchestra was an altar where sacrifices to Dionysus were performed. The stage itself was called the Proscenio. It was situated behind the orchestra, and was

constructed much like stages today, although most of the acting took place in the orchestra. The back of this stage had painted backgrounds to create the settings for each scene.

These buildings were most likely brightly painted, although the paint would have faded over time [Phillips]. Behind the stage, machines used for the performances were kept. These machines were advanced technology for their day, and included the Aeorema, the Ekeclema, and the Periactoi.

The Aeorema was one of the more commonly used. It was a large crane used to pull actors through the air. This was most often employed to create the illusion of gods, which led to the expression, "Deus ex Machina". The Ekeclema was a wheeled platform. This sometimes ferried dead bodies across the stage, as murders and suicides were not shown on stage. This tradition stemmed from the superstition that to kill a person on stage would be foretelling of their actual death. The Periactoi consisted of two pillars, one on each side of the stage, which could turn to change the background setting without need of stagehands [Ancient]. All of these were constructed of simple machines, such as pulleys, levers, and wheels, made from wood, rope, and metal. They were put to use in many famous plays.

The plays themselves were very similar to the modern musical. They had sing and dancing, sometimes accompanied by music. The cast was comprised of many actors, called "hypocrites", both professional and amateur. The main character, or protagonist, was usually played by a professional and often highly-famed actor specifically chosen by the playwright, although some playwrights would portray this character themselves. Like most present musicals, there was also a chorus. The chorus provided the mood of the play by singing and dancing. Generally the lead chorus member was a professional dancer and singer, and the rest of the chorus was made up of amateurs. All the actors were men, as women were forbidden to appear on stage. The actors wore masks when portraying a woman or animal. These masks were built from wood, cloth, and clay, sometimes covered in animal or even human hair. The holes for the eyes were very small, but the opening for the mouth was large to allow the actor's voice to resonate more easily . The actors were sometimes required to wear wooden platform shoes, or kothomoi, in order to appear taller. Actors would also use optical illusions to seem taller or shorter. Vertical stripes were worn to appear taller and horizontal stripes to appear shorter.

Greek plays generally fell into one of two categories: comedy or tragedy. Other than in satirical plays, these categories would never mix. The modern symbol of drama, a smiling comedic mask and a weeping tragic mask, stems from these categories. These different types of plays varied greatly, especially in their topic. Comedy plays included base, vulgar humor. Comedy plays were humorous representations of peasant life and values. They encouraged tradition and criticized what they considered immorality. They were generally far more popular with the lower class, as they joked about topics that the upper class would have been unable to relate to. They were considered by the Greeks to be the easiest to write and perform. Costumes for comedic plays usually depended on the characters of the play. As many of these plays were about animals, so were the costumes. The actors' masks were exaggerated and grotesque, suggesting that the audience should not take them too seriously. The most notable comedic playwright was Aristophanes, and his major plays include The Frogs and Lysistrata.

Tragedy plays were not sad or depressing, but they were about more serious subjects than the comedic plays. Instead of a chaotic, meandering plot, tragic plays had a set rhythm and pattern to them. They also excluded vulgarity, tending not to offend their viewers. Tragedy plays explored the depth of human emotion and character. They were famous for their ability to cause the audience to relate to each character in a more empathetic way. They were more sophisticated and suited to the upper class than their humorous counterpart. Costumes were generally everyday clothing, if somewhat nicer and more elaborate. Notable playwrights of the genre included Sophocles, Euripides, and Aeschylus. Prometheus Bound, Oedipus the King, and Medea are prime examples of tragic plays.

Satirical plays emerged as a compromise to the two categories. These plays dealt with the same topics and ideas of a tragic play, but presented them in a comical manner. The actors mocked the clichés and styles of a tragedy, and were often exaggerated in their mannerisms. These were popular with both the upper and lower classes, and were known for being very witty, a trait the Greeks admired greatly. They were generally as amusing as comedic plays, but not as rude and offensive. Cyclops, written by the poet Euripides, and The Scouts by Sophocles are the only known existing satire plays [Ancient]. Historians know of their existence in ancient Greece from other archaeological sources. Satire plays were considered the most difficult, for both the actors and playwrights. In competitions, a playwright would often submit a satire play to prove his worth, as well as their usual comic or tragic plays. They were also mush shorter than the other plays, usually only half as long as a tragedy.

Greek plays were inextricably tied to the gods. Before each play, a sacrifice would be made to Dionysus, to whom theatre really owes its beginning. Apollo was also important. As the god of music and poetry, Apollo was especially honored by actors and playwrights. Equally important to the theatre were the Muses. The muses were the 9 goddesses of the arts. Terpsichore, Euterpe, Calliope, Thalia, and Melpomene were the most significant to the theatre. Terpsichore and Euterpe personified dance and music respectively, both key elements of Greek theatre. Calliope embodied epic poetry, which was usually the basis of most plays. Thalia and Melpomene represented the two categories of theatre, comedy and tragedy.

The Greeks have given much to our modern world through theatre. Every actor, of course, owes his or her livelihood to the Greeks' innovative thinking. Many Greek plays still exist today, preserving the culture and traditions of their time. The basics of many modern machines come from the Aeorema, the Ekeclema, and the Periactoi, all machines created specifically for theatre productions. The Greeks have also provided the fundamentals of theatre. We still use stages, costumes, and make-up in acting today. We still have comedy, tragedy, and satire, although often combined, in present movies, television shows, and dramatic performances. Many theaters are modeled after Greek amphitheaters, in order to achieve their nearly flawless acoustics.

No doubt exists, however, that Greek theatre has affected our society in deeper ways as well. Since the beginning of history, stories have been used to pass on values, such as integrity, bravery, and respect. Theatre continues today to bring life to these stories, forever imprinting itself into the minds and consciences of its audience. Each person can empathize with and relate to the characters, gaining insight to their own plights and personalities. Theatre also probes deep inside the heart of humanity, for the actors as well as the audience, as if through becoming another person, you learn more about

yourself. Without theatre, culture as we know it could not exist. It has been changed permanently through theatre. A simple tradition of the Greeks has become a vital part of our identity as human beings.

Sophocles; 496-406 B.C

Sophocles, the son of a wealthy arms manufacturer, was born probably in 496 B.C.E. in the deme Colonus near Athens. Of all the ancient playwrights, he scored the most wins in dramatic competitions, and won the most important dramatic festival, the City Dionysia, an unmatched 18 times. He received an education in music, athletics, and dancing, and as a boy of fifteen was chosen to lead the paean (hymn of praise) sung by the chorus of boys after the victory of Salamis. Like most of the ancient playwrights, he acted in the plays he wrote. He showed his musical skill in public, when he played the blind singer Thamyris in his drama of the same name, and played the cithara with such success that he was painted as Thamyris with the cithara in the famous Stoa Poecile ("painted colonnade"), a prominent gathering place in ancient Athens. Sophocles was also involved in Athenian political and military affairs. Owing to his practical gifts with language he was involved in negotiations with the allies of Chios and Samos. During the Peloponnesian War he was one of the generals. In 435 B.C., fulfilling the office of Hellenotamias, he was at the head of the management of the treasure of the allies, which was kept on the Acropolis; and in 413 B.C., when the question arose of giving to the state an oligarchical constitution, he was on the commission of preliminary investigation. He also filled a priestly office.

The charm and the refinement of his character seem to have won him many friends. Among them was the historian Herodotus. He was also deemed by antiquity as a man especially beloved by the gods, particularly by Asclepius, god of medicine, whose priest he probably was, and who was said to have granted him health and vigor of mind to extreme old age. By the Athenian Nicostrate he had a son, Iophon, who won some repute as a tragic poet, and by Theoris of Sicyon another son, Ariston, father of another Sophocles who gained fame for himself by writing tragedies of his own, and afterwards by the production of his grandfather's dramas. There was a legend that a quarrel arose between Sophocles and his son Iophon, on account of his preference for this grandson, and that, when summoned by Iophon before the court as weak in mind and unable to manage his affairs, he obtained his own absolute acquittal by reading the chorus on his native place in the Oedipus Coloneus. The tales of his death, in 405 B.C., are also mythical. According to one account, he was choked by a grape. According to others, he died either when publicly reciting the Antigone, or from excessive joy at some dramatic victory. The only fact unanimously attested by his contemporaries is that his death was as dignified as his life. We are also told that the god Dionysus, by repeated apparitions in dreams, prompted the general of the Spartans, who were then attacking Athens, to grant a truce in order to bury the poet in the family grave outside the city. On his tomb stood a Siren as a symbol of the charm of poetry. After his death the Athenians worshipped him as a hero and offered an annual sacrifice in his memory. In later times, on the proposal of the orator Lycurgus, a bronze statue was erected to him, together with Aeschylus and Euripides, in the theatre, and an authorized and standard copy of his dramas was made to preserve them.

Even in his lifetime, and indeed through the whole of antiquity, he was held to be the most perfect of tragedians; one of the ancient writers calls him the "pupil of Homer". If Aeschylus is the creator of Greek tragedy, it was Sophocles who brought it to perfection. He extended the dramatic action (1) by the introduction of a third actor, so that three people could be on stage in addition to the chorus, while in his last pieces he even added a fourth; and (2) by a due subordination of the chorus, to which, however, he gave a more artistic development, while he increased its numbers from twelve to fifteen persons. These moves made dialogue all the more important. He also perfected the costumes and decoration. But Sophocles' great mastery of his art appears, above all, in the clearness with which he portrays his characters, which are developed with a scrupulous attention to details, and in which he is not satisfied, like Aeschylus, with mere outlines, nor, as Euripides often did, with copies from common life. His heroes, too, are ideal figures, like those of Aeschylus. While they lack the superhuman loftiness of Aeschylus' creations, they have a certain ideal truth of their own. In contrast to Euripides, Sophocles, like Aeschylus, is profoundly religious, and the attitude which he adopts towards popular religion is marked by an instinctive reverence. The grace peculiar to Sophocles' nature makes itself felt in his language, the charm of which was universally praised by the ancients. With his noble simplicity he takes in this respect also a middle place between the weightiness and boldness of the language of Aeschylus, and the smoothness and rhetorical embellishment which distinguish that of Euripides.

Sophocles was a very prolific poet. The number of his plays is given as between 123 and 130, of which above 100 are known to us by their titles and by fragments. Only seven have been preserved complete: The Trachinice (so named from the chorus, and its treating of the death of Heracles), the Ajax, the Philoctetes, the Electra, the Oedipus Tyrannus, the Oedipus at Colonus, and the Antigone. The last-mentioned play was produced in the spring of 440 B.C.; the Philoctetes in 410 B.C.; the Oedipus at Colonus was not put on the stage until 401 B.C., after his death, by his grandson Sophocles. Besides tragedies, Sophocles composed paeans, elegies, epigrams, and a work in prose on the chorus.

The Greek Theatre : Evolution and Influence

Without a doubt, the Greek theatre remains one of the most recognized and distinctive buildings in the world. While we associate many features of modern theatres with their Greek counterparts, the ancient theatre was a very different animal. The size, shape, and functions of the various pieces, though analogous to the modern theatre, were quite different in ancient times. The Greek theatre evolved to fit the changing specifications of tragedy, eventually into the form that survives at hundreds of sites around the Mediterranean. At the same time, the overarching simplicity of the Greek theatre, despite the many changes, demanded certain features of the tragedies. As tragedy evolved from choral songs to works such as Oedipus the King, a unique, reciprocal relationship developed with the theatre.

The earliest Greek theatres recall tragedy's origins in choral songs sung to local heroes and divinities. Choral songs were an early Greek performative art, in which a large group of people, the chorus (in Greek, literally = "dance"), would dance and sing raucous songs in honour of a god. Choral performances in honour of the god Dionysus evolved into what we know as tragedy, an enduring art form that the Greeks invented in the 6th

c. B.C.E. These performances took place in a large, circular orchestra, or dancing area, in which the chorus performed. The orchestra was simply a flattened patch of earth, unpaved, and delimited by a rim of large stones. At the centre of the orchestra, stood an altar to Dionysus, the patron god of tragedy. The chorus did not use the altar per se during performance; instead, the altar acted as a focal point around which the chorus danced and sang. A simple, undecorated wooden tent, or skene, stood behind the orchestra and provided a place for the chorus to store instruments or other props needed during the dance. Audiences began to attend these performances, and orchestras started to be built against hillsides. The rising earth formed a natural seating area, a theatre (in Greek = "watching place"), from which spectators could view the performances.

These choral songs evolved into tragedy with the addition of actors. The actors, naturally, needed some way to physically separate themselves from the chorus and the orchestra. The small tent gave way to larger wooden buildings. These new and improved skene provided a degree of separation for the actors, as well as doors through which the actors could enter and exit. These wooden platforms, though still temporary, were painted with architectural features; though our word "scene" comes from the Greek skene, these paintings were purely decorative and in no way influenced the tragedy or its content. During this time, other areas of the theatre became more defined. First, the orchestra was sunk just below the level of the audience, thus formalizing the stone rim; the orchestra was also paved with large, flat stones. Second, rows of wooden seats were built on the hillside. These benches wrapped more than halfway around the orchestra and began the Greek theatre's distinctive architectural form.

Over time, the actors supplanted the chorus as the dominant characters in tragedy, and theatre design reflected this important shift. The skene evolved again, this time into a complex and permanent stone structure. This generation of skene allowed the actors to perform on stage level as well on the roof. The building became large and sturdy to accommodate the various machines that became popular in tragic performances; such skene were also higher and elaborately decorated with sculpture and architectural features. The new tragic pattern also had ramifications for the orchestra. As the prominence of the chorus diminished, the orchestra got smaller and smaller; late Greek and Roman theatres often reduced the orchestra to a semi-circle. Further modifications came to the audience: Stone seating replaced the wooden benches, and large walkways partitioned the seats for easy access.

Even in its later form, the Greek theatre remained starkly simple, and this heavily influenced the tragedies' performance. First, the Greek theatres were much larger than their modern counterparts, and some theatres held over 14,000 spectators. On these grand scales, actors' tools for communication with the audience were entirely different than modern ones. Body language, facial gestures, and vocal tones, though very effective in a small, modern theatre, would have been lost in the sheer size of an ancient one. Instead, the actor wore a huge tragic mask to roughly depict his state of mind and relied on his speech to do the rest. Lengthy monologues were the only means available for character development. These passages contrast with modern drama, but in ancient times were entirely necessary. Second, the theatre provided no special effects, save a crane in the skene capable of raising and lowering characters onto the stage. Lighting, background changes, curtains, and sounds - the staple special effects in modern dramatic performance - were unavailable to the Greeks. Instead, all "special effects" had to be done through the script. Murder, sex, natural disasters, suicide, and battles all took

place offstage; messengers then reported the results. Given the practical constraints, this was the only sensible way of doing business. Modern readers often desire to "see" these important actions, as they are often the critical points in the tragedy. They take place off-stage not because of incompetence, but because of the limitations of the theatre.

Greek tragedy and the Greek theatre influenced each other in such a way that the discussion of one necessarily involves the other. As Greek tragedy developed from hymns of praise to local gods to the complex works of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, the theatre adapted accordingly. All the while, the theatre remained an essentially simple building and affected the way the tragic poets developed their works. In the end, the distinctive features of Greek tragedy and the Greek theatre resulted from the interaction between the two.

Oedipus: The Greek Period

The Greek period, in the fourth and fifth centuries of B.C., evolved from a small city called Athens, Europe. In this era, a sweep of talent and creativity placed a historical advance on theatre that will dominate for years to come. This spirit most likely emerged from the defeat of the Persian Empire, along with the sense of freedom and expression from the Athenian democracy. Four great writers derived from this ancient astonishment. Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides were three writers of tragedy, whereas Aristophanes was a famous comic dramatist. From these original works came the play festivals using masks and boots to accommodate for the size of the Greek theatre. These tragedies the Athenians went to see consisted of five episodes, and one in particular, Oedipus the King, is made up of five choral odes, featuring the mystery behind the riddle of the sphinx. The dithyrambs were a beginning stage or rough draft of what the plays would soon come to be. Dionysis is the name of a theatre where people like Thespis and other Greek actors performed, using the three unities to keep the audience's attention alarmed and suspense building.

Aeschylus was the first of the tragedy writers. He took the theatres origins and focused less on reciting patterns, dealing more with the presentation of action. Born under tyranny, he grew up during the period in which the Persian Empire was attempting to conquer Athens. Aeschylus was born in 525 B.C. His youth was most likely spent in the city of Pallene with his father, Euphorion, and his brother. It was a repressive time, under the rule of Peisistratus.

The play festivals at which these writers competed were at "City Dionysia" and the Lenaea. The "City Dionysia" was held at the end of March. The people of Athens put on a folk festival at which they would boast of their success, theatrically and politically, to all the prosperous men visiting from outside the state. This festival consumed all of six days, the second day full of dancing and singing, following the previous day of comedies. Then came three days of tragedy performances within the competition of five authors. The second celebration, Lenaea, at the end of January is the older of the two. It started off as a wine festival and gradually included play contests. These contests mainly used comedies to entertain them.

In these productions, masks and boots were the eye-catching features of their wardrobe. The masks attracted attention to their dramatic expressions. This allowed the emotions to be conveyed to the spectators farthest away. The masks, made of linen cork and wood, could be changed by the three actors whom had speaking parts. Therefore, these actors could play many parts. The hole in the mask, disguised as a mouth, is used as a sounding board to project the voice of the actor.

The boots had high painted soles, and while accompanied with a tall headdress, created the effect of a change in height. This change could be even more than one and a half feet. Larger than life, the height was proportioned with bright colours, extravagant padded costumes, and lent colour. Although, the unstableness of the boot created a hazard in walking, it gave a great addition to the intensity of the theatre.

The stage of the open-aired Greek theatre of the fifth century B.C. was surrounded by a seating capacity of fourteen thousand. The marble benches arranged around the circular stage known as the eccyclema, a form of wagon- stage. Behind the dancing floor was the stage building with doors and maybe even columns. This setting would represent a palace or temple which would be the main setting of action. This is also were the actors make their entrance. There was a lack of curtains and lighting and only a few props were used. The gods in the play were sometimes lifted in by cranes while other times they performed on a special platform.

In the Greek tragedies there is a basic outline that the authors followed consisting of five episodes with choral odes between them. **Prologos**, was the first scene which was an introduction. **Episode**, is the second scene which is dramatic one. **Parodos**, was the third scene, served as an entrance lyric by the chorus. **Stasimon** is a choral ode, and the fifth **Exodos** delivers the parting lines by the chorus and leaves the orchestra.

The choral odes in Oedipus the King is a good example of how the chorus was used to create a reaction from the audience. The first choral ode was a prayer to the gods, which reveals the reality of the plague as seen through the eyes of the people as a whole. The second reflects the reactions from the accusations and counteraccusations of Oedipus and Tiresias. The third deals with the truth or falsity of the divine prophecy. The fourth shows the chorus in a mode of feverish excitement dealing with the secret birth of Oedipus. The last deals with the fate of Oedipus.

These tragedies started off as Dithyrambs which formed from myths to stories that were translated into words of song in addition to physical movement. They were the first step toward a literary drama with both tragedy and comedy. These plays were demonstrated at the city of Dionysus featuring Greek actors such as Thespis.

The plays consisted of three unities, the unity of action, time and place. The all united to form a whole with a 'certain degree of magnitude' according to Aristotle. They were part of a trilogy.

The Greek theatre was an extravagant event that allowed the people of the city of Athens to release their magic upon the world. They changed the theatre and that change will last for many years to come. They set a standard for comedy and tragedy that will entertain and influence people forever.

Oedipus Myth

The King of Thebes was Laius, a descendant of Cadmus, and an oracle predicted, before the birth of his son that this son would one day be his father's murderer. When born, Laius (and, in some versions of the myth, Jocasta, Oedipus' mother and Laius' wife) gives the child to a herdsman and orders him to take him out beyond the city and kill him. Out of pity for the child, the herdsman gave the baby to another herdsman, tying his feet together and wounding them (in some versions, Laius pierces Oedipus' feet and exposes him to die, where the herdsman finds him by chance). This herdsman took the baby to Polybus, King of Corinth, who adopted him as his own son.

Oedipus, now fully grown, is told that he is not the son of Polybus, and seeks help from an oracle, who tells him he is destined to kill his father and sleep with his mother. Oedipus – presumably still thinking that Polybus is his father – flees from Corinth to Thebes in an attempt to escape the fate the oracle has predicted for him. As he is travelling, he gets involved in a dispute at a crossroads with a man in a chariot (Laius, his birth father) – and kills him.

As he approaches Thebes, Oedipus is approached by the Sphinx, who proposes her famous riddle: 'What walks on four feet in the morning, two in the afternoon, and three at night?' – the answer is man, who crawls, walks upright, and in his age, walks with a stick. The Sphinx, who has been plaguing Thebes, is defeated – Oedipus has solved the riddle that no Athenian could solve. In gratitude, the Thebans appoint Oedipus the king of Thebes (in Laius' place) and reward him with the dead king's wife, Jocasta, his birth mother. Oedipus and Jocasta have four children: two daughters (Electra and Ismene) and two sons (Polyneices and Eteocles).

At this point, Sophocles' play begins. Years later, a plague strikes Thebes, and Oedipus as King promises to end it. He sends Creon, Jocasta's brother, to the Delphic Oracle to seek guidance and is told that the murderer of Laius must be found and either killed or exiled (depending, again, on which version you read). As he begins to search for the killer, he encounters (or sends for) Tiresias, who tells him that he is the killer of Laius and warns him that he will only be seeking out himself. Oedipus ignores this advice.

A messenger arrives from Corinth giving Oedipus the news that Polybus is dead, and it seems the oracle's prophecy for Oedipus has failed to come true. The herdsman who delivered him to Corinth then appears and informs Oedipus that he is an adopted baby. Jocasta, hearing this, realizes what has happened and kills herself. Oedipus seeks out the herdsman initially ordered to murder him as a baby, and learns that the infant raised by Polybus and Merope (his wife) was in fact the son of Laius and Jocasta. He finally realizes that, at the crossroads, he killed his father, and is married to his own mother. Notably in Sophocles' play, the Corinthian Messenger is also the first herdsman: a small, but concise tweak.

Oedipus finds Jocasta dead, and blinds himself. He then (in Sophocles) leaves the city, and with his daughter Antigone as his guide, wanders blindly through the country, dying finally at Colonous. Some versions of the story have Oedipus commit suicide in Thebes, rather than leave or be exiled.

Oedipus Rex : Summary

Oedipus Rex unfolds as a murder mystery, a political thriller, and a psychological whodunit. Throughout this mythic story of parricide and incest, Sophocles emphasizes the irony of a man determined to track down, expose, and punish an assassin, who turns out to be himself.

When the play opens, Thebes is suffering a plague which leaves its fields and women barren. Oedipus, the king of Thebes, has sent his brother-in-law, Creon, to the house of Apollo to ask the oracle how to end the plague. Creon returns, bearing good news: once

the killer of the previous king, Laius, is found, Thebes will be cured of the plague (Laius was Jocasta's husband before she married Oedipus). Hearing this, Oedipus swears he will find the murderer and banish him. The Chorus (representing the people of Thebes) suggests that Oedipus consult Tiresias, the blind prophet. Oedipus tells them that he has already sent for Tiresias.

When Tiresias arrives, he seems reluctant to answer Oedipus's questions, warning him that he does not want to know the answers. Oedipus threatens him with death, and finally Tiresias tells him that Oedipus himself is the killer, and that his marriage is a sinful union. Oedipus takes this as an insult and jumps to the conclusion that Creon paid Tiresias to say these things. Furious, Oedipus dismisses him, and Tiresias goes, repeating as he does, that Laius's killer is right here before him - a man who is his father's killer and his mother's husband, a man who came seeing but will leave in blindness.

Creon enters, asking the people around him if it is true that Oedipus slanderously accused him. The Chorus tries to mediate, but Oedipus appears and charges Creon with treason. Jocasta and the Chorus beg Oedipus to be open-minded: Oedipus unwillingly relents and allows Creon to go. Jocasta asks Oedipus why he is so upset and he tells her what Tiresias prophesied. Jocasta comforts him by telling him that there is no truth in oracles or prophets, and she has proof. Long ago an oracle told Laius that his own son would kill him, and as a result he and Jocasta gave their infant son to a shepherd to leave out on a hillside to die with a pin through its ankles. Yet Laius was killed by robbers, not by his own son, proof that the oracle was wrong. But something about her story troubles Oedipus; she said that Laius was killed at a place where three roads meet, and this reminds Oedipus of an incident from his past, when he killed a stranger at a place where three roads met. He asks her to describe Laius, and her description matches his memory. Yet Jocasta tells him that the only eyewitness to Laius's death, a herdsman, swore that five robbers killed him. Oedipus summons this witness.

While they wait for the man to arrive, Jocasta asks Oedipus why he seems so troubled. Oedipus tells her the story of his past. Once when he was young, a man he met told him that he was not his father's son. He asked his parents about it, and they denied it. Still it troubled him, and he eventually went to an oracle to determine his true lineage. The oracle then told him that he would kill his father and marry his mother. This prophecy so frightened Oedipus that he left his hometown and never returned. On his journey, he encountered a haughty man at a crossroads - and killed the man after suffering an insult. Oedipus is afraid that the stranger he killed might have been Laius. If this is the case, Oedipus will be forever banished both from Thebes (the punishment he swore for the killer of Laius) and from Corinth, his hometown. If this eyewitness will swear that robbers killed Laius, then Oedipus is exonerated. He prays for the witness to deliver him from guilt and from banishment. Oedipus and Jocasta enter the palace to wait for him.

Jocasta comes back out of the palace, on her way to the holy temples to pray for Oedipus. A messenger arrives from Corinth with the news that Oedipus's father Polybus is dead. Overjoyed, Jocasta sends for Oedipus, glad that she has even more proof in the uselessness of oracles. Oedipus rejoices, but then states that he is still afraid of the rest of the oracle's prophecy: that he will marry his mother. The messenger assures him that he need not fear approaching Corinth - since Merope, his mother, is not really his mother, and moreover, Polybus wasn't his father either. Stunned, Oedipus asks him how

he came to know this. The messenger replies that years ago a man gave a baby to him and he delivered this baby to the king and queen of Corinth - a baby that would grow up to be Oedipus the King. The injury to Oedipus's ankles is a testament to the truth of his tale, because the baby's feet had been pierced through the ankles. Oedipus asks the messenger who gave the baby to him, and he replies that it was one of Laius's servants. Oedipus sends his men out to find this servant. The messenger suggests that Jocasta should be able to help identify the servant and help unveil the true story of Oedipus's birth. Suddenly understanding the terrible truth, Jocasta begs Oedipus not to carry through with his investigation. Oedipus replies that he swore to unravel this mystery, and he will follow through on his word. Jocasta exits into the palace.

Oedipus again swears that he will figure out this secret, no matter how vile the answer is. The Chorus senses that something bad is about to happen and join Jocasta's cry in begging the mystery to be left unresolved. Oedipus's men lead in an old shepherd, who is afraid to answer Oedipus's questions. But finally he tells Oedipus the truth. He did in fact give the messenger a baby boy, and that baby boy was Laius's son - the same son that Jocasta and Laius left on a hillside to die because of the oracle's prophecy.

Finally the truth is clear - devastated, Oedipus exits into the palace. A messenger reveals that he grabbed a sword and searched for Jocasta with the intent to kill her. Upon entering her chamber, however, he finds that she has hanged herself. He takes the gold brooches from her dress and gouges his eyes out. He appears onstage again, blood streaming from his now blind eyes. He cries out that he, who has seen and done such vile things, shall never see again. He begs the Chorus to kill him. Creon enters, having heard the entire story, and begs Oedipus to come inside, where he will not be seen. Oedipus begs him to let him leave the city, and Creon tells him that he must consult Apollo first. Oedipus tells him that banishment was the punishment he declared for Laius's killer, and Creon agrees with him. Before he leaves forever, however, Oedipus asks to see his daughters and begs Creon to take care of them. Oedipus is then led away, while Creon and the girls go back in the palace. The Chorus, alone, laments Oedipus' tragic fate and his doomed lineage.

Oedipus Rex : Major Themes

In the play Oedipus Rex , by Sophocles, two themes appear; one that humans have little control of their lives because fate always catches up with them and the theme that when someone makes a mistake, they will have to pay for it.

The theme that the **lives of humans are controlled by the gods**, in Oedipus, show that everything humans do are futile and result in no gain but only loss. This theme is mainly shown by the character Oedipus, king of Thebes. In the beginning of his life, Laius the king planned to kill his son by leaving him on Mount Cithaeron to die. "...at the moment I was your savior."

From the very beginning, Oedipus was destined to fulfill Apollo's prophecy of killing his father. Even though King Lauis tries to kill Oedipus to stop the fulfillment of this shameful prophecy, fate drives the Corinthian messenger to save Oedipus. What the gods fortell will come true and no human can stop it from happening, not even the kings. Oedipus is once again controlled by this power when he leaves the place of his child hood

after he hears that he is to kill his father and marry his mother. "I shall shrink from nothing...to find the murderer of Laius...You are the murderer..." Oedipus tried to stop the prophecy from coming true by leaving Corinth and only fate can make Oedipus turn to the road where he kills his true father. Leaving Corinth makes Oedipus lose his childhood by making him worry of such issues young people should not have to worry about and becoming a king of a strange land. Last of all, Oedipus carries the last part of the prophecy out, marrying his mother. "I would... never have been known as my mother's husband. Oedipus has no control over the outcome of his life. Fate causes Oedipus to have known the answer to the Sphinx's riddle and win his marriage to his mother, Jocasta. Had fate not intervened, the chances of marrying Jocasta would have been small since there is an enormous number of people and places to go. Oedipus loses his sense of dignity after he discovers he is not only a murderer, but also that he had committed incest. From his birth to the end of the play, fate intervenes when Oedipus is saved from Laius' wrath as a baby, when Oedipus goes to the fork in the road where he kills his father, and lastly, when he answers the Sphinx's riddle and marries Jocasta.

The second theme, **mistakes and wrongs toward other people will be paid**, for is told by Tiresias, the prophet, and carried out by Jocasta, and once again, King Oedipus. Tiresias states, after being accused of being a fool and mocked by Oedipus, "These reproaches you fling at me, all these people here will fling them at you..." Tiresias realizes that mockery and false accusations will not go unpaid forever. This foreshadows the mockery Oedipus will experience after the truth to his marriage is discovered; these people will jeer at him. Jocasta makes a detrimental mistake when she marries Oedipus. She even says, "...he had more or less the same build as you." Jocasta ignores all the obvious features between Laius and Oedipus because she was so in love. If she had taken notice of these things, her pain would be more endurable because Oedipus would not know that the prophecy was being fulfilled. Lastly, King Oedipus made a mistake losing his temper when he meets King Laius. "The driver tried to push me off the road...he aimed at my head with a two-pronged goad, and hit me. I paid him back in full...I killed the whole lot of them." Oedipus wronged Laius here by killing him over a small incident and fit of anger. Had Oedipus not killed Laius, the murderer of would not have to be searched out and ultimately, the truth about his marriage to his mother would not be told and the kingdom would continue to thrive along with the family happiness. The statement by Tiresias and the mistakes of the royal family, show that the mistakes and insults toward others will be returned to that person who has wronged the other.

Oedipus Rex : Critical Concepts

Light and darkness: - Darkness and light are tightly wound up with the theme of sight and blindness in Sophocles' play. Oedipus - and all the other characters, save for Tiresias - is 'in the dark' about his own origins and the murder of Laius. Tiresias, of course, is literally 'in the dark' with his own blindness - and yet manages to have sight over everything that is to follow. After Oedipus finds out what has happened, he bemoans the way everything has indeed "come to light".

Sight and blindness: - Tiresias holds the key to the link between sight and blindness - for even though he is blind, he can still see and predict the future (if not the present). At the end of the play, moreover, Oedipus blinds himself, because what he has

metaphorically seen (i.e. realized) leaves him unable to face his family or his parents in the afterlife). As with the previous theme, sight/blindness operate both literally and metaphorically within the play. Indeed, literal sight is juxtaposed with 'insight' or 'foresight'.

Origins and children: - Oedipus embarks upon a search for his own origins, and - though he does not realize it - for his real parents. As the child of his own wife, and thus father and brother to his children, Sophocles explores various interrelationships between where things began and who fathered who. Similarly, the play itself works backwards towards a revelatory start: the story has, in effect, already happened - and Oedipus is forced to discover his own history.

The One and the Many (also Doubles/Twos): - Throughout the play, a central inconsistency dominates - namely the herdsman and Jocasta both believe Laius to have been killed by several people at the crossroads. The story, however, reveals that Oedipus himself alone killed Laius. How can Laius have been supposedly killed by one person – and also by many people?

Oedipus is searching for Laius' murderer: he is the detective seeking the criminal. Yet in the end, these two roles merge into one person – Oedipus himself. The Oedipus we are left with at the end of the play is similarly both father and brother. Sophocles' play, in fact, abounds with twos and doubles: there are two herdsmen, two daughters and two sons, two opposed pairs of king and queen (Laius and Jocasta, and Polybus and Merope), and two cities (Thebes and Corinth). In so many of these cases, Oedipus' realization is that he is either between – or, more confusingly, some combination of – two things. Thus the conflict between "the one and the many" is central to Sophocles' play. "What is this news of double meaning?" Jocasta asks (939). Throughout Oedipus, then, it remains a pertinent question.

Plague and health: - Thebes at the start of the play is suffering from terrible blight which renders the fields and the women barren. The oracle tells Oedipus at the start of the play that the source of this plague is Laius' murderer (Oedipus himself). Health then, only comes with the end of the play and Oedipus' blindness. Again, 'plague' is both literal and metaphorical. There is a genuine plague, but also, to quote Hamlet, there might be "something rotten" in the moral state of Thebes.

Prophecy, oracles, and predestination: - The origins of this play in the Oedipus myth (see 'Oedipus and Myth') create a compelling question about foreknowledge and expectation. The audience who knew the myth would know from the start far more than Oedipus himself - hence a strong example of dramatic irony. Moreover, one of the themes the play considers as a corollary is whether or not you can escape your fate. In trying to murder her son, Jocasta finds him reborn as her husband. Running from Corinth, from his parents, Oedipus murders his father on the way. It seems that running away from one's fate ultimately ensures that one is only running towards it.

Youth and age: - 'Man' is the answer to the Sphinx's question, and the aging of man is given key significance in the course of the play. Oedipus himself goes from childlike innocence to a blinded man who needs to be led by his children. Oedipus, it might be said, ages with the discovery of his own shortcomings as a man. In learning of his own weaknesses and frailties, he loses his innocence immediately.

Oedipus Rex as an Aristotelian Tragedy

The fifth century B is the golden age of Greek dramas. During that period, Sophocles wrote an outstanding tragedy named Oedipus Rex. Over the centuries, Oedipus Rex has been regarded as the Greek tragedy par excellence. In the Poetics, Aristotle listed many requirements of a successful tragedy. Oedipus Rex is Aristotle's ideal tragedy because it fulfills so many requirements for a successful tragedy.

To begin with, Aristotle believes that "the first and most important part" of his ideal tragedy is **plot**. He requires the plot of a tragedy to be single and complex, which means there should be only one plot that includes peripeteia and anagnorsis. Additionally, all plots should have pathos. It is obvious that all those requirements are satisfied in Oedipus Rex. Peripeteia, which means reversal, occurs when Oedipus hears the news of Polybus's death. The news first sounds good, but reverses to be a disaster in a moment. Anagnorisis means recognition, emerges in the story when Oedipus knows that he kills Laius. Oedipus kills his father in ignorance but learns the true relationship from a Theban people. Pathos means suffering. It is important for a successful tragedy because a destructive or painful act will earn the audience's sympathy. When Oedipus finally understands the truth, he is so suffering from it that he blinds himself. In all, Oedipus Rex meets all Aristotle's requirements of the plot of a tragedy.

The second important part of a successful tragedy, **characters** are required by Aristotle to be good, appropriate, true to life, and consistent. All characters in Oedipus Rex meet those requirements, and Jocasta is a perfect example. She is the queen of Thebe, and she commits suicide because she cannot bear the shame of the immoral truth.

Except fulfilling requirements of all characters, Oedipus Rex also meets the specialty of a **tragic hero**. The most important character in a tragedy is the tragic hero. Aristotle requires that this character should have an elevated status but imperfect, which means the character should be higher than common people but falls below. Oedipus, the king of Thebe, is absolutely high-ranking. However, he falls to the bottom when he recognizes that he kills his father and gets married to his mother. Oedipus might have left the plague to take its course, but pity for the sufferings of his people compelled him to find out the truth. He might have left the murder of Laius uninvestigated, but piety and justice required him to act. Tiresias, Jocasta the Theban people, each in turn tries to stop him, but in vain; he must read the last riddle, the riddle of his own life. What causes his ruin is his own strength and courage, his loyalty to Thebes, and his loyalty to the truth.

In addition, Aristotle also mentions in the Poetics that the **hamartia** of a tragic hero is very important for a good tragedy. The Greek term "hamartia" means "tragic flaw." The character's flaw must result from something that is also a central part of their virtue, which goes somewhat twisted. Aristotle indicates that a truly tragic hero must have a failing that is neither idiosyncratic nor arbitrary, but is somehow more deeply imbedded -- a kind of human failing and human weakness. It is obvious that Oedipus is a tragic hero with hamartia. His basic flaw is his lack of knowledge about his own identity. Moreover, no amount of foresight or pre-emptive action could remedy Oedipus' hamartia; unlike other tragic heroes, Oedipus bears no responsibility for his flaw. The audience fears for Oedipus because nothing he does can change the tragedy's outcome.

Another requirement Aristotle mentions in the Poetics is **catharsis**. Aristotle uses the term catharsis to refer to the purging of excessive emotions of a person. In Oedipus Rex, Sophocles perfectly evokes catharsis to make the story to its climax. By watching the tragedy and feeling the strong emotions of fear and pity on behalf of the characters on stage, audiences experience a kind of cleansing of the soul. So the catharsis from watching tragedy gave the spectators a shared experience that bound them closer together. The catharsis occurs at the end when Oedipus, driven by the guilt of the impermissibility of incest and the emptiness caused by the loss of his beloved mother, blinds himself.

Fulfilled so many requirements by Aristotle, it is obvious that Oedipus Rex is a perfect tragedy. It has a proper plot, characters, tragic hero, hamartia, and catharsis.

Oedipus : Aristotle's Tragic Hero

Sophocles' Oedipus is one of the most well-known and influential fictional figure in the history of literature primarily because of the fact that Oedipus symbolizes many things – as a hero, as a son, as a leader and as an example of the conflicting issues affecting morality. Oedipus is the ideal man to exemplify Aristotle's idea of the tragic hero based on several characteristics focused on the major flaw of Oedipus as an individual character and based on the actions Oedipus took that shaped his fortune and future.

There are several characteristics that define the tragic hero, as per Aristotle's understanding of the concept, and the life and characteristics of Sophocles' Oedipus fit perfectly in this framework. First, there is the idea of **evoking two important emotions**: **fear and pity**. The life of the tragic hero should make us feel fear as well as pity. The role of the hero is to represent the human nature and the innate weakness and futility of the human endeavor to counteract or go against the perceived path that destiny and the universe has set for an individual. These are two of the strongest characteristics of Oedipus and two of the most important facets of the overall story of Oedipus' life.

We **feel pity** over Oedipus because of what Oedipus has to go through, and how he was powerless to fight a prophecy because he feels that it is the moral thing to do. First, Oedipus, as a baby, was cursed to die in the forest because his father believed that if Oedipus lives, it is by his hands that King Laius would receive his end. There is reason to celebrate and be happy because Oedipus somehow managed to get out of the forest alive as he was discovered by chance by some peasant farmers who eventually ended up handing them over to the king and queen of Corinth. However, what was thought to be the start of a better life for Oedipus was actually the opposite. On the contrary, it will be the start of a life that would have a grim ending not only for Oedipus but also for his mother and father.

The **feeling of pity** continues as we witness how Oedipus **unknowingly slays** his father and then **marries his mother**, and it then becomes the **reason for his mother's intense feeling of guilt and confusion** that led he**r to kill herself**. Finally, the feeling of **pity ends with Oedipus making himself** blind and then **throwing** himself in **exile**. He allowed all of these things happen to him in pursuit of saving the lives of those whom he thought were his parents. Despite Oedipus' moral and righteous

goals, he nonetheless ends up doing what is wrong, illustrating the futility of the human being versus the power of destiny which is believed to be out of the control of human beings.

As we ponder about the life of Oedipus who becomes the symbol of the **inability** of a **human being** to **run away from his destiny**, and for that, we **feel fear**. He represents every human being. We feel fear because in our everyday lives, we make conscious choices and efforts in order to keep ourselves away from doing bad things or being subjected to bad experiences. We protect ourselves and do everything we can to be morally upright and to guarantee self-preservation. But Oedipus' life and the lessons from it will become a deeply ingrained realization upon us that we, like Oedipus, are after all helpless versus our destiny, especially once it is revealed to us.

Another important characteristic of the tragic hero is the **shift from a life of prosperity transforming towards the life of adversity**. When Oedipus was born, he has in his hands the prospect of a prosperous life being the son of the King and the Queen. But this prosperity turns to adversity as a result of the response of King Laius to the prophecy. When he was growing up in Corinth, again he was presented by a life of prosperity to which he turned his back against because he does not want to murder his own father and marry his own mother, leading to a path that will saw him murder his true father, marry his own mother who would soon take her own life while Oedipus makes himself blind and them puts himself in exile – clearly a life filled with adversity and not prosperity.

Another important aspect of a tragic hero as presented by Aristotle is the presence of both the **flaw** and **the state of being virtuous**. This puts the tragic hero in a balanced human form – there is the presence of innate good enough to inspire moral actions. There is also the tendency of the tragic hero to demonstrate his frailty or weakness which will result in his error. In the story, Oedipus is the epitome of the tragic hero because he is **virtuous**.

He was a good son to his surrogate (alternate) parents and his being **virtuous** was demonstrated in two important events in his life. The first one was during the time he discovered that he was doomed to kill his father. It broke his heart to leave his parents behind but he knew that even though this is a very painful step for him, this was the only way that he could keep the prophecy from becoming true, saving the life of his father and saving his mother from shame that will result in the marriage of a son to his own mother.

The other event which showed Oedipus innate characteristic of being **virtuous** is during the time he took it upon to punish his own self for his wrong doings. When he discovered his own crime and accepted his own shame, he was the one who took his very own eye sight, symbolizing how he was blinded and how his punishment means, not allowing him to visually enjoy life because of what he did. He also threw himself in exile as part of the punishment he himself embraced, knowing that this is the right and moral thing to do.

Despite these moral actions, Oedipus is not perfect. He is also **flawed** and is a man who is **characterized with errors**. One of his flaws is his **temper**. It is because of his **anger** that has led to his killing his father. Another flaw of Oedipus is his **belief that he is more powerful than destiny and fate**. He believed that he could change the course

of his life based on his own actions. This belief has sent him towards the path which he was trying to avoid. He believed that he can **outrun destiny** and change it over time, and this sense of overconfidence in what he can do doomed him. Had he been humble enough to allow destiny to reveal itself without any effort to change it, things would have been different. Anyone would risk doing anything and everything hoping that things turn out for the best.

Lastly, the most important aspect of the tragic hero is death. Tragedy pertains to a sad ending to a story or a life. The tragic hero's life is a tragedy not because of death. Every human being dies, but the **essence of tragedy** is **seen** in the **details leading towards** the death of the hero, a life characterized by misfortune that the tragic hero has to carry with him to his grave. This is a tragedy because even in his own death, Oedipus knew that there is nothing he can do to redeem himself from his sins. He is a hero because he tried to do the right thing but he only ends up doing the wrong things nonetheless. He was a tragic hero because while we praise him for his values, he is also forever stained by the reality that he can never be redeemed from his errors brought about by his flaws and weaknesses as a man who is powerless against the power of destiny and fate, which is a very significant ideal during the time of Sophocles.

Oedipus Rex: Hamartia

According to Aristotle, a tragic hero is a distinguished person occupying a high position or having a high status in life and in very prosperous circumstances falling into misfortune on account of a "hamartia" or some defect of character. He should be good or fine man though not perfect. There is nothing to arouse the feelings of pity or fear in seeing a bad character pass from prosperity into misfortune while the ruin of a man who represents near-perfection in the moral sense is repugnant and horrible. The tragic hero is neither a moral paragon nor a scoundrel. He should be true to type, and consistent or true to himself. Aristotle would attribute disaster or catastrophe in a tragedy to an error rather than a deliberate crime.

The main requirements of Aristotle in regard to the tragic hero are thus (1) **high social standing**, (2) **moral excellence or goodness**, and (3) **some fault of character**, or **error committed by the hero in ignorance**. Oedipus answers to all these requirements. Oedipus is a man of royal birth; he is brought up by a King and a Queen and he himself afterwards becomes a King and marries a Queen. He is thus a man of social eminence and possessing excellent qualities of character, though his is by no means perfect. We cannot say that his misfortune is due to any defect in his character, though his defects do produce the impression that such a man must pay for his defects. It would be wrong to say that he is a puppet in the hands of fate. Within certain limits he is a free agent, though it must be recognized that the prophecy of the oracle would yet have been fulfilled.

Oedipus is a **good king**, a great well-wisher of his people, a man of integrity, an honest and great administrator and an outstanding intellect. He is a pious man who believes in oracles, respects the bonds of family, and hates impurity. His belief in the prophecies of gods is the very basis of the whole play. The suppliant people approach him almost as a god and he is honoured as a saviour. When Creon reveals the cause of the city's suffering, Oedipus declares his resolve to track down the criminal and he utters a terrible

curse upon him. We can say that Oedipus is almost an ideal King. He also shows himself as a devoted husband and a loving father. He shows due consideration for the opinions and feelings of Jocasta and he lavishes all his affection on his daughters. His relations with the Chorus are also very cordial and he shows all due courtesy to them. In short both as a man and as a king Oedipus is worthy of high respect.

However, Oedipus has his faults. He is **hot-tempered**, **hasty in his judgment, proud of his intelligence, and random in his decisions**. He quickly loses his temper when he finds the prophet reluctant to reveal the things that he knows. He jumps to the conclusion that Tiresias and Creon have hatched a conspiracy against him. This attitude of distrust towards the prophet is in sharp contrast to Oedipus's genuine piety. Oedipus belongs to the world of politics and human standards rather than to the divine order of the world. His piety fails also later on when, under the influence of Jocasta, he becomes somewhat skeptical regarding the oracle.

An outstanding feature of Oedipus's character is an **inherent feeling of pride in his own wisdom**. Because of this arrogance, Oedipus certainly alienates some of our sympathy. When self-confidence takes the form of pride, haughtiness, arrogance or insolence, it becomes disgusting and obnoxious. His attitude of intolerance towards both Tiresias and Creon and his highly offensive and insulting words to both of them create in us the impression that he is paving the way for his own downfall. Of course, Oedipus has already committed the crimes which make him a sinner in the eyes of the god, in his own eyes, and in the eyes of other people. But the tragedy lay in discovery that he is guilty of them. If the crimes had remained unknown there would hardly have been any tragedy. Tragedy comes with the fact for discovery both for Jocasta and himself.

It would be a flaw in the logic to say that Oedipus suffers because of his sin of pride, but his pride is not the direct cause of his tragedy. He tried to avoid the fulfillment of the prophecies made by oracle. He killed his father and married his mother. His tragedy is a tragedy of error. If he had been a little more careful, things would have taken a different shape. He might have avoided the quarrel on the road if he had not been so proud or hot-tempered; and he might have refused to marry a woman old enough if he had not been blinded by the pride of his intelligence in solving the riddle of the Sphinx. But, then, the prophecies of the oracle would have been fulfilled in some other way, because nothing could have been prevented their fulfillment. Pride has little to do with Oedipus's killing his father and marrying his mother.

If Oedipus had not relentlessly pursued his investigations, he might have been spared the shock of discovery. Something in him drives him forward on the road to discovery. After Tiresias has first refused to tell him anything and then uttered some frightening prophecies. Oedipus is discouraged by Jocasta to continue his investigations. But he pays no heed to her philosophy of living at random. She makes another effort to stop his investigations when she has herself realized the truth, but again she failed. The Theban shepherd too tries, but in vain. It is this insistence on the truth that leads to the discovery in which lies the tragedy. We may interrupt this insistence on the truth as a form of pride, the pride of intellect, or the pride of knowing everything. The link of cause and effect is unmistakable between Oedipus's pride of intellect and Oedipus's discovery for his sins. But there is no strong link between his pride and the actual committing of his sins because the sins would have been committed in any case, if the oracle was to be

fulfilled. The oracle did say that Oedipus would be guilty of those crimes but no oracle said that Oedipus must discover the truth.

Oedipus is thus an **authentic tragic hero** in the Aristotelian sense because his tragedy is as much due to his own initiatives in discovering the truth as to external circumstances. To the modern mind, a high social position is not necessary for the tragic hero nor do they recognize the validity of oracles too.

In Oedipus we see the **helplessness of man in the face of the circumstances and his essential greatness**. The manner in which Oedipus blinds himself after realizing his guilt and in which he endures his punishment raise him high in our esteem. The spirit of Oedipus remains unconquered even in his defeat and that is the essential fact about a tragic hero.

Oedipus Rex: Catharsis

According to Aristotle tragedy should arouse the feeling of pity and terror – pity for the hero's tragic fate and terror at the sight of the dreadful suffering befalling particularly the hero. By arousing pity and terror, a tragedy aims at the catharsis of these and similar other emotions and cures these feelings which always exist in our hearts. A tragedy, hence, affords emotional relief and the spectators rise at its end with a feeling of pleasure. This, according to Aristotle, is the aesthetic function of tragedy. Through catharsis the emotions are reduced to a healthy and balanced proportion. Besides pity and fear an audience also experiences contempt, hatred, delight, indignation, and admiration. Still, these emotions are less important or less intense. Pity and fear are the dominant emotions and they are intensely produced.

Tragedy, by means of pity, fear and other emotions also provides exercise and nourishment for the emotional side of human nature. It also satisfies our love of beauty and of truth, of truth to life and truth about life. Experience, and more experience, is a natural human craving. Tragedy leads to an enrichment of our experience of human life. It may teach us to live more wisely and widen the boundaries of our experience of life. Tragedy shows the eternal contradiction between human weakness and human courage, human stupidity and human greatness, human frailty and human strength. Tragedy gives us pleasure by exhibiting human endurance and perseverance in the face of calamities and disasters.

Pity and fear are the dominating feelings produced by the play **"Oedipus Rex"**. Apart from catharsis of these feelings, the play deepens our experience of human life and enhances our understanding of human nature and human psychology. The prologue produces in us pity and fear, pity for the suffering population of Thebes and fear of future misfortunes which might befall the people. The Priest, describing the state of affairs, refers to a tide of death from which there is no escape, death in the fields and pastures, in the wombs of women, death caused by the plague which grips the city. Oedipus gives expression to his feeling of sympathy, telling the Priest that his heart is burdened by the suffering of all the people. The entry-song of the Chorus following the prologue heightens the feelings of pity and fear. The Chorus says:

"With fear my heart is riven, fear of what shall be told. Fear is upon us."

Oedipus' proclamation of his resolve to track down the murderer of Laius brings some relief to us. But the curse, which Oedipus utters upon the unknown criminal and upon those who may be sheltering him, also terrifies us by its fierceness. The scene in which Oedipus clashes with Tiresias contributes to the feelings of pity and terror, the prophecy of Tiresias is frightening because it relates to Oedipus. Tiresias speaks to Oedipus in alarming tones, describing him in a veiled manner as **"husband of the woman who bore him, father-killer and father-supplanter"** and accusing him openly of being a murderer.

In the scene with Creon, the feeling of terror is much less, arising mainly from Oedipus' sentence of death against the innocent Creon which is soon withdrawn. The tension reappears with Oedipus' suspicion on hearing from Jocasta that Laius was killed where three roads met. Oedipus' account of his arrival at Thebes arouses the feeling of terror by its reference to the prophecy which he received from the oracle, but both terror and pity subside when Jocasta tries to assure Oedipus that prophecies deserve no attention. The song of the Chorus harshly rebuking the proud tyrant revives some of the terror in our minds, but it again subsides at the arrival of the Corinthian after hearing whom Jocasta mocks at the oracles. The drama now continues at a rather low key till first Jocasta and then Oedipus find themselves confronted with the true facts of the situations. With the discovery of true facts, both the feelings of pity and fear reach their climax, with Oedipus lamenting his sinful acts of killing his father and marrying his mother.

But the feelings of pity and fear do not end here. The song of the Chorus immediately following the discovery arouses our deepest sympathy at Oedipus' sad fate. The Chorus extends the scope of its observations to include all mankind:

"All the generations of mortal man add up to nothing."

Then comes the messenger from the palace and he gives a terrible account of the manner in which Jocasta hanged herself and Oedipus blinded himself. The messenger concluded his account with the remark that the royal household is today overwhelmed by **"calamity, death, ruin, tears and shame"**. The conversation of the Chorus with Oedipus who is not blind is also extremely moving. Oedipus speaks of his physical and mental agony and the Chorus tries to console him. Oedipus describes himself as:

"…… shedder of father's blood, husband of mother, Godless and child of shame, begetter of brother-sons".

The feeling of deep grief by Oedipus is experienced by the audience with an equal intensity. The scene of Oedipus' meeting with his daughters is also very touching. His daughters, laments Oedipus, will have to wander homeless and husbandless. He appeals to Creon in moving words to look after them.

The feeling of pity and fear has been continuously experienced from the very opening scene of the play. Other feelings aroused in our hearts were irritation with Oedipus at his ill-treatment of Tiresias, anger against Tiresias for his obstinacy and insolence, admiration for Creon for his moderation and loyalty, liking for Jocasta for her devotion to Oedipus, admiration for Oedipus for his relentless pursuits of truth and so on. But the feelings of relief, delight and pleasure have also been aroused in us. These feelings are

the result partly of the felicity of the language employed and the music of poetry, but mainly the result of the spectacle of human greatness which we have witnessed side by side with the spectacle of human misery. The sins of Oedipus were committed unknowingly; in fact Oedipus did his utmost to avert the disaster. Oedipus is, therefore, essentially an innocent man, despite his sin of pride and tyranny. Jocasta too is innocent, in spite of her sin of scepticism. There is no villainy to be condemned in the play. The essential goodness of Oedipus, Jocasta and Creon is highly pleasing to us. But even more pleasing though at the same time saddening is the spectacle of human endurance seen in Jocasta and Oedipus inflicting upon themselves a punishment that is awful and terrible. In the closing scene, the blind Oedipus rises truly to heroic heights, displaying an indomitable spirit. Blind and helpless though he now is, and extremely ashamed of his parricide and incestuous experience as he is, he yet shows an invulnerable mind and it is this which has a sustaining, cheering, uplifting and exhilarating effect upon us.

Jocasta’s fate underlines that of Oedipus. So does the great song of the Chorus on the laws which are “enthroned above”. The song and in particular the denunciation of the tyrant are relevant to Oedipus and Jocasta. The song begins with a prayer for purity and reverence, clearly an answer to Oedipus’ and Jocasta's doubts about the oracles. It ends with an even more emphatic expression of fear of what will happen if the truth of the divine oracles is denied. Between the first and the last stanzas the Chorus describes the man who is born of hybris, such hybris as is displayed by the King and the Queen. The description follows to a large extent the conventional picture of the tyrant, mentioning his pride, greed and irreverence. Not every feature fits the character of Oedipus, nor should we expect that. The Chorus fears that he who behaves with presumption, pride and self-confidence will turn tyrannical and impious, and they foresee that Zeus, the true King of the world will punish the sins of the mortal King. If he does not do so, all religion will become meaningless, and all will be lost.

Oedipus Rex: Tragic Irony

Tragic irony was used initially in **ancient Greek tragedy** and later almost in **all tragedies**. Irony consists essentially in the **contrast of the two aspects of the same remark or situation**. A remark made by a character in a play may have one meaning for him and another meaning for other character and the audience or one meaning for the speaker and the other characters and another meaning for the audience. Similarly, a situation may have a **double significance** in the sense that a disaster may be foreseen by the audience while the characters may be ignorant of it. **Irony heightens the tragic effect.** Sophocles has used irony with striking effect in his plays.

“Oedipus Rex” is replete with tragic irony and is found in most of the **speeches and situations**. There are many occasions on which the audience is aware of the facts while the speaker is ignorant of those facts and some other characters, on the other hand, present a contrast which lends an increased emphasis to a tragic fact or to the ultimate tragic outcome. The proclamation of Oedipus that he will make a determined effort to trace the murderer of Laius and the curse that Oedipus utters upon the killer and upon those sheltering the criminal, possess a tragic irony in view of the audience’s knowledge that Oedipus himself will ultimately prove to be Laius’ murderer. Oedipus proclaims that no house in Thebes is to provide shelter to the guilty man and that the gods will curse those who disobey his command. Thus, without knowing the real meaning of his words,

Oedipus announces the sentences of banishment against the murderer and heightens the tragic effect of the discovery which comes towards the end of the play. Oedipus does not know that he himself is to become the victim of the punishment which he is proclaiming but the audience knows it. In this contrast between Oedipus' ignorance and our knowledge of the true fact lies the tragic irony.

The **scene between Oedipus and Tiresias** is fraught with tragic irony throughout. Tiresias is the prophet who knows everything while Oedipus does not know himself as such. Tiresias would not like to disclose the secret but Oedipus quickly loses his temper thus provoking the prophet to say what he never wanted to say. Tiresias tells Oedipus that he himself is the guilty man he is seeking and that he is living in a sinful union with the one he loves. The impact of these words is totally lost upon Oedipus. The charges of Tiresias enrage him and he insults the prophet by calling him a sightless sot showing his own inner blindness. An irony lies in the fact that Tiresias, physically blind, knows the truth while Oedipus, having normal eyesight, is totally blind to that truth. There is irony also in the contrast between what Oedipus truly is and what he thinks himself to be. To Tiresias he boasts of his intelligence citing his past victory over the Sphinx. The terrible predictions that Tiresias makes regarding the fate in store for Oedipus also possess irony in the sense that, while we know their tragic imports, Oedipus treats them as the ravings of a madman. These predictions become more awful when we realize that they will prove to be true and valid. Tiresias warns Oedipus that the killer of Laius will ultimately find himself blind, an exile, a beggar, a brother and a father at a same time to the children he loves, a son and a husband to the woman who bore him, a father-killer and father-supplenter. Even the Chorus, ignorant of the facts, refuses to believe what Tiresias has said about Oedipus. Thus both Oedipus and the Chorus are unaware of the truth while Tiresias and the audience is fully aware of it.

Tragic irony is also found in the **scene with Creon**. Creon begs Oedipus not to think him a traitor and not to pass the sentence of death or exile against him. But Oedipus blinded by his authority and his anger shows himself relentless. This situation is ironical of the final scene where the roles are reversed. There Oedipus begs Creon to look after his daughters, and entreats him to pass the order of banishment against him. Creon, being a moderate man, does not show himself unrelenting in that scene. The pathos of the final scene is intensified.

Then there is the **scene with Jocasta**. Oedipus and Jocasta are ignorant of the true facts. The audience, aware of the facts, experiences a deep sorrow at the fate which is going to overtake these characters. Jocasta is sceptical of oracles. She thinks no man possesses the secret of divination and as a proof she tells what she and her husband did to the child, who, according to the oracle, was to kill his father. There is palpable irony in Jocasta's unbelief in oracles and her citing as proof the very case which is to prove the truth of one oracle received by her and the late Laius. This irony deepens Jocasta's tragedy.

There is **irony also in the account of his life which Oedipus gives to Jocasta**. Oedipus thinks himself to be the son of Polybus and Merope: he fled from Corinth after the oracle had told him of the crimes he would commit: he has all along been under the impression that he has avoided committing the crimes foretold by the oracles. But all the time Oedipus has been unknowingly performing certain actions leading to the fulfillment of those very prophecies which he had been striving to belie, just as King Laius had

earlier taken desperate but futile measures to prevent the fulfillment of the prophecy which has been communicated to him by the oracle.

When the Corinthian messenger brings the news of Polybus' death, Jocasta gets another chance to **mock at the oracles** without realizing that her mockery will turn against herself.

"Where are you now, divine prognostication?"

Jocasta tells Oedipus that this news proves the hollowness of oracles because Polybus whom Oedipus believed to be his father has died a natural death. There is irony also in the simple remark of the messenger that Jocasta is the **"true consort"** of a man like Oedipus. Neither the messenger nor Jocasta knows the awful meaning of these words. Jocasta makes an exultant speech on the desirability of living at random and on mother marrying as merely a figment of the imagination. Jocasta makes this speech only a few moments before the truth dawns upon her. The Corinthian, who wanted to free Oedipus of his fear of marrying his mother, ends by revealing, unknowingly, the fact that Jocasta's husband, Oedipus, is really her son, although this revelation is at this stage confined to Jocasta. The tragic irony of this situation and in what is said by the Corinthian and Jocasta in this scene is evident.

The **song of the Chorus**, after Jocasta has left in a fit of grief and sorrow, is full of tragic irony. The Chorus thereby pays a tribute to what it thinks to be the divine parentage of Oedipus. There is a big contrast between this supposition of the Chorus and the actual reality. The arrival of the Theban shepherd is the point at which the climax of the tragedy is reached.

After the discovery there is hardly any room for tragic irony. The concluding part consists of a long account of the self-murder and the self-blinding, a dialogue between Oedipus and the Chorus, and a scene between Oedipus and Creon including the brief lament by Oedipus on the wretched condition of his daughters. The concluding portion of the play is deeply moving and poignant, but contains little or no tragic irony.

Oedipus Rex bristles with tragic irony. It opposes Oedipus against those who know i.e. Tiresias. Where characters themselves are not omniscient, the audience is. The audience knows the gist of the story and can be surprised only in the means by which the necessary ends are achieved. They know that Oedipus is, in all sincerity, telling a falsehood when he says:

"I shall speak, as a stranger to the whole question and stranger to the action."

The falsehood is, however, qualified in the term stranger: the stranger who met and killed King Laius, who met and married Queen Jocasta, the stranger who was no true stranger at all. At the outset, he says:

"For I know well that all of you are sick, but though you are sick, there's none of you who is so sick as I."

Here he is, indeed, speaking the truth, but more truth, than he knows, because he is using sickness only in a symbolic sense while actually it is true of him in a literal tense.

In addition to this irony of detail, there is a larger irony in the **inversion of the whole action.** The homeless wanderer by delivering the city of Thebes from the sphinx and marrying Jocasta became a King in fact, but this revelation turned him once more into a homeless wanderer, who had once gone bright eyed with his strong traveller's staff, now uses the staff to feel the way before him.

The **reversed pattern** is seen again in the fact that the cruel oracles have their darkest moment just before they come clear. Jocasta's words mocking the prophecy of the gods are echoed and amplified in Oedipus' typical tyrant-speech of unbelief. The role of the helpers is another example. Sophocles provides at least one helper, or rescuer, for every act. The appeal in the prologue is to Oedipus, himself a rescuer in the past. Oedipus appeals to Creon who comes from and represents Apollo and Delphi. It is as a rescuer that Tiresias is called. Jocasta intervenes to help. So does the Corinthian messenger, and the last helper, the Theban shepherd, is the true and original rescuer. Those who do not know the reality are eager to help; those who know are reluctant. But all helper alike push Oedipus over the edge into disaster.

Oedipus Rex: Character is Destiny

"Oedipus Rex" is a **tragedy of fate**. The **crucial events** in the play have been **pre-determined by fate or the gods**. Man seems **helpless** facing the circumstances which mould his destiny. King Laius was told that his own son by Jocasta would kill him. Laius did **everything possible** to prevent such a disaster. Once Jocasta gave birth to a son, Laius had him chained and handed him over to a trustworthy servant with strict orders that the child be exposed on. Mt. Cithaeron and allowed to perish. But the servant, out of compassion, handed over the child to a Corinthian shepherd who passed him on to the Corinthian King. The child grew up as the son of the King and Queen of Corinth and later killed his true father, Laius, in complete ignorance. Apollo's **oracle was fulfilled** even though Laius and Jocasta took the extreme step to escape the fate foretold by the oracle.

Oedipus had also to **submit to the destiny** which Apollo's oracle pronounced for him. He learnt from the oracle that he would kill his own father and marry his own mother. He, too, tried his utmost to avert a terrible fate and fled from Corinth. His wanderings took him to Thebes, where people were facing a great misfortune. King Laius had been killed and the city was in the grip of the Sphinx, who was causing a lot of destruction because nobody was able to solve her riddle. Oedipus solved the riddle and put an end to the monster. Oedipus was joyfully received by Theban people as their King and was given Laius's widow as his wife. Thus, in complete ignorance of the identity of his parents, he killed his father and married his mother. He performed these disastrous acts not only unknowingly, but as a result of his efforts to escape the cruel fate which the oracle at had communicated to him.

It is evident that the occurrences which bring about the tragedy in the life of Laius, Oedipus, and Jocasta are the work of that **mysterious supernatural power** called **fate or destiny or be given the name of Apollo**. This supernatural power had **pre-determined certain tragic events** and even informed the human beings in advance. These human beings take whatever measures, to avert those events; and yet things turn

out exactly as they had been foretold by the oracles. Oedipus has done nothing at all to deserve the fate which overtakes him. Nor do Laius and Jocasta deserve the fate they meet,

According to Aristotle the tragic hero is a **prosperous man** who falls into misfortune due to some serious **defect or hamartia**. No doubt that Oedipus is an **able ruler**, **a father** of his people, a great **administrator** and an **outstanding intellect**. His chief care is not for himself but for the people of the State. The people look upon him as their **savior and worshipped him**. He is also a **religious man** in the orthodox sense. That such a man should meet the sad fate is unbearably painful to us.

Oedipus is not, however, **a perfect man or a perfect King**. He does suffer from a **hamartia** or a defect of character. He is **hot-tempered**, **rash**, **hasty** in judgments, **easily provoked** and somewhat **arbitrary**. Though in the beginning his attitude towards Tiresias is one of reverence, he quickly **loses his temper** and speaks to the prophet in an **insulting manner** accusing both him and Creon of treason and showing a **blind suspicion** towards friends. His **position and authority** seem to be leading him to become a **tyrant**. Creon has to remind him that the city does not belong to him alone. Even when blinded he draws the reproach:

"Do not crave to be master in everything always."

All this shows that Oedipus is not a man of a **flawless character**, not completely **free from faults**, not an **embodiment of all the virtues**. His **pride** in his own **wisdom** is one of his **glaring faults**. His success in solving the riddle of the Sphinx further developed his inherent feeling of pride. There is in him a **failure of piety** even. Under the influence of Jocasta, he grows **sceptical of the oracles**. Thus there is in him a **lack of true wisdom** which took him on the verge of becoming an impious tyrant.

If Oedipus had **not been hot-tempered**, he might **not have got entangled in a fight** on the road and might have not been guilty of **murdering his father**. Similarly, if he had been a little **more cautious**, he might have hesitated to **marry a woman old enough to be his mother**. After all there was **no compulsion** either in the fight or in his marriage. Both his acts may thus be **attributed to his own defects** of character. All at once it has to be accepted that the **decree of the oracles were inescapable**. Even if Oedipus had taken the **precautions**, the prophecy was to be fulfilled. The oracle's prediction was **unconditional**; it did not say that if Oedipus did such and such a thing he would kill his father and marry his mother. The oracle simply said that Oedipus would kill his father and marry his mother. What the oracle said, was bound to happen.

If Oedipus is the **innocent victim** of inescapable doom, he would be a **mere puppet** and the play becomes a **tragedy of destiny** which denies **human freedom**. Sophocles does not want to regard Oedipus as a puppet; there is reason to believe that Oedipus has been portrayed largely as a free agent. The attendant in the play insistently describes Oedipus' **self-blinding as voluntary** and distinguishes it from his **involuntary murder** of his father and **marriage** with his mother. Oedipus' actions were **fate-bound**, but everything that he does, he does as a free agent – his **condemnation** of Tiresias and Creon, his **conversation** with Jocasta to reveal the facts, his **pursuing his investigation** despite the efforts of Jocasta and the Theban shepherd to stop him, and so on. Oedipus, **freely choosing a series of actions**, led to

his own ruin. Oedipus could have left the **plague** to take its course but his **pity over the sufferings** of his people forced him to consult the oracle. He could have left the **murder of Laius uninvestigated**, but his **love of justice** obliged him to inquire. He need not have **forced the truth** from the reluctant Theban shepherd but he could not **rest content with a lie**. Tiresias, Jocasta, the Theban shepherd each tried to stop Oedipus, but he was **determined to solve the problem of his own parentage**. The direct cause of his ruin is not fate; no oracle said that he must discover the truth. The cause of his ruin lies in his own **weakness**. His own **strength and courage**, his **loyalty to Thebes** and his **love of truth** causes his ruin. All this shows him a free agent.

In spite of the facts that Oedipus is a **free agent** in most of his actions, still the most tragic events of his life – his murder of his father and his marriage with his mother – had **inevitably to happen**. Here the **responsibility of fate cannot be denied**. The real tragedy lies in the discovery of truth, which is due to his own traits. If he had not **discovered the truth**, he would have continued to live in a **state of blissful ignorance** and there would have been **no tragedy and no suffering**. But the **parricide** and the **incest** were **pre-ordained** and for these fate is responsible.

Oedipus Rex: Role of Chorus

Greek tragedy is said to develop itself from the group of dancers and singers who used to partake in the worship of various gods. According to Aristotle the Chorus should be like one of the characters. Gradually the role of the Chorus became less and less important in classical tragedy, until in Roman tragedy the speeches of the Chorus were supposed to be made in between the acts.

Chorus discharges some broad functions in all classical tragedies. The structure of a Greek tragedy is determined by the Chorus. After the prologue, it is with the entry of the Chorus that a Greek tragedy begins. Various episodes are also marked off by choric odes. The conclusion of a Greek tragedy occurs with the exode or the exit song of the Chorus. It is the function of the Chorus to **comment on actions and events**. It also sometimes questions the characters. Its standard role is that of **the moderator**. At times it **represents the view-point of the common spectator** and in some cases it **represents the view-point of the dramatist** himself.

The functions of the Chorus are very well performed in Oedipus Rex. In the very first ode the **Chorus depicts the horror of the plague and expresses an apprehension about the message from the oracle of Delphi.** Other odes comment on the action that has taken place after the last ode and build an atmosphere appropriate to that stage of the play. It plays the role of a peace-maker between the king and Creon and succeeds in getting the king’s pardon for the latter. After the exit of Tiresias it comments on the terrible predictions which Tiresias has made but shows determination to support the king. Its most significant response is when Oedipus and Jocasta have expressed irreverent thoughts against the oracles. At many other times also they reflect the dominant mood and help to deepen it. When Oedipus imagines that he is the son of the goodness of luck, the Chorus, immediately sing that their master, Oedipus, might be the son of Apollo.

In the fifth or last choric ode in Oedipus Rex, the **Chorus reflects the dejection of Oedipus** and says that all the generations of moral man add up to nothing. This ode must not be regarded as reflecting the final mood and impression of the play, for the impression is as much of the greatness of the human spirit as of the insignificance of man and the transitoriness of his happiness. This ode must, therefore, be looked upon only as reflecting a final judgment of it. Oedipus remains forceful even in his downfall; in a sense he is still heroic.

The Chorus **takes part in the dialogues** also. When Oedipus consults them about ending the plague in the city, they express disappointment that the oracle had not guided them about the identity of Laius' murderer. They also tell him what they know about the murder of their previous king and its circumstances. When Creon, learning that the king has accused him of treason, comes on the stage he talks to the Chorus, who tell him that the king's accusation was probably made in the heat of anger. Creon asked if the king looked absolutely serious while making the charge and they rightly say that it is not for them to look into the eyes of his master when he speaks. When Oedipus has almost passed a sentence upon Creon, Jocasta arrives on the scene and first talks to the Chorus. They request her to settle the difference between the two men. They are worried when they see Jocasta going into the palace in a very dejected mood, and they give expression to their apprehension. Oedipus asks them about the shepherd who gave the infant to the Corinthian, they answer that his queen would be able to answer the question better. They sympathize with Oedipus when they see him after he has blinded himself. It is clear, thus, that the Chorus never takes a direct hand in the action. It does not consist only of spectators but influences the action in various subtle ways.

The contribution of the Chorus in Oedipus Rex is considerable. They link the play with common humanity. In some sense they are often in the position of the **ideal spectator**. They fill in the gaps in the action when no other character is there on the stage. They **add to it the element of melody** which must have been one of the attractions of Greek tragedy. They provide an appropriate shift between the titanic, heroic figure of Oedipus and the mass of common humanity represented by the two shepherds in Oedipus Res. The tragedy of Oedipus and its relevance to common life is very well stressed by the Chorus in its exit ode or exode.

Oedipus Rex : Fate

In the Greek tragedy Oedipus the King written by Sophocles, the antagonist is fate. The theme of fate is deeply intertwined in the plot. In this play, all meet their fate despite attempting to escape it. Two characters bring about a fate worse than their original fate as punishment for trying to cheat fate.

The first instance-involving fate occurs when Oedipus sends Creon, Jocasta's brother, to the temple of Apollo, the god of prophecy and healing, to find the fate of Thebes and how to rid Thebes of the plague the people are suffering from. Oedipus says,

I acted at once. I sent Creon,
My wife's own brother, to Delphi—
Apollo the Prophet's oracle7—to learn
What I might do or say to save our city. (Sophocles, 81-84)

It is important to note that Apollo made the prophecy to King Laius, Jocasta's former husband, and Jocasta, Oedipus's wife, that they would bear a son who would kill King Laius, and Apollo made the prophecy to Oedipus that he would kill his biological father and sleep with his biological mother.

Fate is next brought into the play when Creon is sent in search of the blind prophet of Apollo, Tiresias. Against his will, Tiresias reveals Oedipus' fate. Oedipus is so anxious to find the murderer of King Laius that he will not give up until the murderer is found. Oedipus relentlessly pursues the truth, unwilling to give up until the truth is found.

After Oedipus repeatedly provokes Tiresias, he reveals what Oedipus is and who Oedipus really is. Tiresias says to Oedipus,

You cannot imagine…I tell you,
you and your loved ones live together in infamy,
you cannot see how far you've gone in guilt. (Sophocles, 417-419)

Tiresias is alluding to the fact that Oedipus unknowingly is married to his mother and has produced offspring through her. Oedipus is too blind to comprehend what Tiresias is saying. Tiresias goes on to say, "I pity you, flinging at me the very insults / each man here will fling at you so soon" (Sophocles, 423-424). Tiresias is warning Oedipus that everything he thinks he has is not really his. People will turn against Oedipus and he will lose everything. Oedipus blasphemes against the gods when he tells Tiresias that he does not have the gift of prophecy. This is blasphemy because Tiresias is the messenger between gods and humans, and when Oedipus calls him a liar he is denying the words of the gods.

Upon further provocations, Tiresias tells Oedipus that Oedipus does not know where he is living or who his parents are. Tiresias insinuates that Oedipus is both father and sibling to his children when he says, "And a crowd of other horrors you'd never dream / will level you with yourself and all your children" (Sophocles, lines 485-486). Next Tiresias predicts, "This day will bring your birth and your destruction" (Sophocles, 499).

In his final speech towards Oedipus, Tiresias tells Oedipus that he is the murderer. Tiresias further tells Oedipus that though he is a stranger to Thebes, he will soon discover that he is a native Theban. Oedipus will also discover that he is both father and brother to his children, and both son and husband to his wife. Tiresias aptly foretells that Oedipus will lose everything; that Oedipus will be blind and exiled (Sophocles, 510-525).

After first arguing with Tiresias and then Creon, Oedipus talks to Jocasta, bringing about our third example of fate as an antagonist. Upon learning what the argument was about Jocasta relays that an oracle had come to King Laius and told him that he would "die a victim at the hands of his own son" (Sophocles, 786-787). The king had pierced the infant's ankles and sent him to die, and besides King Laius was killed by highwayman. Jocasta argues that Oedipus should not fear prophecy because of the following,**Apollo brought neither thing to pass. My baby,**

no more murdered his father than Laius suffered,
his wildest fear—death at his own son's hands.
That's how the seers and all their revelations. (Sophocles, 794-797)

Jocasta should have known that she could not outwit the gods, or fate. Fate next comes into play when Oedipus, who has begun to think he is King Laius' killer, recounts the dinner where the drunken man accused Oedipus of being a bastard. Oedipus goes to the oracle at Delphi to find his destiny. The oracle tells Oedipus as follows:

You are fated to couple with your mother, you will bring,
A breed of children into the light no man can bear to see—
You will kill your father, the one who gave your life!. (Sophocles, 873-875)

After hearing the oracle's prediction, Oedipus flees Corinth to protect Merope and Polybus and to escape his destiny, which gives us our fifth instance of fate.

The change in the curse was brought about by Jocasta, who feared the oracle's prophecy. Jocasta sent the infant, Oedipus, to his death. In doing this Jocasta was attempting to cheat fate. Jocasta thought that if she killed the baby, she could change her husband's destiny. The added prophecy that Oedipus would lie with his mother and produce cursed offspring is a result of Jocasta's attempt to cheat fate. Oedipus is really an innocent victim of fate.

Again fate is seen when the messenger brings news that Polybus has died a natural death. Both Oedipus and Jocasta rejoice briefly in this news for it further proves that oracles are wrong Yet, Oedipus still has fear of prophecy for he will not return to Corinth as long as Merope is alive, for fear that he will lay with her. The messenger tells Oedipus that Merope is not Oedipus' true mother, as he himself gave Oedipus to her and to Pelops as a gift (Sophocles, 1113-1119). It is a strange twist of fate this messenger both took Oedipus to Corinth, but also is one of the final puzzle pieces in Oedipus' true identity.

When the shepherd arrives on the scene he is forced by Oedipus to verify that Oedipus is the child of Jocasta and King Laius. Oedipus' is now forced to realize that he has not escaped his fate. The entire prophecy has been fulfilled. After finding Jocasta's body, "And there we saw the woman hanging by the neck" (Sophocles, 1396), Oedipus does the following:

He rips off her brooches, the long gold pins
holding her ropes—and lifting them high,
looking straight up into the points,
he digs them down the sockets of his eyes, crying. (Sophocles, 1403-1406)

In the end of the play Oedipus is blind, ruined, and exiled just as Tiresias foretold when he said,

You are the scourge of your own flesh and blood,
And the double lash of your mother and your father's curse
Will whip you from this land one day, their football
Treading you down in terror, darkness shrouding
Your eyes that now can see the light. (Sophocles, 474-479)

Fate came out victorious in the end. In the Greek vision Fate cannot be altered or cheated. Even the gods cannot change Fate. Instead of claiming one victim, many were

ruined. If Jocasta had not tried to cheat fate, perhaps King Laius would be the only death. Instead King Laius and Jocasta are both dead, Oedipus is ruined and his children are cursed by this incestuous pollution. Fate is a force not to be reckoned with.

Considering all the facts ,we can say that Oedipus is neither a free agent nor a mere victim of fate. The major events of his life are determined by fate, but his own acts such as fleeing from Corinth, killing an old man, marrying an aged woman, without knowing his whole identity, showing over-confidence and milking the shepherd for information all have contributed in precipitating the disaster.

Oedipus Rex : Plot Construction

Plot is the "first principle," the most important feature of tragedy. Aristotle defines plot as "the arrangement of the incidents". According to him ;"The plot must be "a single whole," with a beginning, middle, and end. It must be "complete," having "unity of action."

By this Aristotle means that the plot must be structurally self-contained, with the incidents bound together by internal necessity, each action leading inevitably to the next without any intervention.

"The worst kinds of plots are "'episodic,' in which the episodes or acts succeed one another without probable or necessary sequence" The plot must be "of a certain magnitude," both quantitatively (length, complexity) and qualitatively ("seriousness" and universal significance). It should not be too brief; it may be either simple or complex, although complex is better. Simple plots have only a "change of fortune". Complex plots have both "reversal of intention" and "recognition "connected with the catastrophe (disaster)."

Oedipus Rex is the finest example from plot construction point of view and it has been envied by many of the writers. According to Aristotle, the plot of Oedipus Rex satisfies all the requirement of a good plot in a very nice way and he, in his book "the poetic", presents Oedipus Rex as a model tragedy from all dramatic convictions' point of view. When we analyse critically Oedipus Rex from plot construction point of view we can say that the first thing which strikes us is its unusual plot.

Oedipus Rex has an extremely unusual plot. It is the story of a King who is brought down by the unforeseen consequences of his own oath. From beginning to end it is concerned with the investigation of some past events. The play unites two parallel problems. One is the detection of murderer of Laius and the second is the identity of Oedipus himself. The two problems are one in a way and solving of either of them is like solving the both.

The general pattern of the story is that of finding of a lost one. The theme can be applied at several levels. We can say that Oedipus finds his parents or Thebes and Corinth discover their lost prince. This is very old theme. The foundling story has certain set features. For example, the child is generally believed to be dead, though it often escapes miraculously or by some kind human beings. The child grows up in the house-hold of a poor man but at the appropriated time, his identity is discovered by some physical signs or tokens. The Oedipus story is an exception in the sense that here the prince is brought up still as a prince, though in the family of another king. The token are not used by

Sophocles towards the solution – he has another use for them, but they are there in the form of pins stuck through the baby's ankles. Often this theme is used in many comical stories but Oedipus is a true tragedy.

Unity of Action: - Each of the incidents in this play is part of a tightly constructed cause-and-effect chain. The plague in Thebes prompts Oedipus to send Creon to consult the oracle of Delphi; the oracle's reply that the murderer of Laius must be banished from Thebes prompts Oedipus pronounce a solemn curse on the murderer and to send for Tiresias. Tiresias states that Oedipus is the murderer, but since the king knows himself to be innocent (or thinks he knows), he accuses Creon of plotting with Tiresias against him. The quarrel of Oedipus and Creon brings Jocasta from the house; seeking to calm down her husband and prove that oracles cannot be trusted, she tells again of how Laius died. When she mentions that he was killed "at a place where three roads meet," Oedipus suddenly begins to suspect that he may indeed have killed the king without knowing who he was. To settle the matter, they send for the Herdsman who is the only survivor of that attack. Meanwhile a messenger arrives from Corinth to inform Oedipus that his supposed father, King Polybus of Corinth, has died. Oedipus rejoices that he did not kill his father as the oracle had prophesied but is still worried that he may marry his mother, the Messenger, seeking to relieve him of this fear, innocently tells him that Polybus and Merope were not his real parents.

The arrival of the Messenger is the only action in the play that is not directly caused by a previous action. However, this is a perfect example of Aristotle's contention that if coincidences cannot be avoided, they should have "an air of design," for this messenger seems brought by fate, since he is the missing link in Oedipus' story, the very man who received Oedipus as a baby from the Herdsman. Thus, when the Herdsman arrives and they tell their respective stories, the whole truth emerges. This is the climax, or turning point, of the plot—the truth about Oedipus leads directly to the suicide of Jocasta and Oedipus' self-blinding and request to be exiled. The departure of Oedipus from Thebes will lift the plague, thus resolving the problem that started off the chain of events and concluding the plot.

This plot is also a perfect example of the exclusion of the irrational and the skillful handling of traditional elements of the myth on which the play is based. Sophocles does not dramatize any of the admittedly irrational parts of the myth (e.g., why did Laius and Jocasta not kill the baby outright? If Oedipus was afraid of marrying his mother, why did he marry a woman old enough to be his mother? etc). Instead, in a brilliant move, he constructs the play as an investigation of the past. The tremendous sense of inevitability and fate in this play stems from the fact that all the irrational things have already been done; they are unalterable. Once Oedipus begins to investigate the murder of Laius, the whole truth about the past is bound to emerge; as he himself says,

**"O, O, O, they will all come,
All come out clearly!"**

Complex Plot: The peripeteia of the play is the Messenger's reversal of intention; in seeking to help Oedipus by telling him that Polybus and Merope were not his real parents, he instead creates the opposite effect, providing the crucial piece of information that will reveal that Oedipus has indeed killed his father and married his mother. As Aristotle recommends, this is directly connected to the anagnorisis, for the Messenger and Herdsman piece together the whole story of Oedipus, enabling him to "recognize" his true identity, to gain the essential knowledge he has lacked. The peripeteia and anagnorisis directly cause Oedipus' catastrophe, or change of fortune from good to bad, and lead to the emotional "scenes of suffering" with Creon and his children. In a sense, each of Oedipus' actions can be considered a reversal of intention, and each gives him a little more knowledge of the dreadful truth that will lead to his downfall.

Role of the Hamartia: The play offers a perfect illustration of the nature of the hamartia as "mistake" or error rather than flaw. Oedipus directly causes his own downfall not because he is evil, or proud, or weak, but simply because he does not know who he is. If he really wanted to avoid the oracle, leaving Corinth was a mistake, killing an unknown older aristocrat was a mistake, and marrying an older queen was a mistake. Seeking to uncover the past, cursing the murderer of Laius, sending for the Herdsman—each of the actions that he pursued so vigorously and for such good reasons led to his doom. Oedipus is not morally guilty, but he is radically ignorant, and Sophocles does not present him as a unique case but rather as a paradigm of the human condition, as "a man like ourselves." In the words of the Chorus:

What man, what man on earth wins more of happiness than a seeming and after that turning away?

**Oedipus, you are my pattern of this,
Oedipus, you and your fate! (stasimon 5)**

Oedipus Rex : Relationship b/w man and the gods

Crucial Events Pre-determined:- Oedipus Rex is, to a large extent, a tragedy of fate. The crucial events in the play have been pre-determined by fate or the gods. Human beings seem rather helpless in the face of the circumstances which mould their destiny.

King Laius was told that his own son by Jocasta would kill him. Laius did everything possible to avoid such a disaster. As soon as Jocasta gave birth to a son, Laius had him chained and handed him over to a trustworthy servant with strict and precise instructions to the effect that the child be exposed on. Mt. Cithaeron and allowed to perish. No child could have survived under the circumstances. But the servant, out of compassion, handed over the child to a Corinthian shepherd who passed him on to the Corinthian King. The child grew up as the son of Polybus and Merope, the King and Queen of Corinth, and subsequently killed his true father, Laius. Of course, the son killed his father unknowingly and in complete ignorance of the real identity of his victim. But Apollo's oracle was fulfilled in the case of Laius even though he and his wife Jocasta took the extreme step of ordering the death of their own child, in order to escape the fate which had been foretold by the oracle.

Oedipus's Efforts to Avert His Fate Thwarted: - Oedipus, the son whom Laius had begotten, had likewise to submit to the destiny which Apollo's oracle pronounced for him. Oedipus learnt from the oracle that he would kill his own father and marry his own mother. Like his parents, Oedipus tried his utmost to avert a terrible fate. He fled from Corinth, determined never again to set eyes on his supposed father and mother as long as they lived. His wanderings took him to Thebes the people of which were facing a great misfortune. King Laius had been killed by an unknown traveller (who was none other than Oedipus himself) at a spot where three roads met; the city was in the grip of a frightful monster, the Sphinx, who was causing a lot of destruction because nobody was able to solve the riddle which she had propounded. Oedipus was able to solve the riddle and thus put an end to the monster. As a reward for the service he had rendered to the city, Oedipus was joyfully received by the people as their King and was given Laius's widow as his wife. Thus, in complete ignorance of the identity of both his parents, he killed his father and married his mother. He performed these disastrous acts not only unknowingly and unintentionally, but as a direct result of his efforts to escape the cruel fate which the oracle at Delphi had communicated to him.

Characters Not Responsible for their Fate: - It is evident, then, that the occurrences which bring about the tragedy in the life of Laius, Oedipus, and Jocasta are the work of that mysterious supernatural power which may be called fate or destiny or be given the name of Apollo. This supernatural power had pre-determined certain catastrophic events in the life of these human beings. These human beings are even informed in advance that they will become the victims of certain shocking events; these human beings take whatever measures they can think of, to avert those events; and yet things turn out exactly as they had been foretold by the oracles. How can we attribute any responsibility for the tragic happenings to characters? Oedipus, the greatest sufferer in the play, has done nothing at all to deserve the fate which overtakes him. Nor do Laius and Jocasta deserve the fate they meet.

The Goodness and Intelligence of Oedipus: - Let us, however, take a closer look at the character of Oedipus, the tragic hero of the play. Aristotle expressed the view that the tragic hero is a man, esteemed and prosperous, who falls into misfortune because of some hamartia or defect. Now, there can be no doubt at all about the essential goodness of Oedipus. He is an able ruler, a father of his people, an honest and great administrator, and an outstanding intellect. His chief care is not for himself but for the people of the State. The people look upon him as their saviour. He is adored and worshipped by them. He is also a religious man in the orthodox sense; he believes in oracles; he respects the

bonds of family; and he hates impurity. Indeed, in the prologue of the play we get the feeling that Oedipus is an ideal King. That such a man should meet the sad fate which he does meet is, indeed, unbearably painful to us.

Oedipus's Defects of Character: - Oedipus is not, however, a perfect man or even a perfect King. He does suffer from a hamartia or a defect of character which makes him liable to incur the wrath of the gods. He is hot-tempered, rash, hasty in forming judgments, easily provoked, and even somewhat arbitrary. Even though in the beginning his attitude towards Tiresias is one of reverence, he quickly loses his temper and speaks to the prophet in a highly insulting manner accusing both him and Creon of treason. His sentencing Creon to death even though subsequently he withdraws the punishment shows his rashness and arbitrariness. Indeed, in the two scenes with Tiresias and Creon, Oedipus shows a blind suspicion towards friends, an inclination to hasty inference, and a strange vindictiveness. When he meets opposition, or thinks he does, he easily loses all self-control. His position and authority seem to be leading him to become a tyrant. (That is the reason why this play is also called Oedipus Tyrannus). Creon has to remind him that the city does not belong to him alone. Even when blinded he draws the reproach; "Do not crave to be master in everything always." All this shows that Oedipus is not a man of a flawless character, not a man completely free from faults, not an embodiment of all the virtues. His pride in his own wisdom is one of his glaring faults. His success in solving the riddle of the Sphinx seems to have further developed his inherent feeling of pride. No seer or prophet found the solution: this is Oedipus's boast, pride and self-confidence that induce him to feel almost superior to the gods. There is in him a failure of piety even. Under the influence of Jocasta, he grows sceptical of the oracles. Thus there is in him a lack of true wisdom and this lack is an essential feature of the man who is on the verge of becoming an impious tyrant.

The Oracle's Predictions Inescapable: - But the question that arises is: what is the connection between these defects of character in Oedipus and the sad fate that he meets. It may be said that if he had not been hot-tempered, he might not have got entangled in a fight on the road and might thus have not been guilty of murdering his father. Similarly, if he had been a little more cautious, he might have hesitated to marry a woman old enough to be his mother. After all there was no compulsion either in the fight that he picked up during his journey or in the act of his marriage with Jocasta. Both his killing his father and his marrying his mother may thus be attributed to his own defects of character. At the same time it has to be recognised that the pronouncements of the oracles were inescapable. What was foretold by the oracle must inevitably happen. Even if Oedipus had taken the precautions above hinted at, the prophecy was to be fulfilled. The oracle's prediction was unconditional; it did not say that if Oedipus did such and such a thing he would kill his father and marry his mother. The oracle simply said that Oedipus would kill his father and marry his mother. What the oracle said was bound to happen.

Oedipus Not a Puppet, But a Free Agent in His Actions on the Stage: - If Oedipus is the innocent victim of a doom which he cannot avoid, he would appear to be a mere puppet. The whole play in that case becomes a tragedy of destiny which denies human freedom. But such a view would also be unsound. Sophocles does not want to regard Oedipus as a puppet; there is reason to believe that Oedipus has been portrayed largely as a free agent. Neither in Homer nor in Sophocles does divine fore-knowledge of certain events imply that all human actions are pre-determined. The attendant in the present

play emphatically describes Oedipus's self-blinding as voluntary and self-chosen and distinguishes it from his involuntary murder of his father and marriage with his mother. Some of Oedipus's actions were fate-bound, but everything that he does on the stage, from first to last, he does as a free agent—his condemnation of Tiresias and Creon, his conversation with Jocasta leading him to reveal the facts of his life to her and to his learning from her the circumstances of the death of Laius, his pursuing his investigation despite the efforts of Jocasta and the Theban shepherd to stop him, and so on. What fascinates us in this play is the spectacle of a man freely choosing, from the highest motives, a series of actions which lead to his own ruin. Oedipus could have left the plague to take its course but his pity over the sufferings of his people compelled him to consult the oracle. When Apollo's word came, he could still have left the murder of Laius un-investigated, but his piety and his love of justice compelled him to start an inquiry. He need not have forced the truth from a reluctant Theban shepherd, but he could not rest content with a lie and, therefore, wanted to prove the matter fully. Tiresias, Jocasta, the Theban shepherd, each in turn tried to stop Oedipus, but in vain; he was determined to solve the problem of his own parentage. The immediate cause of his ruin is not fate or the gods; no oracle said that he must discover the truth. Still less does the cause of his ruin lie in his own weakness. What causes his ruin is his own strength and courage, his loyalty to Thebes, and his love of truth. In all this we are to see him as a free agent. And his self-blinding and self-banishment are equally free acts of choice.

The Responsibility of fate and the Responsibility of Character: - What is our conclusion, then? In spite of the evidence to prove Oedipus a free agent in most of his actions as depicted in the play, we cannot forget that the most tragic events of his life—his murder of his father and his marriage with his mother—had inevitably to happen. Here the responsibility of fate cannot be denied. But the discovery by Oedipus of his crimes or sins is the result of the compulsions of his own nature. The real tragedy lies in this discovery, which is due to the traits of his own character. If he had not discovered the truth, he would have continued to live in a state of blissful ignorance and there would have been no tragedy—no shock, no self-blinding, and no suffering (assuming, of course, that Jocasta too did not discover the truth). But the parricide and the incest—these were pre-ordained and for these fate is responsible.

Oedipus Rex : Role of Hubris in the Play

Hubris means great and unreasonable pride. On the surface there are ample evidences that Oedipus falls because of his excessive and unreasonable pride. His pride starts when he runs from Corinth. He runs from Corinth when he is told by an oracle that he is doomed to kill his father and he marry his mother. He runs because he is proud of his intelligence and think that he can avoid his fate through intelligence Had he not been proud, he would have asked the oracle to avoid this fate. The oracles might have told him some way to avoid the immoral situation but he runs away and leaves the city trusting his intelligence.

He kills his father, though he does not know the real identity at that time, in a fit of pride. From the details of the encounter we come to know that Oedipus refused give way to the king because of his pride and when the king tried to force his will he killed him and all his company except one person who escaped.

Again when he embarks to investigate the murder of the king, he is motivated by pride. The following lines bear testimony to this statement: "then once more I must bring what is dark to light."

Each and every word spoken by Oedipus to Tiresias shows his pride. The following speech is noteworthy in this respect: when that hellcat the Sphinx was performing here, what help were you to the people? …. Your birds what good were they? Or the gods, for the matter of that? But I came by, Oedipus the simple man who knows nothing— I thought it out for myself, no birds helped me! And this the man you think you can destroy."

He thinks himself solver of riddles; therefore, he becomes crazed with zeal to unveil the murder of Liaus. It is his pride that leads him to think that Creon was hatching a conspiracy against him. This pride blinds him to all other consideration and he blames Creon in open. He also does not spare the blind soothsayer and charges him of treason against his throne and life. He does not even stop to think why the blind soothsayer would be in league with Creon.

When Oedipus hears the news of Polybos' death , he is overjoyed. The following speech of Oedipus also shows his excessive pride: " why should a man respect the Pythian heart, or give heed to the birds that jangle above his head? They prophesied that I should kill Polybos, kill my own father— he packed the oracle off with him underground. They are empty words."

All these detail may delude the readers to think that Oedipus was punished for the pride that he professes in his talents. It is true that Greeks thought any disrespect and blasphemy towards gods as great sin and believed that those who committed these sins cannot avoid sins. But things are not as simple in the case of Oedipus. We must bear in mind that the playwright wants to show something more involved than this. Therefore before we decide the cause of Oedipus' fall, we will have to keep a lot of things in mind.

We must be clear in our mind that Oedipus was doomed to kill his father and marry his mother. Oedipus falls not because of his pride but because he kills his father and marries his mother. No doubt he commits both these acts without knowledge but as soon as he comes to know his crime, he blind himself. All this has nothing to do with his pride. He does not blind himself out humiliation or disgrace rather he punishes himself for not being able to see the difference. This points to the fact that the playwright wants to show that man has but little freedom to choose what he likes and he is fated to get what is written in his fate in spite of this he tries to fight all forces that annihilate his significance. At the end of the play the writer seems suggesting that man is not "like butterflies to the wanton boys to the gods" but he is responsible what happens to him.

In short we can say that Oedipus falls because he was doomed to fall even before his birth. His pride has nothing to do with his fall. It is true that his pride hastens his fall but it is his pride makes him the real tragic hero. The reader may feel temporary dissatisfaction with Oedipus for his pride but his pride leads him to discover the greatest truth of his life and once he succeeds in discovering this truth he punishes himself adequately. At the end we feel that all who were advising Oedipus not to probe into the murder of Liaus were wrong and Oedipus was right.

Oedipus Rex : Moral Lesson in the Play

Oedipus Rex is a play of inexhaustible interest. Literary critics and students of Greek religion in our times continue to turn to it. Anthropologists and Psychologists find it useful as a reflection of an ancient myth and man's unconscious mind. In short, the play continues to be a subject of intensive discussion.

Certain things about it are clearer than others. For instance, it can easily be analysed as a piece of stagecraft; the methods used to arouse the interest and excite the emotions of the audience are evident to the analytical reader. But the meaning or significance of the play has aroused a lot of controversy. Briefly speaking, there are two major considerations regarding this play i. e Sophocles' dramatic craftsmanship, and Sophoclean thought—the former presenting no problem and the latter giving rise to considerable differences of opinion. Most critics have found a profound meaning in the play and they have offered a variety of interpretations ranging from the didacticism of Plutarch to the more complex explanations of the 20th century (such as Freudian, post-Freudian, Marxist, and existentialist).

Matching Wits with the gods: - The plot of this play is a search for knowledge, and its climax is recognition of truth. The hero here is a man whose self-esteem is rooted in his pride of intellect. The gods here manifest themselves not by means of any miracle but by a prediction which is proved true after a long delay. Various formulas have been imposed on this play. For instance, the play has been interpreted to mean that a wicked man is punished, or that an imprudent man pays the price, or that a family curse returns, or that an innocent man is victimised by fate. However, a more appropriate formula would be to say that in this play a man matches wits with the gods. We might even lend universality to this formula by saying that here man (and not a man) matches wits with the gods.

The gods always Win: - The play appears to dramatize the conventional Greek wisdom that, when mortal man vies with the immortal gods, the gods always win. The theme is as old as Homer, who tells this story to illustrate it in the sixth book of the Iliad. In this particular play the specific point of contention is knowledge. This is Sophocles' way of translating the old theme into a form suited to the age of enlightenment and it creates a fine contrast or opposition between knowledge as power and self-knowledge. In short, the awareness that man is less than the gods is undoubtedly an element in the play.

Victory in Defeat: -"Oedipus Tyrannous of Sophocles combines two apparently irreconcilable themes, the greatness of the gods and the greatness of man, and the combination of these themes is inevitably tragic, for the greatness of the gods is most clearly and powerfully demonstrated by man's defeat. The god is great in his laws and he does not grow old. But man does grow old, and not only does he grow old, he also dies. Unlike the gods, he exists in time. The beauty and power of his physical frame is subject to sickness, death, and corruption, the beauty and power of his intellectual, artistic, and social achievement to decline, overthrow, and oblivion. His greatness and beauty arouse in us a pride in their magnificence which is inseparable from and increased by our sorrow over their imminent death. Oedipus is symbolic of all human achievement, his hard-won magnificence, unlike the everlasting magnificence of the divine, cannot last and, while it

lives, shines all the more brilliant against the sombre background of its impermanency. Sophocles' tragedy presents us with a terrible affirmation of man's subordinate position in the universe, and at the same time with a heroic vision of man's victory in defeat. Man is not equated to the gods but man at his greatest, as in Oedipus, is capable of something which the gods cannot experience; the proud tragic view of Sophocles sees in the fragility and inevitable defeat of human greatness the possibility of a purely human heroism to which the gods can never attain, for the condition of their existence is everlasting victory."

The Lesson of Modesty or Self-Restraint: - It might be held that the play teaches us the precept: "know thyself". If we agree, we shall have to support the view that the play is didactic and that Sophocles is a teacher; for what the Delphic maxim just quoted amounts to is a warning to cultivate sophrosyne, a word best translated as modesty or self-restraint. It may be asserted that the play teaches the reader to cultivate the virtue of modesty, or self-restraint, or self-control, or caution. According to a strong supporter of this view, the touchstone by which Oedipus is to be judged is Creon. Creon's "pious moderation" and "modest loyalty" are the ideals against which the arrogance of Oedipus is measured and found to be wrong. If the play teaches the lesson of self-control and self-restraint, then we have to admit that Creon's personality illustrates this virtue. Creon explicitly claims this virtue in one of his speeches. He is at all-time respectful, cautious, and reverent. Even at the end, he insists that he will not exile Oedipus until he is absolutely sure that this is what the gods desire. It is he who points the obvious moral in the last scene, that now perhaps Oedipus will put his faith in the gods. His last, minor dispute with Oedipus is over a question of caution. Oedipus wants to be exiled immediately but Creon will not promise this until the will of the gods is made quite clear. Twice in the course of the play Creon makes a statement that may be taken as his motto. The statement is to the effect that Creon will not do or say anything unless he possesses definite knowledge to justify his doing or saying it.

The Contrast with Creon: - This trait in Creon contrasts him sharply with Oedipus who suffers from the pride of knowledge. Creon shows a desire to avoid the responsibilities of kingship because they are dangerous and painful. Creon would be content instead with public approval and with honours that bring gain. Creon is a just man; he is even a kind man who brings the children in the last scene to meet Oedipus. He is also an innocent man unjustly accused who reacts mildly and seems not to bear any grudge at the end. But he is humdrum and poor spirited and self-satisfied. He is thoroughly decent in his way, but Oedipus with his boldness and intelligence and ease of command is a much greater personality.

The Contrast between Oedipus & Other Main Characters: - The contrast between Oedipus and the other two principal characters is also noteworthy. Tiresias represents and defends the wisdom of the gods in his opposition to human folly. But Tiresias, as a person, stands no comparison with Oedipus. His first words in the play show that Tiresias finds his knowledge unbearable, and he is quite prepared to go back home until Oedipus provokes him to anger. As for Jocasta, she has raised irresponsibility to the status of a principle. Besides, neither Jocasta nor Tiresias is willing to face the truth, while Oedipus is not only willing but determined. Neither Tiresias nor Creon desires the responsibility that comes with office and power, but Oedipus does. Tiresias and Creon are both wiser men than Oedipus and at the end of the play Creon is still

giving to Oedipus a lesson in sophrosyne or self-restraint. But the brilliance and the courage of Oedipus make him a greater man than both Tiresias and Creon.

The True Greatness of Man: - Oedipus may be taken to represent all mankind. He represents also the city which is man's greatest creation. His resurgence in the last scene of the play is a prophetic vision of a defeated Athens which will rise to greatness beyond anything she had attained in victory. In the last scene, we witness a vision of a man superior to the tragic reversal of his action and the terrible success of his search for truth, reasserting his greatness not this time in defiance of the powers which shape human life but in harmony with those powers. In the last scene we see beyond the defeat of man's ambition the true greatness of which only the defeated are capable.

No Moral Lesson: - There is no moral lesson here. No moralist would present human folly in such bright colours and depict wisdom and temperance as dull. The kind of play Sophocles was writing in Oedipus Rex was intrinsically unsuited to be a lesson. The play does not persuade that Creon is a nobler man; it only shows him to be a wiser man. It does offer some comfort to the pious reader, but only a little, though it creates a difficulty for a philosopher like Plato who believed in the unity of human virtues. Nor could this play have pleased humanists of the fifth century, who attached great importance to the human intellect. Here we have a play showing man at his noblest and greatest when he is most foolish and in the very actions which exhibit his folly. We may accept that gratefully as a great artistic triumph, but we should not expect a moral lesson from it.

Blindness in Oedipus Rex

People can be "blinded" to the truth. The answer to their question or solution to their problem may have been obvious. Yet, they could not "see" the answer. They were blinded to the truth. Associations have been made between being blind and enlightened. A blind person is said to have powers to see invisible things. They "see" into the future. The blind may not have physical sight, but they have another kind of vision. In Sophocles' King Oedipus, Tiresias, the blind prophet, presents the truth to King Oedipus and Jocasta. Oedipus has been blinded to the truth his whole life. When he does find the truth, he loses his physical vision. Because of the truth, Oedipus blinds himself. Jocasta was blind to the true identity of Oedipus. Even when she found out the truth, she refused to accept it. In this case, those who are blind ultimately do have a higher vision - the truth.

Kind Oedipus started life with a prophecy that he would kill his father and marry his mother. In an attempt to avoid this fate, his parents, Laius and Jocasta, sent him into the mountains to die. However, a shepherd saved Oedipus. This shepherd gave Oedipus to Polybus and Merope. When Oedipus learned of his prophecy, he fled his home, thinking these people were his real parents. On his flight, he met Laius. He ended up killing Laius. He continued on, answered a riddle of the evil Sphinx, and ended up king of Thebes. With this kingdom, Oedipus married Jocasta. He had lived out the prophecy without even knowing he had. Thebes fell onto bad times, and a prophet put the blame on a polluter of the lands. Oedipus called on Tiresias, and Tiresias informed him that the

polluter was the King. As Oedipus searched further and further, he discovered that he was the polluter and that the prophecy had come true. When Oedipus finally discovered the truth, he was so distressed that he ran pins into his eyes, blinding himself. He had been blinded to the truth for so long.

Oedipus was blind in more than one way. He was blind to the truth about his own life. Oedipus had no idea that his real parents were Laius and Jocasta. He was so blind that he got mad at anyone who was foolish enough to suggest such an idea. As more and more of the story started to fall into place, Oedipus was forced to open his eyes to the truth. Oedipus did kill his father and marry his mother. Oedipus was the person causing the bad times in Thebes. As soon as Oedipus knew and accepted the truth, he blinded himself. Just as Tiresias was blind and open to the truth, so was Oedipus.

Oedipus was also physically blind. Oedipus' physical blindness played into the whole role of the Greek tragedy. The blindness completed the tragedy for Oedipus. Every Greek tragedy was supposed to end with the main characters experiencing their own, personal tragedy. For Oedipus, this tragedy was discovering the truth and becoming blind. It completed the prophecies that Oedipus received from the blind prophet, Tiresias. Tiresias told Oedipus that he had come into Thebes with his sight, but he would leave Thebes without it. Oedipus' physical blindness also left Oedipus to the wrongs of his life. With nothing to look at, Oedipus was forced to think about his life and what had happened. He was forced to deal with it. He had the blackness and the physical pain he had inflicted on himself as reminders and as punishment. Oedipus' physical blindness was just as painful as his blindness to the truth. Both were intertwined in each other.

Jocasta's blindness was different then Oedipus'. She knew about the prophecy, but she thought Oedipus was dead. She had no idea that she had married her son. As pieces of information came to point to the whole truth of the matter, Jocasta refused to accept what had really happened. She realized what had happened, and she knew that she had played a role in them. Her way of dealing with the whole deal was to kill herself. Jocasta's blindness ultimately led to her downfall.

Tiresias' blindness was of the physical nature. Tiresias played the role of the typical prophet in the Greek tragedy. He was physically blind, but he had vision into the future. When he presented the truth to Oedipus, Oedipus attacked his blindness. He told Tiresias that the only reason he was not blaming him for the whole situation was that Tiresias could not see. Oedipus used his blindness to prophesize that Oedipus would leave Thebes blind, poor, and shamed. This statement irritated Oedipus even more. Oedipus began to turn away from the idea of a prophet and seeing into the future. Teiresias' physical blindness led to Oedipus' physical blindness.

Figurative blindness can be harder to deal with then literal blindness. A person who is physically blind knows that he will probably be blind the rest of his life. That person will learn to deal with the blindness. However, if a person is blind to the truth, there is nothing that person can do until they learn the truth. The person may not even know that he is wrong. When the person does learn the truth, he tends to feel ignorant. The person wonders if things could have been avoided had the truth only been known. For Oedipus and Jocasta in Sophocles' King Oedipus, this scenario was just the case. When Oedipus learned the truth, his way of dealing with his figurative blindness was to blind himself. When Jocasta learned the truth, her way of dealing with her figurative blindness

was to kill herself. In this play, blindness led to the truth, and the truth led to blindness. Oedipus, Tiresias, and Jocasta were all blind, yet all found the truth.

Oedipus the King : Reason and Passion

In the play, Oedipus the King, there are dual parts of reason and passion. Oedipus primarily acts with both reason and passion at different stages in the play. There are several points in the play where Oedipus acts with reason. The first such point occurs when he is asked by his followers to help save Thebes. He acts with reason when he immediately decides to heed to their demands and find help for them. However, he may also have been deciding to do this through passion. His need for his land to be perfectly normal might have prompted this immediate decision.

Reason also occurs through the character of Oedipus himself. He has a heroic confidence in his own abilities, and he has good reason for such confidence, both from his own sense of past achievements and from the very high regard everyone has of those achievements. He is conscious of himself as a great man. He feels that he can achieve anything.

The central metaphor in this play is blindness. For the tragic hero is, in a sense, blind from the start, at least in the sense that he is not alert to the fact that the way he sees his situation may not be true, may be only a partial take on the reality of things. Oedipus is not prepared to admit that he might be wrong. Why should he? He has always been right in the past; no one else in Thebes is acting resolutely to meet the crisis, any more than they were when the city was threatened before. His vision may well include a certain narrowness, and yet because he sees the world that way, he is also the one with the most confidence in his own sight and the one most ready to act in accordance with what he sees. The way he sees the world lies at the very source of what makes him a great man now and in the past. Those around him rely upon that confidence in order for the crisis to be dealt with.

It is ironic that the only way that the curse will be lifted from Thebes is by finding the murderer of Laius. Oedipus starts on a powerful trip to find the murderer, and this ends up throwing him into a passionate search within himself to find the truth. Because Oedipus will not compromise, and will only go after the answer to Apollo's requests in one way, this sets him up for a horrific downfall. When Oedipus's reason ends up meeting his passion for finding the murderer, he finds that he is in a whirlpool of bad things that are going to bring him down.

Even when the full truth of what he has done strikes home, he will not abandon his faith in himself but will see himself out to the end. To the very end of this play, Oedipus is still insisting that he is the one who has blinded himself that he will accept his exile that he is fully prepared to accept the self-destructive consequences of what he has done.

Jocasta's attempt to put his mind at rest about killing his father - "don't believe seers, e.g. they were wrong about Laius being killed by his son" - the very thing that starts Oedipus on the suspicion that he is guilty.

Where did Oedipus go wrong? Leaving Corinth? Killing Laius? Marrying Jocasta? Pursuing his identity-search in the play? Certainly the latter, but this not the first, or major mistake.is ill temper, jumping to conclusions as distinctive of Emotion = Dionysus. Oedipus has characteristics both Apollonian and Dionysian.

We have observed that one key to Oedipus's character is that he will not compromise. He must see life through on his own terms, no matter what the cost. He is prepared to acknowledge no authority outside his own will. Hence, if he is to be satisfied the world must answer to him.

As his situation gets more complicated and things do not work out as he has imagined they might, Oedipus does not adapt, change, and learn. He becomes more and more determined to see the problem through on his own terms; he becomes increasingly inflexible.

Having accepted the responsibility for saving Thebes, he will on his own see the matter through, without compromise, without lies, without deceit. Anyone who suggests that he proceed differently is simply an obstacle who must be overcome. That attitude, as we know, leads to the most horrific conclusions.

Oedipus is prepared only to do things in the way he sees fit. Whatever stands in his way he sees as an obstacle that he must overcome publicly, directly, and without compromise. He is anything but a flexible character. His sense of his own worth is so strong that he will not admit of any departure from his characteristic way of doing things. In fact, he is probably incapable of imagining acting in any other manner. He has no ability for the sort of delayed emotional response. Whatever he feels, Oedipus immediately reacts to, usually in public.

What makes Oedipus so compelling is not that he suffers horribly and endures at the end an almost living death. The force of the play comes from the connection between Oedipus's sufferings and his own actions, that is, from the awareness of how he himself is bringing upon his own head the dreadful outcome.

We can say Oedipus is capable of doing what he does because he is uniquely brave, excellent, and intelligent. But the tragedy reminds us, even the best and the bravest, those famous throughout the world for their knowledge, are doomed if they set themselves up against the mystery of life itself and if they try to force life to answer to them, they are going to self-destruct. Oedipus and his reasoning were correct in the way he followed them, but his passion and his ignorance of viewing the world properly led to his horrific downfall.

The Punishment of Oedipus the King

At the end of Oedipus Rex, Oedipus, king of Thebes, ends up banished forever from his kingdom. Additionally, Oedipus physically puts out his own eyes, for several reasons. The question is: Did Oedipus deserve his punishments? There are many factors that must be considered in answering this, including how Oedipus himself felt about his situation. His blinding was as much symbolic as it was physical pain.

It is important to keep in mind the whole basic reasoning for Oedipus' search for Laius' killers: he wished to put an end to a deadly plague, and that plague would only be stopped when said murderer is killed, or driven from the land. Thus, when it is revealed that Oedipus himself murdered Laius, then banishment seems to be the only option. Death, in my mind, is not valid simply because of what it might do to the kingdom's people. Even though it seems that Oedipus has not been a particularly good monarch, in fact his only major accomplishment seems to be killing the Sphinx all those years ago; having a king put to death could have serious repercussions on the rest of the kingdom. So in the end, the only way to cure the plague and keep the kingdom stable seems to be the banishment of Oedipus. In this case, the question of whether or not he deserved to be punished seems irrelevant; Oedipus' only goal was to stop the plague and by leaving, he has accomplished that goal. Banishment was the only choice.

But what exactly was Oedipus being punished for? Even after re- reading the play, this still seems to be a grey area. Incest? Immoral, to be sure, but Oedipus was obviously ignorant to his actions, and to my knowledge, in Sophoclean times, there was no written law against it and therefore no punishment for it. Oedipus' punishment may have been for killing Laius, but how could you punish someone for being a victim of fate? Greeks believed at the time of the play's writing that a man's life was "woven" by the 3 fates and that he was irrevocably bound to that destiny. Knowing this and knowing that Oedipus became king of Thebes only because it was his destiny to murder Laius and kill the Sphinx, how could he rightfully be punished? Even Oedipus himself knows that his actions are not by choice, but by acts of the gods, he mentions this twice in the play: "Some savage power has brought this down upon my head." As well as "My god, my god -- what have you planned to do to me?" Such quotes clearly show that Oedipus knew that he had no choice in his actions. In this manner and in this manner alone, Oedipus is undeserving of said punishment. Oedipus may not have been a particularly good man, but in the end he knew what was best for his kingdom: "Out of this kingdom cast me with all speed" ...for only that would save his former subjects.

Were that Oedipus' only punishment, the play might have been quite a bit simpler (and this essay quite a bit shorter), but Oedipus, in a fit of rage, stabs his own eyes with Jocasta's dress pins. This was Oedipus' way of trying to punish himself, as well as an escape. Oedipus would no longer gaze upon the faces of his subjects, his brother (uncle?) Creon or even those of his children. He is plunged into a world of darkness. It must be noted that this was more than simply a punishment, though I'm sure that it was one of the ways Oedipus intended it. The physical pain alone seems to prove that. There are much easier ways of becoming blind to the world than stabbing one's eyes out. As we have stated before though, Oedipus was blinded by his foolish pride long before the beginning of the novel. He only realized the truth behind Laius' murder when it was right in front of his nose. He was by no means stupid, in fact he came off as quite a clever man, but his was a world of blindness because of pride and power.

We have been concentrating on the two most obvious of Oedipus' punishments, but there is another one that may not seem so clear. Keeping in mind that Sophocles made it very clear that Oedipus was a man of so much pride that he may have thought himself to be akin to a god, was not Oedipus basically stripped of that pride at the end of the play? The true punishment has been revealed.

Oedipus' life was based on pride. It was what led to the murder of Laius, which in turn led to the killing of the Sphinx, which led to his becoming king. As he continues on his particular thread of life, Oedipus becomes more and more powerful, and as such, his pride also increases proportionately. He threatens both Tiresias and Creon, and single-handedly tries to unravel the mystery of Laius' death. What must go on inside his mind when he finds out that not only did he murder his father, the king, but he also slept with his mother? Knowing full well that his kingdom would eventually find out his acts, how could he hold his head up when walking through the city streets? How could his subjects respect and revere a king who was a murderer and committer of incest? Oedipus is thusly stripped of his pride, the driving force behind his whole personality. He has been crushed, and that which he had so much of before has been denied him. Where he was once at one extreme (hubris), he is now at the other. To take away the very thing that drives a man is worse than any physical pain or even death itself. That is truly, as Sophocles intended it, Oedipus' ultimate punishment.

When the curtain falls and the lights go out on Oedipus Rex, the king's punishments total three. Though in my mind at least, one far outweighs the other two, they are all important and they all contribute to the total experience of the Greek tragedy. In the end, I do not feel that Oedipus truly deserves the punishments he is handed, but that is only because of the fact that I place myself in the time period that this was written in, using the beliefs of that time for my own. Were this story to have taken place in modern times, Oedipus certainly would have deserved his punishment, but this idea is irrelevant because, quite simply, this did not take place in our "advanced" civilization. Oedipus was a victim of fate, incapable of free will, and as such he should have not been punished, save banishment only to cure the plague.

Doctor Faustus

THE RENAISSANCE (1500 -1600)

Meaning and Scope: - Renaissance means the Revival of learning, and it denotes in its broadest sense the gradual enlightenment of the human mind after the darkness of the Middle Ages. With the fall of Constantinople in 1453 A.D. by the invasion of the Turks, the Greek scholars who were residing there, spread all over Europe, and brought with them invaluable Greek manuscripts. The discovery of these classical models resulted in the Revival of learning in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The essence of this movement was that "man discovered himself and the universe", and that "man so long .blinded had suddenly opened his eyes and seen". The flood of Greek literature which the new art of printing carried swiftly to every school in Europe revealed a new world of poetry and philosophy. Along with the Revival of learning, new discoveries took place in several other fields. Vascoda Gama circumnavigated the earth; Columbus discovered America; Copernicus discovered the Solar System and prepared the way for Galileo. Books were printed; and philosophy science, and art were systemized.

The chief characteristic of the Renaissance was its emphasis on Humanism, which means man's concern with himself as an object of contemplation. This movement was started in Italy by Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio in the fourteenth century, and from there it spread to other countries of Europe. In England it became popular during the Elizabethan period. This movement which focused its interest on 'the proper study of mankind' had a number of subordinate trends.

Spirit of Discovery: - The second important aspect of Humanism was the discovery of the external universe, and its significance for man, but more important than this was that the writers directed their gaze inward, and became deeply interested in the problems of human personality. In the medieval morality plays, the characters are mostly personifications; Friendship, Charity, Wickedness and the like. This tendency led to the rise of a new literary form "the Essay", which was used successfully by Bacon. In drama Marlowe probed down into the deep recesses of the human passion. His heroes, Tamburlaine, Doctor Faustus and Barabas, the Jew of Malta, are possessed of uncontrolled ambitions. Shakespeare, a more consummate artist, carried Humanism to perfection. His genius, fed by the spirit of the Renaissance, enabled him to see life whole, and to present it in all its aspects.

Another aspect of Humanism was the enhanced sensitiveness to formal beauty, and the cultivation of the aesthetic sense. It showed itself in a new ideal of social conduct, that of the courtier. An Italian diplomat and man of letters, Castiglione, wrote a treatise entitled Cortigiano (The Courtier) where he sketched the pattern of gentlemanly behavior and manners upon which the conduct of such men as Sir Phillip Sidney and Sir Walter Raleigh was modeled. This cult of elegance in prose writing produced the ornate style called Euphuism by Lyly. Though it suffered from exaggeration and pedantry, yet it introduced order and balance in English prose, and gave it pithiness and harmony.

Men's actions:- Another aspect of Humanism was that men came to be regarded as responsible for their own actions, as Cassius says to Brutus in Julius Caesar:-

The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
But in ourselves, that we are underlings.

Instead of looking up to some higher authority, as was done in The Middle Ages, during the Renaissance Period guidance was to be found from within. Lyly wrote his romance of

Euphues not, merely as an exercise in a new kind of prose, but with the serious purpose of inculcating righteousness of living based on self-control. Sidney wrote his Arcadia in the form of fiction in order to expound an ideal of moral excellence.

Elizabethan Drama: - One of the results of the humanist teaching in the schools and universities had been a great development of the study of Latin drama and the growth of the practice of acting Latin plays by Terence, Plautus and Seneca, and also of contemporary works both in Latin and in English. These performances were the work of amateur actors, school boys or students of the Universities and the Inns of Court, and were often given in honour of the visits of royal persons or ambassadors. Their significance lies in the fact that they brought the educated classes in touch with a much more highly developed kind, of drama, than the older English play. About the middle of the sixteenth century some academic writers made attempts to write original plays in English on the Latin model. The three important plays of this type are Nicholas Uall's Ralph Roister Moister, John Still's Grammar Gurton's Needle, and Thomas Sackville's Gorbodue or Ferrel- and Porrer–the first two are comedies and last one a tragedy. All these plays are monotonous and do not possess much literary merit.

The University Wits: - The second period of Elizabethan drama was dominated by the "University Wits", a professional set of literary men. Of this little constellation, Marlowe was the central sun, and round him revolved as minor stars, Lyly, Greene, Peele, Lodge and .Nash.

(a) Lyly (1554-1606) the author of Euphue:3, wrote a number of plays the best known of them are Compaspe. (1581), Sapho and Phao (1584), Endymion (1591), and Midas (1592). These plays are mythological and pastoral and are nearer to the Masque (court spectacles intended to satisfy the love of glitter and novelty) rather than to the narrative drama of Marlowe. They are written in prose intermingled with verse. Though the verse is simple and charming prose is marred by exaggeration, a characteristic of Euphuism.

(b)George. Peele (155.8-97?), formed, along with Marlowe, Greene and Nash, one of that band of dissolute young men endeavoring to earn a livelihood by literary work. He was an actor as well as a writer of plays. He wrote some half dozen plays, which are richer in beauty than any of his group except Marlowe. His earnest work is the Arrangement of Paris, (1584); his most famous is David Und Bathsheba (1599). The Arrangment of Paris., which contains an elaborate eulogy, of Queen Elizabeth, is really a court play of the Masque order. David and Bathsheba contains many beautiful lines. Like Marlowe, Peels was responsible for giving the blank verse musical quality, which- later attained perfection in the deft hands of Shakespeare.

(c)Thomas Kyd (1558-95) achieved great popularity with his first work, The Spanish Tragedy, which was translated in many European languages. He introduced the blood and thunder' element in drama, which proved one of the attractive features of the pre-Shakespearean drama. Though he is always violent and extravagant, yet he is responsible for breaking away from the lifeless monotony of Gorbodue.

(d)Greene (1560-1592). He lived a most dissoluted life, and died in distress and debt. His plays comprise Orlando Furioso, Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay, alphonous King of Aragon and George a Greene. His most effective play is Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay, which deals partly with the trick of the Friar, and partly with as simple love story between two men with one maid. Its variety of interest and comic, relief add to the

entertainment of the audience. But the chief merit of the play lies in the lively method of presenting the story. Greene also achieves distinction by the vigorous humanity of his characterisation.

(e) Christopher Marlowe (1564 – 1593). The dramatic work of Lodge and Nash is not of much importance of all the members of the group Marlowe is the greatest. In 1587 hi; first. play Tamburlaine was produced and it took the public by storm on account of its impetuous force, its splendid command of blank verse, and its sensitiveness to beauty. In this play Marlowe dramatised the exploits of the Scythian shepherd who rose to be "the terror of the world", and "the scourge of God" Tamburlaine was succeeded by The Tragical _History Doctor Faustus, in which Marlowe gave an old medieval legend a romantic setting. The story of the scholar who sells his soul to the Devil for worldly enjoyment and unlimited power, is presented in a most fascinating manner Marlowe's Faustus is the genuine incarnation of the Renaissance spirit. The Jew of Malta, the third tragedy of Marlowe, is not so fine as Doctor Faustus, though it has a glorious opening. His last play, Edward II, is his best from the technical point of view. Though it lacks the force and rhythmic beauty of the earlier plays, it is superior to them on account Of its rare skill of construction and admirable characterisation.

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE (1564-1593)

Christopher Marlowe was born in 1564, the year of William Shakespeare's birth. His father worked in Canterbury, England, as a cobbler, and Christopher was one of many children to be born into their middle-class household (Bakeless 3-30.) After attending the King's School on a scholarship, he won another scholarship to attend Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. Marlowe completed his BA degree in four years and then stayed on at Cambridge to work towards an MA. Students who did so were granted an extended scholarship-and were expected to take Holy Orders.

During the following three years, Marlowe began to absent himself from the college for weeks on end. Although such absences were not uncommon among BA students, Marlowe's spotty attendance seems to have earned the ire of the college administration. Rumors arose that Marlowe planned to defect to the Catholic seminary of Rheims, France. Amidst such rumors, it became a matter of the Queen's Council that Marlowe should receive his degree at graduation--the Privy Council conveyed to the college that Marlowe had been in government service all along. The evidence suggests that he had been serving England as a spy in Rheims.

When Marlowe left Cambridge in 1587, it was to write for the stage. Before the end of the year, both parts of his Tamburlaine were produced in London. The plays basked in a decidedly popular and vernacular spirit. Renaissance scholar David Riggs notes that the chaotic stage of Tamburlaine, featuring a blasphemer and murderer protagonist, "challenged the limits of public behavior" (220). In any case, Marlowe's debut earned him an excellent standing among contemporary playwrights. His plays, of a quality astonishing for a man in his twenties, constantly produced crowd-pleasing spectacles. In the following six years before his early death, Marlowe continued to achieve success through such works as Doctor Faustus, The Jew of Malta, and The Massacre at Paris.

The last part of Marlowe's life was violent and contains some suspicious coincidences. While living near London in 1592, a year before his death, scholar Lisa Hopkins reports that Marlowe appeared so threatening and was thought so dangerous by two constables

of the town of Shoreditch (the suburb in which Marlowe lived and where the theatres for which he wrote were located) that they formally appealed for protection from him. As many researchers of Marlowe's life have noted, it is puzzling what a person must do in order to make the police afraid of him. In September of that same year Marlowe was involved in a fight in his native Canterbury, attacking Williame Corkine with a sword and dagger. This year, too, was the one in which Marlowe's good friend Thomas Watson died. There is the possibility that during this time Marlowe had a relationship with Thomas Walsingham, nephew of the Sir Thomas Walsingham who was the head of the spies in Queen Elizabeth's service. However, the relationship is by no means proved. It is a matter of record, however, that Marlowe was staying at Walsingham's country house in Scadbury at the time he was killed.

The circumstances of Marlowe's death provide much for speculation. On May 30, 1593, when Marlowe was only twenty-nine, he was feasting in a rented private room in a Deptford house (the home of Dame Eleanor Bull, not a tavern as is often recounted) with a group of four men. He reportedly quarreled with Ingram Friser (the personal servant of Sir Thomas Walsingham), who killed Marlowe on the spot by stabbing him above the right eye. Friser claimed self-defense and was pardoned shortly thereafter, despite the mysterious circumstances. David Riggs points out that the Queen herself had ordered Marlowe's death four days before (334). Was the Friser incident merely a coincidence? And how had Marlowe earned the anger of the Queen?

Two days after Marlowe's death, a man named Richard Baines sent a document to the police accusing Marlowe of blasphemy and homosexuality. Among other things, the document recounts Marlowe's barely concealed atheism, his public denouncement of faith, and his sacrilegious speech against Jesus himself. The document also notes that Marlowe was not content merely to keep these opinions to himself; at every opportunity, he supposedly tried to win men over to his views. His allegedly heretical views were in fact already known to the government. When the famous playwright Thomas Kyd-Marlowe's former roommate-was arrested in possession of blasphemous papers, Kyd confessed that he had received the documents from Marlowe. Seen in this light, the Queen's order and Marlowe's consequent death seem to be of a piece. Harold Bloom is convinced that Marlowe was "eliminated with maximum prejudice by Walsingham's Elizabethan Secret Service" (10.)

If these events are linked, the details remain obscure. Allegations abound. Men reported that Marlowe was cruel, violent, homosexual, and foul-mouthed, cursing all the way to his last breath. Although these reports cannot be discounted easily, little conclusive evidence supports any of these allegations. As J. B. Steane puts it, "as for Marlowe the man, atheist and rebel or not, we have to acknowledge that there is no single piece of evidence that is not hearsay-only that there is a good deal of it, that it is reasonably consistent, and that on the other side there is no single fact or piece of hearsay known to us" (16). Who was Marlowe, really?

Further complicating our picture of Marlowe is the relationship between author and work. Marlowe's works have been interpreted as atheistic and blasphemous; they also have been understood as traditional and Christian. The two sides stand apart in their proximity to any picture of Marlowe's personal life. To be sure, an author does not necessarily (if ever) write through autobiography or self-expression, or to communicate an ideological position. Yet, it is significant that the young poet, dead before his thirties, is a man who studied to take Holy Orders, who likely served his country in espionage

missions, and who died violently under the taint of scandal. Such a colorful and ambiguous character cannot help but loom behind Marlowe's work. Where biography has relevance for literary interpretation, readers can profit from meeting the challenge of seeing Marlowe's plays from the perspective of his life; at the same time, one should remember that his works were intended for English audiences who did not know as much about his life.

Historical Perspective of Drama before Marlowe

The Greek Drama

In order to fully grasp the rise and content of the English drama, we must peer into the dim past and retrace our steps to the early days of ancient Greece. The beginnings of drama in general get lost in the 'mimes' or crude performances of the Dorian Greeks in honour of Dionysus, the God of Wine, whose name stood for carousal, revelry and merriment.

The addition of dialogue to the dumb mimicry marked an important stage, but it required yet the infusion of action into the dialogue to complete the transformation. This crude drama of the Greeks was a commentary upon the lives and manners, not of human beings, but of the pantheon of gods and other mythological persons: it dealt with things of heaven, not with the problems of mundane existence. But its tone and treatment were generally comic. It was this farcical element that led, by devious and zig-zag paths, to the rise of the famous Athenian Comedy. The supernatural theme made room for the human. The ludicrous representation of the heavenly life which they combined to produce an essentially secular mind, but the religious elements were not altogether done away with. The drama, we may say, was brought down from the heavenly heights to suit the earthly needs.

In the days of Aristotle, the Greek drama almost completed its process of growth and received some final touches at the hands of this master-mind. It gathered all those attributes which constitute its distinctive marks. Two characteristics distinguished it mainly, the Chorus and the Unities. The Chorus was a band of singers and dancers who played in concert and sang odes to the God of Wine, and sometimes followed up the music with a lively dialogue. This dialogue came to supplant in the long run, the musical part of the performance. "The lack of scenery and of stage effect was made up for by descriptions and explanations sung by the Chorus and the limitations imposed by the three unities were met in a similar manner. The Chorus served to give a break and relief in the gloomy and often tragic monotony of the Greek drama. The Shakespearean devices of relieving tragedy by a comic element would not have been admissible."

The Chorus was as old as the drama itself, but the rules of the Unities began with Aristotle. He observed that good plays must conform to these rules and must observe the three Unities of Time, Place and Action—

(i) The Unity of Time. The duration of the action or story must not exceed 24 hours.

(ii) The Unity of Place. The incidents of the drama must be represented in an unbroken link: the scene should be invariable and should not be so located that the dramatis personae are unable to visit it in the time allotted for the duration of the play.

(iii) The Unity of Action. The main interest or plot of the story should be uninterrupted and its course should not be deflected by side-issues and minor plots or incidents. The unity of action must be smooth and straight; all characters and scenes must directly contribute to it.

In addition to the 'Unities', Aristotle touched upon the form of the drama and divided it into five parts:—

(i) The Exposition. This constitutes the opening of the play; the characters are introduced to the audience and are portrayed in their respective situations which gradually work up to the dramatic action.

(ii) The Rising Action i.e., the development of the dramatic situation from the incidents in the Exposition and the gradual rise of the pitch in the dramatic plot.

(iii) The Crisis or Climax. This is the highest pitch in the drama, the turning point in the plot. It represents the effect of the incidents which have already taken their rise in the Exposition and have passed through the second stage. It marks the culmination of the dramatic action and is followed by a lowering of the tone in the play.

(iv) The Descending or Falling Action, in which the action is toned down to a lower pitch.

(v) The Denouement or Catastrophe or Solution, where the various forces in the dramatic action converge towards the solution of the plot.

The Drama and the Christian Church: - In its days of decadence, the art of drama fell into the hands of wandering minstrels called **Jongleur** who travelled from place to place and visited the courts of kings as well as the village greens. Their art consisted in a crude representation of the life and manners of that age, but it did not achieve a height of excellence

In the 9th century A.D. or thereabouts, the dramatic stage shifted from the village green to the altar of the church. The churchmen saw in the stage an effective means of the propagation of Christianity and succeeded in substituting a religious theme for the secular art of the Jongleurs. Certain striking episodes in the life of Jesus Christ were cast into a dramatic form—his Birth, Crucifixion, Resurrection and many others—and these were represented on the stage on appropriate occasions. The drama thus became the handmaid of Christianity.

The Altar and the Stage: - There was another swing of the pendulum. The church could not keep up the vigour of the art which the Jongleurs had exhibited and there was a return to the village green. The Churchmen tried their best to suppress this secular tendency. The village green or the market square now became the scene of the simple plays, mainly based on Biblical themes, and called the Miracle and Mystery plays. The Elizabethan drama is usually considered to be a development of these. "Miracles" and "Mysteries," and it is more than probable that Shakespeare witnessed the performance of some of these. The Creation of the world, the Fall of Man, the Deluge, the Birth of Christ, and Resurrection were some of the commonest themes of these 'Miracles.'

The Didactic Drama: "Moralities" or Allegorical Plays: - The next stage in the growth of the drama was the change from the religious to the didactic theme. The latter half of the 14th century witnessed a strong wave of allegorical influence throughout Europe, and the dramatic art could not but put on the colour and catch the tone of the times. A new type of drama—the Allegorical plays or the Moralities—came into being. Characters in these plays were not human beings, but abstract qualities like Vice, Virtue, Avarice, Pride, Ignorance, Love, Mercy, Justice, Life, Death etc. The object of the Moralities was wholly didactic: the eternal warfare of evil and good, the struggle of Truth against Falsehood and a dramatic representation of the interaction of human misery and happiness formed the theme of these plays. The Moralities had a happy innovation in the shape of comic element. Satan was represented as a low jocular buffoon who kept the audience in a 'fit of mirth.' The introduction of the seeds of Comedy and the new romantic treatment of the theme were a happy relief to the otherwise serious monotony and dryness of the Moralities. (The Cradle of Security, Hit the Nail on the Head, Second Shepherd's Play were some of the famous Moralities).

The **Morality play** was a distinct **improvement upon the Miracle play**. The Miracle Play was purely religious in character while the Morality Play was chiefly concerned with human nature. The latter dealt with morals and the eternal conflict between the forces of good and evil and with the misery that emanates from vice. The theme of the Miracle Play was superhuman, while that of the Moralities was mainly human and earthly. The Miracle Play left no room for originality; its subject-matter was borrowed from the Bible; the rough-and-ready incidents from the Old Testament supplied abundant material so that the dramatic genius of inventing new plots and sub-plots could not be brought to play. The Moralities, on the other hand, gave free rein to the fertile imagination of the playwright. He could invent a new scheme as well as draw upon the old sources. The addition of the comic element proved the way for the Elizabethan comedy, and provided a short spell of mirth and sunshine in the dull and irksome monotony of the Miracles. The Miracle Play, however, had one advantage over the Morality in that the characters who figured in the Miracle Play had distinct individualities, whereas the Morality dealt with abstractions, the personification of abstract qualities.

Interludes and Comedies (Secular Drama): - The importance of the comic element in the Moralities has been emphasised above. It was at first employed to relieve the dreary monotony of the play, but soon it outgrew its function and expanded into a regular dramatic composition. This comic element or the Interlude as it was often called was the mother of the later Elizabethan comedy. The Interludes were short lively pieces, with characters mostly drawn from real life, though these characters still represented types rather than individuals. But they formed a happy transition from the bare abstractions of the Moralities to the clear-cut individualistic characterisation of the Shakespearean play. The Interludes gave an impetus to the growth of regular drama. They emphasised the element of diversion just for its own sake and offered a contrast to the religious motive of the Miracle Plays or the didactic of the Moralities. The range of subjects grew; the life and manners of the contemporary age came to be reflected truthfully. "Moreover there was now arising the feeling of the need for division on the classical model into regular acts and scenes, and with the Interludes now claiming independent existence, a rough and ready division may be made of Tragedy, Comedy, and plays which are a mixture of both."

English Drama and the Renaissance: - At this time, Europe was animated by a new spirit and fresh ideals. The wonderful Renaissance Movement kicked the slumbering continent into energy. The Muses bore the torch of new knowledge to all parts of Europe. This Revival of Learning brought in its train a passionate zeal for the classical literature of Greece and Rome. It had its influence on the English stage too. The "Miracles'', "Mysteries" and the "Moralities" were driven out by a new type of drama which took its rise in Oxford and Cambridge and derived its inspiration from Greece and Rome. English dramas came to be written on the classical model; of these all, Gorboduc was the most striking example. It was based on the tragedies of the illustrious Seneca and it contained all the traits of the Greek drama—the Chorus, the three Unities and the division of the dramatic action into five parts. Many plays belong to this period of infancy of the English stage e.g.

(i) Ralph Roister Doister, a comedy written by Nicholas Udall in 1550-51, but actually published in 1566.

(ii) Gorbodue or Ferrex and Porrex (1562), tragedy.

(iii) Damon and Pythias, (1564) a tragi-comedy by Richard Edwards, based upon the classical mythology.

The Renaissance, combined with the Reformation, tended to produce the Romantic drama. To this drama, therefore, we should now turn.

The Romantic Drama of the Renaissance or the Elizabethan Age: - The Romantic drama was a product of the Elizabethan age. The English dramatists, after a few experiments on the classical model, noted above, altogether discarded the three unities. The classical drama was followed in two ways: (a) a dignified form and (b) a luxuriant expression. The treatment of the English drama grew to be romantic rather than classical. The three unities of time, place and action were not observed, so that an English play of this period could cover an indefinite period of time, the action could "move from place to place" and subsidiary plots or by-plots could exist side by side with the main plot. Thus in King Lear, Othello and some other plays we notice sub-plots running alongwith the main thread of the story.

The Praise of Marlowe among the University Wits: - Christopher Marlowe, though the youngest of the University Wits and the earliest to die, except for Robert Greene, was the most important among them in the world of drama; he is still regarded as the mighty and wonderful dramatic genius who gave to the English tragic drama a permanent direction and life. He collaborated with some of his fellows and most probably was associated with Shakespeare. "It has been suggested from internal evidence that he was the part-author of Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus. He perhaps also wrote parts of Henry VI, which Shakespeare revised and completed, and of Edward III." Be that as it may, the four plays, all tragedies that make Marlowe foremost among the predecessors of Shakespeare are Tamburlaine, Parts I and II, The Jew of Malta, Doctor Faustus, and Edward II.

Marlowe: A Typical Product of the Renaissance: - Renaissance, which literally means 're-birth' or 're-awakening' is the name of a Europe-wide movement which closes the trammels and conventions of the medieval age and makes for liberation in all aspects of life and culture.

Though the influence of the spirit of the Renaissance marks all the writers of the latter half of the age of Elizabeth,—in poetry, drama, and prose romances and novels, that can be seen working with particular force on Marlowe and his fellows who together are called the University Wits. Of them again, the writings of Marlowe are the most prominent embodiment of the spirit of the Renaissance. Generally speaking, Marlowe himself is the spirit of Renaissance incarnate. A reckless Bohemian in life, a daring atheist setting not much value on moral worth but all value on the Machiavellian virtue, living a life of imagination rather than of thought, of gaiety full of the zest for life, Marlowe is the typical product of the Renaissance. In the conception of the central characters of his dramas, he is impelled by the Renaissance spirit for unlimited power, unlimited knowledge for the sake of power, unlimited wealth, again, for the sake of power. Aspirations, unbounded desire of love for the pleasures of the senses, infinite longing for beauty rather than for truth—these are the characteristics of the imaginative life which glittered before his eyes in that great age of daring adventures. On the aesthetic side, love of physical beauty mentioned above goes in him hand in hand with love of the beauty of harmony; the high astounding terms of his blank verse, the thrills and echoes of his phrases, the resounding roll of his declamations, the surfeit of mythological allusions—all these run into excess; but the excesses only point to the essential ambition of reaching beyond the narrow and the limited into the infinity of achievement, which is the noblest gift of the Renaissance.

Doctor Faustus : Background

Marlowe lived in a time of great transformation for Western Europe. New advances in science were overturning ancient ideas about astronomy and physics. The discovery of the Americas had transformed the European conception of the world. Increasingly available translations of classical texts were a powerful influence on English literature and art. Christian and pagan worldviews interacted with each other in rich and often paradoxical ways, and signs of that complicated interaction are present in many of Marlowe's works. England, having endured centuries of civil war, was in the middle of a long period of stability and peace.

Not least of the great changes of Marlowe's time was England's dramatic rise to world power. When Queen Elizabeth came to power in 1558, six years before Marlowe's birth, England was a weak and unstable nation. Torn by internal strife between Catholics and Protestants, an economy in tatters, and unstable leadership, England was vulnerable to invasion by her stronger rivals on the continent. By the time of Elizabeth's death in 1603, she had turned the weakling of Western Europe into a power of the first rank, poised to become the mightiest nation in the world. When the young Marlowe came to London looking to make a life in the theatre, England's capitol was an important center of trade, learning, and art. As time passed, the city's financial, intellectual, and artistic importance became still greater, as London continued its transformation from unremarkable center of a backwater nation to one of the world's most exciting metropolises. Drama was entering a golden age, to be crowned by the glory of Shakespeare. Marlowe was a great innovator of blank verse, unrhymed lines of iambic pentameter. The richness of his dramatic verse anticipates Shakespeare, and some argue that Shakespeare's achievements owed considerable debt to Marlowe's influence.

Like the earlier play, Tamburlaine, Doctor Faustus is a play of deep questions concerning morality, religion, and man's relationship to both. England was a Protestant country since

the time of Queen Elizabeth I's father, Henry VIII. Although theological and doctrinal differences existed between the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church, the former still inherited a wealth of culture, thought and tradition from the latter. Christianity was a mix of divergent and often contradictory influences, including the religious traditions of the Near East, the heritage of classical Greco-Roman thought and institutions, mystery religions, and north European superstition and magic.

Sorcery and magic were part of widespread belief systems throughout Europe that predated Christianity. These early beliefs about magic were inextricable from folk medicine. Women in particular used a mix of magic and herbal medicine to treat common illnesses. But as Christianity spread and either assimilated or rejected other belief systems, practitioners of magic came to be viewed as evil. In the fifth century CE, St. Augustine, perhaps the most influential Christian thinker after St. Paul, pronounced all sorcery to be the work of evil spirits, to distinguish it from the good "magic" of Christian ritual and sacrament. The view of the sorcerer changed irrevocably. Magic was devil-worship, outside the framework of Church practice and belief, and those who practiced it were excommunicated and killed.

The Protestant Reformation did not include reform of this oppressive and violent practice. Yet magic continued to keep a hold on people's imaginations, and benign and ambiguous views of magic continued to exist in popular folklore. The conceptions of scholarship further complicated the picture, especially after the Renaissance. Scholars took into their studies subjects not considered scientific by today's standards: astrology, alchemy, and demonology. Some of these subjects blurred the lines between acceptable pursuit of knowledge and dangerous heresy.

As this new Christian folklore of sorcery evolved, certain motifs rose to prominence. Once Christ was rejected, a sorcerer could give his soul to the devil instead, receiving in exchange powers in this life, here and now. Numerous Christian stories feature such bargains, and one of the most famous evolved around the historical person Johanned Faustus, a German astrologer of the early sixteenth century. Marlowe took his plot from an earlier German play about Faustus, but he transformed an old story into a powerhouse of a work, one that has drawn widely different interpretations since its first production. Marlowe's Doctor Faustus is first great version of the story, although not the last. In the nineteenth century, the great German writer Johann Wolfgang van Goethe gave the story its greatest incarnation in Faust. Faustus' name has become part of our language. "Faustian bargain" has come to mean a deal made for earthly gain at a high ethical and spiritual cost, or alternately any choice with short-lived benefits and a hell of a price.

The chronology of Marlowe's plays is uncertain. Doctor Faustus's composition may have immediately followed Tamburlaine, or may not have come until 1592.

Two versions of the play were printed, neither during Marlowe's life. The 1604 version is shorter (1517 lines), and until the twentieth century was considered the authoritative text. The 1616 version is longer (2121 lines), but the additions were traditionally thought to have been written by other playwrights. Twentieth century scholarship argues that the B text (of 1616) is in fact closer to the original, though possibly with some censorship. The Penguin Books edition used for this study guide uses the longer B text as the basis while incorporating sections of A that are recognizably superior.

Doctor Faustus : Summary

Doctor Faustus, a talented German scholar at Wittenburg, rails against the limits of human knowledge. He has learned everything he can learn, or so he thinks, from the conventional academic disciplines. All of these things have left him unsatisfied, so now he turns to magic. A Good Angle and an Evil Angel arrive, representing Faustus' choice between Christian conscience and the path to damnation. The former advises him to leave off this pursuit of magic, and the latter tempts him. From two fellow scholars, Valdes and Cornelius, Faustus learns the fundamentals of the black arts. He thrills at the power he will have, and the great feats he'll perform. He summons the devil Mephistopheles. They flesh out the terms of their agreement, with Mephistopheles representing Lucifer. Faustus will sell his soul, in exchange for twenty-four years of power, with Mephistopheles as servant to his every whim.

In a comic relief scene, we learn that Faustus' servant Wagner has gleaned some magic learning. He uses it to convince Robin the Clown to be his servant.

Before the time comes to sign the contract, Faustus has misgivings, but he puts them aside. Mephistopheles returns, and Faustus signs away his soul, writing with his own blood. The words "Homo fuge" ("Fly, man) appear on his arm, and Faustus is seized by fear. Mephistopheles distracts him with a dance of devils. Faustus requests a wife, a demand Mephistopheles denies, but he does give Faustus books full of knowledge.

Some time has passed. Faustus curses Mephistopheles for depriving him of heaven, although he has seen many wonders. He manages to torment Mephistopheles, he can't stomach mention of God, and the devil flees. The Good Angel and Evil Angel arrive again. The Good Angel tells him to repent, and the Evil Angel tells him to stick to his wicked ways. Lucifer, Beelzebub, and Mephistopheles return, to intimidate Faustus. He is cowed by them, and agrees to speak and think no more of God. They delight him with a pageant of the Seven Deadly Sins, and then Lucifer promises to show Faustus hell. Meanwhile, Robin the Clown has gotten one of Faustus' magic books.

Faustus has explored the heavens and the earth from a chariot drawn by dragons, and is now flying to Rome, where the feast honoring St. Peter is about to be celebrated. Mephistopheles and Faustus wait for the Pope, depicted as an arrogant, decidedly unholy man. They play a series of tricks, by using magic to disguise themselves and make themselves invisible, before leaving.

The Chorus returns to tell us that Faustus returns home, where his vast knowledge of astronomy and his abilities earn him wide renown. Meanwhile, Robin the Clown has also learned magic, and uses it to impress his friend Rafe and summon Mephistopheles, who doesn't seem too happy to be called.

At the court of Charles V, Faustus performs illusions that delight the Emperor. He also humiliates a knight named Benvolio. When Benvolio and his friends try to avenge the humiliation, Faustus has his devils hurt them and cruelly transform them, so that horns grow on their heads.

Faustus swindles a Horse-courser, and when the Horse-courser returns, Faustus plays a frightening trick on him. Faustus then goes off to serve the Duke of Vanholt. Robin the Clown, his friend Dick, the Horse-courser, and a Carter all meet. They all have been

swindled or hurt by Faustus' magic. They go off to the court of the Duke to settle scores with Faustus.

Faustus entertains the Duke and Duchess with petty illusions, before Robin the Clown and his band of ruffians arrives. Faustus toys with them, besting them with magic, to the delight of the Duke and Duchess.

Faustus' twenty-four years are running out. Wagner tells the audience that he thinks Faustus prepares for death. He has made his will, leaving all to Wagner. But even as death approaches, Faustus spends his days feasting and drinking with the other students. For the delight of his fellow scholars, Faustus summons a spirit to take the shape of Helen of Troy. Later, an Old Man enters, warning Faustus to repent. Faustus opts for pleasure instead, and asks Mephistopheles to bring Helen of Troy to him, to be his love and comfort during these last days. Mephistopheles readily agrees.

Later, Faustus tells his scholar friends that he is damned, and that his power came at the price of his soul. Concerned, the Scholars exit, leaving Faustus to meet his fate.

As the hour approaches, Mephistopheles taunts Faustus. Faustus blames Mephistopheles for his damnation, and the devil proudly takes credit for it. The Good and Evil Angel arrive, and the Good Angel abandons Faustus. The gates of Hell open. The Evil Angel taunts Faustus, naming the horrible tortures seen there.

The Clock strikes eleven. Faustus gives a final, frenzied monologue, regretting his choices. At midnight the devils enter. As Faustus begs God and the devil for mercy, the devils drag him away. Later, the Scholar friends find Faustus' body, torn to pieces.

Epilogue. The Chorus emphasizes that Faustus is gone, his once-great potential wasted. The Chorus warns the audience to remember his fall, and the lessons it offers.

Marlowe's Contribution to English Drama

Tragedy before Marlow: Swinburne's remarks, "Before him there was neither genuine blank verse nor a genuine tragedy in our language. After his arrival the way was paved for Shakespeare." With the advent of Marlowe, Miracle and Morality plays vanished. He brought Drama out of the old rut of street presentation and made it a perfect art and a thing of beauty. After the Reformation, the Mystery and Morality plays were disliked by the public at large until the advent of University Wits the greatest of whom was Marlowe.

It was in the fifteenth century that tragedy came to English dramatic field. This was due to the Revival of Learning in Europe commonly referred to as the Renaissance and the translation of great Italian tragedies. Italian Renaissance exercised a vital influence on the development of English Drama. The first English tragedy was Gorbodue (1565) by Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville. In style and treatment of theme Seneca was very much their model. Although this tragedy showed some innovation, yet most of the Senecan qualities such as long speeches, ghosts, gruesome murders and talks and talks were very much there. The tragedies that followed Seneca had the same qualities and properties. It required the mighty efforts of a genius to free the Elizabethan Drama from the worst features of the Senecan tragedies and it was Christopher Marlowe who has achieved this foundation for the realm of English Dramatic Literature. There are umpteen characteristic of Marlovian tragedies. In discussing Marlowe, we can point out how he formulated the English Drama and especially Tragedy which was improved upon and perfected by a genius like Shakespeare who owes Marlowe for all his greatness and grandeur. Because had there been no Marlowe, there would have been no Shakespeare. It is also due to Marlowe that English Drama for the first time was bestirred with the vigorous poetry and passion. He has rightly been called the Morning Star of English Drama.

Marlow's Great Tragic Heroes: The first great thing done by Marlowe was to break away from the medieval conception of Tragedy. The Medieval Drama was a game of the princes and imperial classes – the kings and Queens and their rise and fall. But it was left to Marlowe to evolve and create the real tragic hero. All of his tragic heroes are of humble parentage, Tamburlaine, Barabas in the Jew of Malta and Faustus, but they are endowed with great tragic and heroic qualities. His tragedy is a tragedy of one man – his rise and fall, his fate and actions and finally his death for his own failings and incapacities. All the other characters fade into insignificance besides the towering personality and the glory and grandeur of the tragic hero. Even various incidents revolve round the hero. His heroes are men fired with indomitable passion and inordinate ambition. His Tamburlaine is in full-flooded pursuit of military and political power, his Faustus sells his soul to the Devil to attain ultimate power through knowledge and gain the deity and His Jew of Malta discards all sense of human values with his blind aspirations. What Marlowe depicts and dramatizes is that all his mighty and towering heroes with all their sky-high designs and aspirations ultimately fall into failure and doom exhibiting their tragic and doomed end. Herein lies the greatness of Marlowe.

Working of a passion: We have previously studied that Marlowe's heroes are dominated by the inordinate desires and passions. These passions take the form of wealth, spirit of learning, high power. Through these, Marlowe imparts vehemence, fire and force in the drama. But in this way, we may trace the distinct influence of Machiavelli on Marlowe. Marlowe must have read his famous book, The Prince and

derived this idea of ambition and spirit from him. Marlowe discarded the old concept of tragedy as decent from greatness to misery and supplanted it greatness by the greatness of individual worth. His heroes truly reflect the new Spirit of Learning because he himself was the product of Renaissance.

The Inner Conflict: Another great achievement of Marlowe was to introduce the element of conflict in the tragic hero especially in Doctor Faustus and Edward II. The conflict may be on the physical or spiritual plane. The spiritual and moral conflict takes place in the heart of man and this is of much greater significance and much more poignant than the former. And a great tragedy most powerfully reveals the emotional conflict or moral agony of the mighty hero. In the realm of England’s dramatic literature, Doctor Faustus may be reckoned the first spiritual tragedy or the tragedy of the soul. In this epoch-making drama, true and deep moral agonies and painful spiritual conflict has been superbly laid bare before us by Marlowe. Like the old Greek heroes, Marlovian Heroes are not helpless puppets in the hands of Fate and they are never destined by gods. They have free thinking of religion and carve their way themselves. The tragic end they meet is caused by the tragic flaw in their personalities and they achieve this end through their actions. This is the greatest contribution of Marlowe to the English Drama.

Moral Conception: It was Marlowe who first discarded the medieval conception of tragedy as it was distinctly a moral one. In old Morality Plays, the purpose was to simply inculcate a moral lesson by showing the fall of the hero. There is no such thing in Marlovian plays. The main interest centers on the sky-touching personality of the heroes with their tremendous efforts to attain the limit and their rise and fall in their struggle.

Blank Verse: Another great achievement of Marlowe was to introduce a new type of blank verse in his tragedies. A new spirit of poetry was breathed into the artificial and monotonous verse of the old days. In fact, the whole of Elizabethan Drama was enlivened by a new poetic grandeur.

Seriousness and Concentration: Another notable characteristic of Marlowe’s work is seriousness and concentration on the theme and there is complete lack of humor. According to many critics, the clownish scenes and the other absurdities were interpolated by the later authors. There are also no women characters in Marlowe’s works; this is also a typical quality of his. The episodes of Helen in Doctor Faustus and other female figures in other plays are only shadows or figure-heads. Most of these features may also be regarded as the drawbacks, however; it was Marlowe’s distinct way of writing which is typical of him. Or perhaps, for these reasons, he couldn’t reach the towering high plane of fame as did Shakespeare. But we must remember that he was a pioneer and path-finder. He was the Columbus of a new literary World in England. It is due to Marlowe that we have Shakespeare whom we know and read, but had Marlowe not written such these works, there would have been Shakespeare, but not the one we know today. Shakespeare, without him, would have been only another writer.

Renaissance Elements in Doctor Faustus

The word 'Renaissance' itself means 'rebirth'. "The idea of rebirth originated in the belief that Europeans had discovered the superiority of Greek and Roman culture after many centuries of what they considered intellectual and culture decline." Thus the question what was the renaissance about is answered as the widespread cultural revival marking the division between the so called 'dark ages' and the modern world. The Renaissance was a period of fundamental change in human outlook once dominated by religious dogma and Christian theology. The age was marked by a great yearning for unlimited knowledge; by love for worldliness – supreme power, sensual pleasures of life; by love for beauty; respect for classicism; by skepticism, individualism and Machiavellian influence.

Christopher Marlowe was a product of the Renaissance. Therefore it was usual for him that his play Doctor Faustus would contain Renaissance spirit. We see in Doctor Faustus a wonderful expression of renaissance elements and the character Doctor Faustus as a renaissance man.

The most important thing in the Renaissance is craving for 'knowledge infinite'. This characteristic has been injected in Faustus properly. He has achieved knowledge of all branches. Yet he feels unfulfilled. So he wants to practice black art and with this he would be able to know all things: **"I will have them read me strange philosophy."**

After selling his soul, he, at the very first, questions Mephistopheles to know the mystery of the universe, about the position of hell.

> **"First, will I question with thee about hell,**
> **Tell me where is the place that men call hell?"**

Faustus's longing for material prosperity, for money and wealth, which is also a Renaissance element, has been expressed in the following lines where he desires to gain the lordship of Embden a great commercial city-

> **"Of wealth!**
> **Why, the signiority of Embden shall be mine."**

He further wants to enjoy a splendid life full of worldly pleasures. He says,

> **"I will have them fly to India for gold,**
> **Ransack the ocean for orient pearl,**
> **....**
> **And search all the corners of the new found world.**
> **For pleasant fruits and princely delicates."**

Here we see another inherent thing characterized by Renaissance in Faustus i.e. love for adventure.

Faustus's eagerness to get the most beautiful German maid to be his wife and Helen to be his paramour and to find heaven in her lips proves his love of beauty along with love for sensual pleasure which is also a Renaissance element. He says to Mephistophilis,

> **"For I am wanton and lascivious**
> **And cannot live without a wife."**

Dominance of classical literature, art and culture is a prominent feature of the Renaissance. And it is frequently expressed by Faustus in his allusions, examples,

references. One of such examples can be noticed in the following couple of lines where Faustus says,

"Have I not made blind Homer sing to me
Of Alexander's love and Oenon's death?"

"The Renaissance was marked by an intense interest in the visible world and in the knowledge derived from concrete sensory experience." "It turned away from the abstract speculations and interest in life after death that characterized the middle Ages." Faustus raises question and gives answer to that question in the following lines-

"That, after this life, there is any pain?
Thus, these are trifles and mere old wives tales."

Thus Renaissance allows Scepticism and secularism.

In the Renaissance, "the unique talents and potential of the individual became significant. The concept of personal fame was much more highly developed than during Middle Ages." Actually Faustus is an individualistic tragic hero. His tragedy is his own creation. He does not think like traditional heroes or men. He crosses his limit while common people do not generally cross that.

Renaissance movement is greatly influenced by Niccolo Machiavelli, his The Prince and his ideal "ends justify the means." Similarly Faustus also wants to reach his goal by any means, even by selling his soul to Devil –"Faustus gives to thee his soul." Furthermore, Faustus earns money by selling a false horse to a Horse-course deceitfully. The Renaissance has made Faustus fascinated by supreme power. Faustus says-

"A sound magician is a mighty God
Here, Faustus, tire thy brains to gain a deity."

Finally we must say that Faustus is a faithful embodiment of the Renaissance. He bears all the characteristics of the age. Actually Marlowe has pictured Faustus with great care and interest of the age. George Satayana justly says in this regard – "Marlowe is a martyr to everything, power, curious knowledge, enterprise, wealth and beauty."

Faustus as an Individualistic Tragic Hero of Renaissance

Christopher Marlowe, in his Doctor Faustus, his master piece, draws an excellent character before us. This character can be regarded as a strong individual, an embodiment of Renaissance and a tragic hero. Indeed, each and every man possesses two forces going on in him.one is social that abides by the set up rules of his surroundings. Another is individual that thinks things in his mind particularly from his own demand, dream and thought. In Doctor Faustus's case, it is the second one- he has a firm individuality, that's why he is called an individualistic hero

As an embodiment of Renaissance, Doctor Faustus, having attained knowledge, power and fame, wants more and more, unparalleled possession. He has achieved knowledge of all branches. Yet he wants to do whatever he pleases. So he would like to practice necromancy.

Shall I make spirits fetch me what I please
....
I will have them fly to India for gold,
Ransack the ocean for orient pearl,

And search all corners of the new-found world
For pleasant fruits and princely delicates;
I'll have them read me strange philosophy,
And tell the secrets of all foreign kings;

Thus he will compel them to build a wall of brass around Germany and to make the river Rine divert its course to flow round the lovely city of Wittenberg; will be able to supply plenty of silk garments to the public school; will drive Prince of Parma form his country and become the supreme monarch of all the provinces; and will have wonderful and powerful weapons of war.

But before and after attaining the black art, there runs a conflict in him between the good and evil, between the good and bad which is at the beginning symbolized by good angel and evil angle. (Act 1, Scene 1)

In order to attain his purpose, Doctor Faustus racks the name of God ....

Faustus is an individual tragic hero. He is the maker of his own tragedy, his fate, good or bad. He falls, not by the fickleness of fortune or the decree of fate, or because he has been corrupted by Mephistopheles, the agent of Lucifer, the devil, but all things happen to him because of his own will. He commits sin by wanting like God or to exceed God and by rejecting God and accepting Beelzebub, the devil. So he must suffer in fine.

Faustus always experiences a conflict between his consciousness and free will which is also found in great tragic heroes of Shakespeare, namely Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello.

Faustus is a tragic hero, individual in character. But through his death he proves the loftiness of God, Almighty. O.P. Broclbent says- "Faustus's passion for knowledge and power is in itself a virtue, but diverted from the service of God it threatens to become totally negative and self- destroying''.

However, if we go through the depth of Faustas's tragedy, we observe that Faustus stands not for a character, not for a single man, but for man, for every man. His tragedy is not a personal tragedy, but a tragedy that overtakes all those who dare "practice more than heavenly power permits" In this way, Faustus's individualistic tragedy turns to a universal too.

To sum up, we must say that Doctor Faustus is an embodiment of Renaissance, a tragic hero, individual and forceful. At the same time, he represents us too. But the only difference is that we dare hardly avoid the established concepts of society, religion, but Faustus boldly went ahead to his individual demand. However in religious point of view, he committed a great sin and suffered a lot - that is, it is a morality play too.

Renaissance ideals vs Medieval morals

Faustus's inner turmoil gives way to the dominant meaning within the play: Medieval morals versus Renaissance ideals. Marlowe's characterization of Faustus leads one to the predominant idea of duality in society of his era in which Medieval values conflict with those of the Renaissance. His refusal to see what is fact and what is fiction is a result of his pompous persona. In his quest to become omnipotent, Faustus fails to see that there is life after death and that his material possessions are of no consequence. Faustus is a combatant in his own internal war of knowledge or salvation.

In the opening of the play Marlowe uses the chorus to announce the time, place, and most importantly, to introduce Faustus. The chorus refers to the Greek myth of Icarus while characterizing Faustus –

" Till swoll'n with cunning, of self-conceit
His waxen wings did mount above his reach
And melting, heavens conspired his overthrow!"(Prologue. 19-21.)."

His waxen wings did mount above his reach" is an ironic comparison between Icarus and Faustus. It is ironic because Icarus directly disobeys his father, which ties into the idea of moral sin. However, in Faustus' case it is disobedient to become too learned. Also, the line: **"heavens conspired his overthrow"** could be a reference to Lucifer's attempt to overpower God. Thus, the Chorus would ultimately be making reference to Faustus attempting to outwit God. This is the contrast between Medieval and Renaissance values; the medieval world shunned all that was not Christian while the Renaissance was a re-birth of learning in which people openly questioned divinity as with much more. The chorus makes it seem that Faustus is a 'bad' man because he seeks knowledge. In essence, it portrays Faustus as a "Renaissance man who pays the medieval price for being one."

Faustus's constant struggle to explore Renaissance principles is heightened by the Good Angel and Bad Angel. The Good Angel pulls Faustus towards Medieval values. He represents Faustus's Medieval instincts:

"O Faustus, lay that damned book aside
And gaze not on it lest it tempt thy soul
And heap God's heavy wrath upon thy head!
Read, read the Scriptures - that is blasphemy!" (1.1.67-69).

The Angel is eluding to Medieval ideals by saying that books are 'damned' and will bring 'God's heavy wrath'. 'That is blasphemy' is yet another reference to books not being of God. The Good Angel is Faustus key to salvation. Again, Faustus's inner conflict gives way to the ultimate theme of redemption and sin. While the Good Angel represents the medieval era, the Bad Angel signifies the Renaissance:

"Go forward Faustus, in that famous art
Wherein all nature's treasure is contained.
...
Lord and commander of these elements!"(1.1.71-74).

The Bad Angel feeds Faustus's thirst for knowledge by telling him that 'all nature's treasure is contained' in his books. Going even further, the Angel tells Faustus to be 'Lord' and 'commander' of these elements ultimately telling Faustus that he could be God if he so chose. Both angels are ultimately signify duality within society. Where half are pulled towards the righteous Medieval morals and the others toward liberated Renaissance ideals.

Faustus embraces his Renaissance persona by acknowledging his life choices. In his never ending quest to obtain knowledge, Faustus conjures Helen of Troy so that he may marvel at her beauty:

"Was this the face that launched a thousand ships
And burnt the topless towers of Illium?
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.

Her kiss suck forth my soul.
See where it flies!" (5.1.95-99).

Helen is an apt person for Faustus to gawk at. She was considered to be the most beautiful women in the entire world. However, Faustus lives in a time and place of sexual repression. Thus, Helen represents sin and sexual freedom - an end to Medieval morals. The word 'immortal' implies that Helen's kiss allows men to live forever and that Helen herself is 'immortal'. This ironical comparison demonstrates that Faustus is still in denial about death. However, with 'Her kiss suck forth my soul', Faustus suggests that Helen has taken his life. This is ironic on many levels, most noticeably being that many men died to rescue Helen from the Trojans. In addition, Faustus is the only one responsible for his lost soul. The conjuring of Helen of Troy represents Faustus's decision to accept what he has done with his life and follow his Renaissance persona. In calling on Helen, Faustus has yielded himself to immortal sins. First and foremost, Faustus has sinned by using black magic to call on Helen. Lastly, Faustus is openly sexual with Helen of Troy. His kissing of Helen is ultimately a symbol of accepting that which has already been done and preparing to face eternal damnation.

Faustus's epic battle between Medieval morals and Renaissance ideals results in his eternal damnation. Faustus has many chances to repent, yet not once does he decided to put an end to seeking knowledge and practicing magic. His decision is ultimately a signal for the end of Medieval beliefs in 'religion being the key' and the emergence of free thinking. Faustus has been said to be "a Renaissance man who paid the Medieval price for being one". He was an intellectual in a society of ignorance imposed upon by the clergy of the Catholic Church.

Though Faustus is the tragic hero of the play one must really consider if in fact Faustus's demise is tragic. Faustus makes his own decisions and knows where they will take him to in the end. He refuses to see that heaven and hell do exist and despite the many warnings given to him about the heinousness of hell, he still follows the path of damnation Faustus's harrowing demise results in eternal damnation is tragic. He is a man with the charisma and courage to follow his passions in life. Faustus is told time after time that he can still repent and save himself from the wrath of God. Several times he does in fact repent, yet because of his inner conflict he 'takes it back'. Not till Faustus utters his last words is one completely sure that Faustus's story is tragic, at best. Ultimately, he dies unhappy and still a combatant in his own internal war.

At the end we can say that in spite of being a man of medieval period, Faustus was a Renaissance man. And by his activities we find the elements of Renaissance where medieval values are buried because of the emergence of Renaissance ideals.

Doctor Faustus as an Over-Reacher

Doctor Faustus is what Harry Levin calls, 'an over-reacher.' The play is a tragedy of presumption in which a man of humble origin but great learning over reaches and ruins himself. It presents the pathetic figure of a great mind going to ruin. Doctor Faustus is a typical Renaissance hero. He reveals an important aspect of the Renaissance temper. He like other Marlovian heroes is distinguished by his **fiery passion**, capacity for **infinite struggle** and the Renaissance **lust for power**, **beauty**, **wealth** and **knowledge**.

Marlovian heroes are the embodiments or manifestations of single qualities and single forces. They are projected from his subjectivity and made convincing by sheer

imaginative insight into the dark mysteries of nature. They are all massively drawn. They are all Titanic figures who challenge the forces which ultimately prove too great for them. They stand all by themselves and dwarf and over-shadow all other characters. They are **lonely figures** in a world of Lilliputians. Faustus seeks **infinite knowledge** and the **satisfaction of physical desires**. Barabas has an **unlimited passion for revenge**. They seem to illustrate Machiavelli's Prince whose only desirable virtue is ambition and who denies all morality except that which operates for his own good. But man, by nature, has limited power. His desire to transcend himself is bound to be frustrated. This is the typical tragic predicament (situation). As informed by the chorus, Faustus is swollen with cunning of a self-conceit; his waxen wings did mount above his reach.

Faustus, in the opening soliloquy shows his **dissatisfaction with various branches of knowledge**. He has studied Aristotle’s logic but that has only sharpened his thirst for knowledge, he rejects the study of medicine as it has failed to put life into the dead. He disapproves of the study of law which provides only petty gains. The study of religion is considered futile as it only tells of the essential sinful nature of man.

> **Yet art thou still but Faustus and a man.**

He **wishes to acquire unlimited knowledge**. This he feels is possible only through the study of magic.

> **Divinity, adieu!**
> **These metaphysics of magicians,**
> **And necromantic books are heavenly;**
> **Lines, circles, scenes, letters, and characters;**
> **Ay, these are those that Faustus most desires**

He is **prepared to sign the contract in his own blood** to **give away** his **soul** to **Satan** in order to **seek infinite knowledge**. He is obviously tired of orthodox learning. As soon as Mephistophilis appears, he starts questioning him about the nature of hell and heaven, of earth and the stars, of God and devil. Immediately after signing contract, he moves in a dragon-drawn chariot through various planets in the universe. Obviously this doctor of divinity has forgotten the Christian dictum that the fruit of knowledge is forbidden. He suffers because he is tempted to explore the mysteries that are forbidden by heavenly powers.

True to a typical Marlovian hero, Faustus treats God and Devil not merely as rival centres of power but himself wishes to be a similar centre of power. It is with this end in view that he pursues the study of “black art”. This pursuit of magic will put at his command all things that move between the quiet poles. He believes that ‘**A sound magician is a demi-god’**. Like Tamburlaine, he wishes to be a great emperor of the world:

> **I'II join the hills that bind the Afric shore**
> **And make that country continent to Spain**
> **And both contributory to my crown:**
> **The Emperor shall not live but by my leave.**
> **Nor any potentate in Germany.**

Like the Prince of Machiavelli, Faustus doesn’t bother about the traditional morality. He appears to be at least as great as Devil, if not as God. He seeks a vision of greatness

which is denied by the laws that govern human beings. A king commands power only in his kingdom but Faustus through magic wishes control over the elements.

The trade with the countries of Asia and Africa was bringing a lot of wealth into the country. This created an insatiable desire for wealth. Faustus shares Barabas' **thirst for wealth**. That is perhaps why Faustus is keen to call forth spirits and says: -

> **I'll have them fly to India for gold,**
> **Ransack the ocean for the orient pearl.**

Beauty was a passion with the Elizabethans. True to this spirit, Faustus wishes to live in all voluptuousness and yarns to have "a world of profit and delight". He summons blind Homer to sing of Alexander's love and Oenon's death. He listens to the music of Amphion who raised the walls of Thebes with music. He calls the spirit of Helen, the face that launched a thousand ships and burnt the topless towers of Ilium. He yearns for a kiss of Helen that will make him "immortal". He is thus truly a microcosm of Renaissance humanism. This love for sensuous pleasure is reflected when one of the first desires mentioned by Faustus is to have a wife. This craze for carnal delights is both the cause and effect of his suffering. It is this passion that leads him astray and he drowns his inner conflict in these very physical pleasures.

Faustus as a tragic hero introduces the element of inner conflict for the first time in English drama.

"Faustus remains an almost unique record of spiritual tragedy." The **conflict** in this play is not between man and man, nor in the interaction of a group of characters but between the divine will and the human will, between curiosity and conscience. Faustus, ambitious like Milton's Satan, undergoes a similar deterioration and degeneration and therein lies his tragedy. He seeks to have "a world of profit and delight, of power, of honour, and of omnipotence". He does start with an ambition of world conquest and securing all knowledge. He does satisfy his lust for knowledge and power but forgets all about his claims. He neither builds any brass wall around Germany nor any bridge joining Spain with Africa. Instead of becoming a world-emperor, he is reduced to the level of an entertainer and a juggler. His mischief with the Pope reduces him to the level of a buffoon. His trick with the horse-dealer is like that of a clown. His fetching the grapes in winter is cheap show that jugglers perform even now. He had rejected medicine because it could not turn the dead into living. He had decided to pursue the black art because it would help him control the elements. But in actual practice, he fails to avoid his own death and cannot stop the movement of time. The comic scenes rightly parody his efforts. But all this deterioration and degeneration is not sudden. The change in him is gradual like in Satan in Paradise Lost. From the ridicule of Pope, to the ridicule of a knight and then to the ridicule of an ordinary horse-dealer indicates this steady down-fall. In the beginning he calls Mephistopheles and can command him. Later he depends on Mephistophilis to do everything. But ultimately the evil spirits dominate him and he seeks to drown his grief into sensuous pleasures. To conclude we can rightly say that Faustus presents the pathetic figure of a great mind going to ruin.

Blank verse in Doctor Faustus

Blank verse is a literary device defined as un-rhyming verse written in iambic pentameter. In poetry and prose, it has a consistent meter with 10 syllables in each line

(pentameter); where, unstressed syllables are followed by stressed ones and five of which are stressed but do not rhyme. It is also known as un-rhymed iambic pentameter.

Marlowe has always been regarded more of a poet rather than a dramatist. Both his contemporaries and the moderns have waxed eloquent in praise of his poetic excellence. Helen Rex Keller calls Doctor Faustus a tragic poem rather than a play. Pinkerton observes, "It is neither the philosophical nor the teaching element that attracts us now. The play touches us, I think, by the quality of its poetry". Swinburne regards this play as the most remarkable of all great poems in dramatic form. He believes that a few master-pieces of any age in any language can stand beside the tragic poem for the qualities of terror and splendor, for intensity of purpose and sublimity of note. J. A. Symonds remarks that Marlowe traced the outline of the legend of Faustus with a breadth and dignity, beyond the scope of the prose legend. He filled it with the power of a great poet and with the intensity of life belonging to himself. Leigh Hunt declared, "If there was a born poet, Marlowe was one." Robertson could never think of him except as a poet, Marlowe was one". Robertson could never think of him except as a poet. Saintsbury regards Marlowe as one of the greatest poets of the world whose work was caused by accident and caprice into an imperfect mould of drama. Marlowe masters us by poetry. He is lifted above his fellows-reaching the pedestal on which Shakespeare stands alone.

All these estimates make us praising Doctor Faustus as a great dramatic poem rather as a great play overlooking the remarkable acting quality of the chief scenes. This acting quality is proved by the successful performances both in Marlowe's time and in ours when properly staged. However, it is true that Doctor Faustus has far more passages of superb dramatic poetry than any other play of Marlowe. The subject here, more than even Tamburlaine, lends itself to passionate outbursts and lyrical raptures. Marlowe has few equals in the expression of such lyrical raptures. Faustus' apostrophe to Helena is the most memorable of such passages. Many a times, in many other speeches, Marlowe's imagination glows with a similar brightness. Feeling is here expressed in the same rich phrases, and in the same sonorous music. Most of these passages in Doctor Faustus represent the ecstatic quality of his poetry. Marlowe is the rapturous lyrist of infinite passions. This ecstatic quality finds its best expression in the following lines:

Was this the face that launched a thousand ships?
And burnt the topless towers of Ilum!
Sweet Helen! Make me immortal with a kiss.
Her lips suck forth my soul' See, where it flies!

Similarly, Faustus depicts his delight secured through magic in the following lines of poetic excellence:

Have not I made blind Homer sing to me
Of Alexander's love and Oenon's death?
And hath not he, that built the walls of Thebes
With ravishing sound of his melodious harp,
Made music with my Mephistophilis?

Again, when Faustus' passion to conquer the secret forces of nature is described, his words have same glow of poetic ecstasy: Simple, Pictorial, Vitalising.

Marlowe's poetry, apart from being ecstatic, is simple, pictorial and Vitalising. Classical legends are used as images in the description of Helen's beauty:

Brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter
When he, appeared to hapless Semele;
More lovely than the monarch of the sky
In wanton Arethusa's azur'd arms,

Marlowe is neither rhetorical nor obscure. He speaks with a bright and lucid simplicity. Many of his happiest lines are woven from the words of everyday speech, often a sequence of monosyllables:

Her lips suck forth my soul,' see, where it flies'

Even in its less exalted verse passages, as in Chorus narratives and in some of the speeches, this play is almost entirely free from the rhetorical declamation. The vitalizing energy of Marlowe's poetry lends a beauty and lifting power to this play. We admire even the horrible imagination and vibrant music.

This play very well demonstrates the extent of Marlowe's mastery over blank verse was dull and monotonous. Marlowe uses the end-stopped line. He changes the fall of stress and the internal pause to introduce variety. There is, for example, consistently regular rhythm in the Chorus passages. It creates an effect of stately rigidity. But the opening soliloquy of Faustus has flexibility introduced through variation in rhythm and pause. The last soliloquy of Faustus shows Marlowe's highest attainment as a meterist. Here, in response to the stress of the passions, the blank verse is worked into new beautiful rhythms. The blank verse before Marlowe was like a dried preparation. It seemed to wait for infusion of new blood. Earlier blank verse was rendered lifeless by stiff rules, rigid regularity and monotony. Marlowe brought an end to this old wooden versification. He liberated blank verse from the shackles of formalism, rigidity and regularity. His verse is throbbing with life and vitality. It gives full play to his poetic power and passion. It permits the ebb and tide of diction. It is pervaded with the rhythm of thought and feeling. His exceptional poetic genius helped him to achieve absolute freedom, flexibility and range for his blank verse. The leaden ore of the meter of Gorbodue was transformed by him into the liquid gold of his mighty lines.

We may conclude with Bradley that Marlowe had many of the makings of a great poet ¾ a capacity for Titanic passions which might with time have become Olympian. His imaginative vision which was already intense must have deepened and widened with time. He had the gift of style and making words sing which is unique and unparalleled.

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Plot in Doctor Faustus

Marlowe has been criticized by many critics for his defective and faulty plot-construction. Dr. Faustus has been called a failure in construction though it has a quite natural and impressive introduction and exposition. lfor Evans believes that the play is not wholly successful. He agrees that its opening speeches, in which Faustus barters his soul, are magnificent. The closing presentation of the final hour of retribution reaches a depth of pathos which Marlowe never equaled. The weakness, according to him, lies in the middle scenes, some of which are crude, and even farcical. Indeed they are considered so inadequate that some critics have even doubted Marlowe's authorship of these scenes.

Helen Rex Keller calls it rather a tragic poem than a play. It consists of fourteen scenes without any grouping into acts. Felix Schelling thinks that the play is little more than a succession of scenes, void of continuity or cohesion. The only factors of unity are the central figure and his unrelenting progress towards catastrophe. Nicholas Brooke believes that the play is wandering, ill-constructed and ill-written affair despite its flashes of greatness. R. S. Knox and Harry Levin, like lfor Evans take strong exception to the middle scenes of the play.

There is much art in the simple, quiet opening. Faustus is in meditation among his books. This soliloquy reveals the working of Faustus' mind. His keen intellect rejects all subjects. The mastery over these subjects is inadequate to satisfy his lust for power and position. He dreams of superhuman force through magic. It reflects the spirit of Renaissance with its yearning for new realms of art and learning and passion for unlimited power. The silent entry of the Angels and their whispered device have a great dramatic impact. It is not just a continuation of the tradition of Miracle and Morality plays. It shows a conflict in Faustus' mind between moral and religious ideas of Reformation and the worldly ambitions of Renaissance. Faustus' enraptured cry, as he thinks of the glorious future offered to him, makes an impressive picture if seen in a setting approaching bare Elizabethan stage:

O what a world of profit and delight.
Of power of honour of omnipotence,
All things that move between the quiet poles
Shall be at my command.

The signing of the contract with the devil vigorously portrays Faustus' excitement, his terror and his almost hysterical haste to put his new power to the test.

The end of the play culminates in great emotional moments like the reappearance of the Old Man and Faustus' cry of ecstasy as he gazes at the symbol of conscience in Faustus' soul. Old man represents Christian faith with its ideas of prayer and penitence salvation and redemption. He makes Faustus aware of his polluted soul and the need for sincere repentance. But Faustus is plunged into deep despair. The love for physical pleasures so degrades him that he asks Mephistophilis to torture the Old Man. The physical tortures are treated by the Old Man as a test of his faith in God which ultimately triumphs. It gains its dramatic value by contrast with Faustus who is terribly afraid of physical tortures. The craving for Helen's beauty to drown his despair has a deep psychological basis. Most effective is, however, the ecstatic praise of Helen's beauty

Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships.
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?
Sweet Helen! make me immortal with a kiss.

The last soliloquy reveals Faustus' tragic discovery of the reality of hell and its tortures and the prospect of eternal damnation because Faustus vomits out his inner mental corruption. It is the deep agony of a terror-stricken soul;

If thou will not have mercy on my soul.
Yet for Christ's sake, whose blood hath ransom'd me,
Impose some end to my incessant pain,
Let Faustus live in hell a thousand years.
A hundred thousand. and at last be sav 'd.

Most of the critics have condemned the middle scenes, the comic scenes, in Dr. Faustus. These scenes have been called crude, grotesque and even farcical. J. A. Symonds believes that they might be easily transposed without any material injury to the plan. Dr. Lopez, a contemporary of Marlowe, has referred to the interpolation of comic scenes. The diary of Marlowe's actor-manager suggests that he had engaged the services of William Birde and Samuel Rowley for changing the text of Dr. Faustus. Harold Osborne and Arnold Wynne dismiss these scenes as crude buffoonery in the tradition of native comedy to tickle the fancy of the groundlings.

The presence of comic scenes can be justified on many grounds. The introduction of cheap buffoonery in a tragedy was in keeping with the taste of contemporary audiences. T.S. Eliot has suggested that it is wrong to suppose that Marlowe had no sense of humour. He gives the example of Marlowe's Dido. Queen of Carthage, and Tamburlaine to show his sense of humour. J.C. Maxwell has suggested that comic scenes in this play are quite consistent with its main theme. The same genius that shows itself in the tragic scenes is manifested, though less strikingly, in the selection exercised on miscellaneous buffoonery. Marlowe brings some order out of chaos by presenting the high-life scenes side by side with low-life scenes.

Most of the comic scenes parody the main plot. They thus introduce the ironic element in the play and deepen its significance. In the first scene, Faustus announces his intellectual supremacy and his decision to acquire god-like power through magic. In the second scene, Wagner apes his master's display of learning by arguing with the two scholars. In the third scene Faustus agrees to sell his soul for power and sensuous pleasures. Immediately after this, the Clown considers selling of his soul for a shoulder of mutton and a taste of wenching. In the next scenes he launches his career as a magician by snatching away the Pope's food and drink. Similarly Raphel and Robin parody Faustus' magic and try to steal a goblet from a Vintner. In the latter half of the play, the mighty Faustus parodies his own ambitious thoughts just as Wagner and the Clown had parodied them earlier. As Faustus becomes invisible, the tragic-comic contrast begins to merge. Scene by scene, the images approach one another until at last we discover the figure of the fool beneath the exalted appearance of the fearless rebel. When Faustus steals the Pope's cup and Robin steals the Vintner's goblet, the tragic and the comic images nearly merge. The difference between the hero and the clown is one of degree, not of kind.

The balance of tragic and comic elements in Faustus is somewhat comparable to that in Paradise Lost. C. S. Lewis has suggested that Satan might have been a comic figure if Milton had chosen to emphasize, more than he does, the absurdity of diabolical ambition. Like Faustus, Satan changes his shape. Satan, however, is the unwitting fool of God, the brilliant schemer whose victory turns to ashes. Faustus' destiny is more obscure and pathetic. He is Lucifer's fool, not God's.

Dr. Faustus doesn't have a plot construction in the ordinary sense. But it has a better construction than Tamburlaine or The Jew of Malta. R. G. Lunt points out that the play has five well-marked natural movements or divisions corresponding to the five acts of a play. Similarly Ellis Fermor divides the play into six episodes followed by a catastrophe. In the first episode, Faustus surveys his position and chooses to study magic that begins the action and sets it moving towards the crisis. In the second episode, Mephistophilis is summoned. Next episode presents the crisis - the contract with the devil and the resulting wavering of mind. Faustus regrets in the fourth episode but the evil powers

triumph. It is followed by the period of disintegration and loss of ideals. The last episode, after a brief conflict between good and evil forces, presents a confirma-tion of the terrible bond and the appearance of Helen.

Harry Levin discovers in the play the main plot, the sub-plot and the over-plot. The main plot deals with the ambitions and ideals of Dr. Faustus, his struggle to achieve his ambition and his ultimate tragedy. The comic sub-plot presents an anti-climax to the main plot. It shows Faustus' ideals and aspirations in a comic light. It emphasizes the fact that the comic and the serious, the ridiculous and the sublime, are closely inter-linked. They are two sides of the same coin. The over-plot or the philosophical plot represents the struggle between the forces of good and evil in the universe and in the human soul. This struggle makes the play so gripping.

So to sum up we can say that the general disapproval of the middle or comic scenes of Dr. Faustus is largely misconceived because of the failure to discover a traditional plan of construction in the play. The play has also another and different kind of unity through the dominating character of Faustus .and the presentation of his inner conflict. This conflict lends dignity because the conflict is not between men for domination of one character over another or in the interaction of a group of characters. This conflict is between man and the spiritual powers as in Greek tragedy and this imparts organic unity to the play.

Themes in Christopher Marlowe's Doctor Faustus

Absolute Power, Sin and Redemption, and the Divided Nature of Man

Marlowe's "Doctor Faustus" stands as one of the most influential and frequently-referenced pieces of literature in history. The play is the story of Doctor Faustus, a man who considers study in the fields of logic, medicine, law, and divinity and instead chooses to forsake them all to practice black magic. He enters into a deal with Mephastophilis, a servant of the devil, in which Faustus gains the services of the demon but has to give up his soul after 24 years. The play deals with several important themes. The corrupting influence of power, sin and redemption, and the divided nature of man are interwoven throughout the piece.

Absolute power corrupts Faustus thoroughly. In the beginning we are introduced to a man at the top of his game. He's mastered several important disciplines and is seeking a further, more rewarding, challenge so he turns to black magic. Faustus dreams of the many amazing things he'll accomplish with his new powers. He muses on sending spirits to India to fetch him gold, ponders having them "Ransack the ocean for orient pearl," and contemplates how he will use his spirits to gain knowledge of "the secrets of all foreign kings." His ambitions even extend to the throne of Germany.

When finally granted the power he so desires, Faustus proceeds to do very little with it. He starts out auspiciously enough with an adventure in a chariot pulled by dragons so that he may unlock the mysteries of astronomy. Faustus seeks to test the accuracy of maps of the coasts and kingdoms of the world as well and eventually ends up in Rome. Soon after, however, he basically lets his amazing power go to waste. He spends his time impressing various noblemen, playing petty tricks on people, and conjuring up specters of Alexander the Great and Helen of Troy.

The underlying statement Marlowe is making is one of the basic tenets of modern psychology. People simply don't appreciate things they didn't have to work to gain. In the beginning, Faustus is a great man, full of ambition and at the top of his field. While he 'earns' his new-found power in a sense by forfeiting his soul, he has done no actual work to acquire it. Throughout the course of the play we see the formerly-ambitious Faustus reduced to a petty conjurer and celebrity because of the corrupting influence of his power. Instead of choosing to act on his lofty ambitions or, heaven forbid, use his power for unselfish reasons; he simply wastes his days amusing himself with practical jokes and beautiful women.

Marlowe also comments on **the nature of sin and redemption**. Faustus essentially commits the ultimate sin by signing a pact with the devil. He chooses of his own free will to give up his eternal soul in exchange for an earthly reward. According to Christian mythology, one can be forgiven of any sin, one has only to repent and ask God's forgiveness. Despite the severity of his sin, Faustus is given several opportunities to repent his sin and be saved, and is encouraged to do so both by the good angel who appears several times and by the old man in scene 12. Each time he chooses to remain loyal to Hell. He seems to consider repenting at the very end, but Mephistopheles threatens to tear his body apart, so he chooses instead to send Mephistopheles to torture the old man whose words he finds himself unable to heed. Even though an easy answer to the problem of losing his soul exists, and he is several times reminded of it, in the end his own weakness prevents him from making the choice to repent and damns him for all eternity.

The **divided nature of man** is literally personified in the play by the good and evil angels that appear to Faustus periodically. These characters represent opposing sides of Faustus' own psyche, as well as representing emissaries of heaven and hell. Faustus is continually undecided whether he should continue his bargain or repent and seek salvation. He is clearly afraid for his eternal soul but is unable to relinquish the amazing power his bargain has afforded him. Marlowe may have intended the two angels as literal beings, but it's obvious he also intended them as an allegorical representation of Faustus' own internal struggle.

Themes are an integral part of the play, but Marlowe's work has truly stood the test of time. What is it about Doctor Faustus' story that has made it resonant to countless generations of readers since it was written?

The good doctor is a character with whom readers can sympathize. This is not to necessarily say that he is a 'sympathetic' character, but simply that he's a man who faces temptation and a tough choice. Human beings face tough choices every day, and like Faustus we are forced to weigh the consequences of yielding to those temptations.

Every human being faces temptation almost every day of their lives. These temptations range from the miniscule, such as being tempted to eat a slice of bread in spite of your pledge to adhere strictly to the Atkins diet, to the extreme, such as your best friend's drunken girlfriend coming on to you. The story of Faustus rings true with readers even today because of this. It speaks to every reader because there are no people who have lived without temptation. We all have our "good angel" and "bad angel," the voices inside our heads that spell out consequences of choices we're faced with. In most cases, people who give into temptation are aware of the consequences of that choice. The fact that Faustus' temptation is a far greater one than any of us is likely to face and has far

greater consequences than any of us will ever be up against just makes it even more resonant. Everyone has given in to a strong temptation at some point in their lives and it makes us feel good to see someone doing the same despite the enormous consequences that follow for Faustus.

Despite the fact that Faustus has committed the ultimate sin by choosing of his own free will to give up his immortal soul for an earthly reward, the possibility of salvation exists for him until the very end. We as people want to believe that the possibility of salvation and forgiveness exists for us no matter how heinous the deeds we have committed are. Marlowe's play speaks to this desire within us, telling us that, like Faustus, the possibility of repentance and forgiveness exists for us no matter how badly we screw up. It's a very comforting thought, especially to those living with guilt over some past transgression.

Another reason that the story in "Doctor Faustus" is as relevant today as it was when Marlowe wrote it is Faustus himself. Some may see him as a tragic hero, and it's very possible to consider him in this light, but it's also not much of a stretch to call him a villain. Men like Faustus exist even today, people who are willing to do whatever it takes to get what they want regardless of the consequences to themselves or to others. Ken Lay in the recent Enron scandal comes to mind as an example of this. Mr. Lay was perfectly willing to practically destroy the lives of thousands of people by taking their hard-earned money and squandering it on yachts and other expensive trifles. He, in effect, sold his soul. Faustus' selfish deeds remind us that people like him exist in real life. When Faustus is corrupted by his power and basically squanders it we are both angry at his inability to find a way to do good with his powers and pleased that he is getting what he deserves. Society likes it when people who commit evil deeds have it blow up in their face. We want to see justice served, whether it be Faustus' eternity in hell or Mr. Lay's recently-handed-down prison sentence, it feels good to know that evil people are punished.

"Doctor Faustus" has truly stood the test of time as a great piece of classical literature. Countless indications of its influence exist even today, ranging from the film "The Devil's Advocate" to the good and evil angels that appear on the shoulders in Warner Brothers cartoons. Marlowe's use of complex themes and subtle commentary on the nature of man coupled with the underlying messages that speak to the human psyche have established "Doctor Faustus" as a pinnacle of the writer's craft and a treatise on the human condition.

Conflict in Doctor Faustus

Conflict is the essence or the soul of the tragedy and it is born of some strong motivating cause. This conflict may be on two planes: physical plane and spiritual plane. Hence there may be external conflict, and internal or spiritual conflict.

The external conflict generally occurs between the forces of two rival groups. The hero belongs to one of these rival groups and the conflict often takes the form of a battle, a conspiracy or the like. Marlowe’s Tamburlaine, Edward II and the Jew of Malta, all illustrate this external conflict as it takes place between the hero and his adversaries. But the hero’s heart and soul is the great battlefield for the internal or spiritual conflict. Two opposite thoughts, desires, emotions, loyalties or affiliations may contend against each other in human soul giving rise to most acute spiritual conflict. And of all tragic conflicts, the most tragic one is the losing battle of the good in man against the evil that

ultimately comes out triumphant. Marlowe's Doctor Faustus, the most outstanding tragedy before Shakespeare, illustrates this supreme spiritual conflict in the most forceful manner.

"Doctor Faustus": Internal or Tragic Conflict

Marlowe's contribution to English or Elizabethan drama was great and manifold. And one of his greatest is the introduction of this internal or spiritual conflict in the mind of his proud and ambitious hero in Doctor Faustus.

In Doctor Faustus we find the conflict or the psychological struggle raging in the heart and soul of the hero. In fact there is hardly any external action in this play**—"the delineation of a psychological struggle or spiritual conflict in the mind of the hero is the chief thing."**

Generally this inner conflict takes place when a man is faced with two alternatives, one of which he must have to choose but finds himself pulled in opposite directions. Now Faustus is inspired by the spirit of Renaissance, by dreams of gaining limitless knowledge and super-human powers. These he can attain only by taking to unholy necromancy, by discarding godly order or by denouncing doctrines of Christianity. Faustus may reject all these intellectually but he is definitely attached to them emotionally. The conflict may be said to be the conflict between will and conscience externalized by the Bad Angel and Good Angel respectively. So the heart of Faustus is the field where the forces of good and evil are trying to overwhelm each other. We can follow this conflict and career of Faustus in the play in three stages.

The First Stage

In the first part of the drama we have the scenes that depict how intellectual pride and inordinate ambition lead Faustus into a vicious (malicious) bargain with the Devil. In the very first scene we find that Faustus is disappointed with all branches of knowledge like Physic, Philosophy, Law and Divinity as they are absolutely inadequate to serve his purpose. Finally he decides in favour of the black art of magic as:

"These metaphysics of magicians,
And necromantic books are heavenly."
And he convinces himself that:
"A sound magician is a mighty god"

The dramatic tension of Faustus lies in the fact that he is determined to satisfy the demands of his nature as God has made him—to be himself a deity—that is forbidden: it can be achieved by a conscious rejection of God who created him in his own image, but denied him (as much as Lucifer) fulfillment of that image. But Faustus's emotional attachment to the medieval doctrines of Christianity is too deep to be rooted out. Hence just after his final decision in favour of necromancy he feels the prick of conscience and in this very scene the Good Angel and the Evil Angel make their first appearance on the stage. These two Angels, in fact, represent the two aspects of human mind. Hence here the **Angels are externalizing the inner conflict between vice and virtue, between will and conscience raging in the mind of Doctor Faustus**. We find that the entire action of the play is fluctuating between the weak and wavering loyalties of Faustus to these two opposing forces. The Good Angel urges Faustus to shun 'that damned book' and to read the scriptures. But the Evil angel scores a victory by luring away Faustus with the assurance that by mastering the black art of magic Faustus will be: "Lord and

commander of the elements." After meeting and talking to his two friends who also encourage and inspire him to go for necromancy Faustus is determined that: "**This night I'll conjure, though I die therefore."** Then at the end of third scene of Act I we find Faustus telling Mephistopheles that he has already abjured the Trinity of his own will and has absolutely made up his mind to sell his soul to the Devil to gain limitless powers with the help of Mephistopheles as his abject slave and 'to live in all voluptuousness' for twenty-four years. His imagination takes wings and he tells us:

"Had I as many souls as there be stars,
I'd give them all for Mephistophilis.
By him I'll be great emperor of the world."
And then he starts indulging in day-dreams.

Undoubtedly, Faustus abjured God and the Trinity and decided to surrender his soul to the Devil of his own will, but in the beginning of Scene I of Act II, we find Faustus experiencing the **prick of Conscience and a tussle between will and conscience** starts raging in his soul. It begins to dawn on him that he is going to be eternally damned and can in no way be saved and he gives vent to his sense of despair thus:

"Ay, and Faustus will turn to God again,
To God? He loves thee not:
The god thou serv'st is thine own appetite,
Wherein is fix'd the love of Belzebub:"

The Good Angel and the Evil Angel, the symbols of his passion and conscience make their appearance again. But the lure of wealth and honour scores over the voice of conscience that urges him to pray and repent. He is now determined to write the bond with his own blood for surrendering his soul to the devil. But when Faustus starts writing the bond his blood coagulates. Then again when he has already 'bequeath'd his soul to Lucifer' he has optical illusion: the words 'Homo, fuge' have been inscribed on his arm. All these are outward expressions of the voice of virtue in him.

The Second Stage

In this stage is depicted Faustus's pathetic struggle to escape his impending doom and damnation and his deep sense of helplessness. This is revealed when he confesses to Mephistopheles that:

"When I behold the heavens, then I repent,'
And curse thee, wicked Mephistophilis,
Because thou hast depriv'd me of those joys."

The two Angels appear again—one urging him to pray and repent so that he may still have God's mercy and the other tells him that as he is a spirit, God can never pity him. Faustus very sadly realizes **"My heart's so harden'd, I cannot repent:"** And he would have killed himself out of despair had the sweet pleasures provided by Mephistopheles not dispelled his gloom of despair. Again at the end of this very scene the conflict in his soul becomes very acute when Mephistopheles refuses to answer some of his questions and the Good and Evil Angels reappear to externalize his inner conflict.

This time the Good Angel's appeal has some effect on his mind. But the Evil Angel tells him that the devils will tear him to pieces if he listened to the voice of conscience. Realizing the critical situation Lucifer himself, Beelzebub and Mephistopheles appear before him and finally warn him not to think of God so that there may not be any breach

of his bond. And Faustus has to submit to the demand of the Devil once more. And to pull up his drooping mind the Devil puts up the flimsy show of Seven Deadly Sins.

The spiritual conflict takes the most acute turn in the first scene of Act V after Faustus has raised the spirit of Helen and when the Old Man, the symbol of the good and divine in him, appears before him. His was the last attempt to guide his steps 'unto the way of life'. The acute mental tension is revealed forcefully in the following lines:

"Where art thou Faustus, wretch what hast thou done:
Damn'd art thou, Faustus, damned, despair and die."
Out of desperation, Faustus is just going to commit suicide; but it is the same Old Man who prevents him from taking this desperate step with a fervent appeal 'to call for mercy, and avoid despair.' But alas! Faustus ultimately seals his own fate by surrendering himself into the arms of sweet Helen to make him 'immortal with a kiss' just to forget the intense agony of his troubled and despairing soul.

The Final Scene

In the closing scene we find the climax culminating into a terrible catastrophe. Faustus has realised that he is doomed to eternal damnation without the least hope of redemption. The most poignant soliloquy of Doctor Faustus starting just before an hour of his final doom reveals forcefully the deep agony of a horror-struck soul. His last-minute frantic appeal to the ever-moving spheres of heaven to stand still or to the sun to rise again to 'make perpetual day' "That Faustus may repent and save his soul!"—is absolutely of no avail. And when the final hour strikes the Devil's disciples snatch away the agonised and trouble-torn soul of Faustus to hell to suffer eternal damnation.

We may now conclude with the very illuminating remark of Ellis-Fermor. "In Marlowe's great tragic fragment, the conflict is not between man and man for the domination of one character over another, or in the inter-action of a group of characters. But as in Aeschylus's Eumenides, the protagonists are man and the spiritual powers that surround him, the scene is set in on spot upon physical earth but in the limitless region of the mind and the battle is fought, not for kingdoms or crowns, but upon the question of man's ultimate fate. Before him lies the possibility to escape to spiritual freedom or a doom of slavery to demoniac powers. Thus, and in such terms is staged the greatest conflict that drama has ever undertaken to present."

"Doctor Faustus": A Link between Morality and Drama

Introduction: - Marlowe has rightly been called the 'Morning Star' of the great Elizabethan drama. Among the first pioneers of Elizabethan drama, he was definitely the greatest. Undoubtedly, it was Marlowe who raised the matter and the manner of the English drama to a high level and set it firmly on the straight road to greatness by drawing it from the old rut of Morality and rambling Interlude.

So Marlowe's contribution to the evolving of Romantic drama was really great. But the fact is that the Romantic drama was a curious blend of indigenous and classical traditions. Hence some of the characteristics of medieval Miracle and Morality plays are quite evident in the plays of Marlowe. And in this respect Doctor Faustus may be treated

as a connecting link between the Miracle and Morality plays and the illustrious drama of Elizabethan period.

Miracle and Mystery Plays and "Doctor Faustus": - The English dramas of the Middle Ages which presented the miracle of the saints and, very often, scenes from the Bible were generally and correctly, called Miracle plays. Scholars, from time to time, have attempted to distinguish between the Miracle play and the Mystery—the former as the saints-play and the latter as the Bible play. But both terms are still used for both types with very little discrimination. The production of these plays was at its height in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Saints-plays were earlier than Biblical plays. Those who wrote and produced them called them Miracles, shows or pageants. There is no doubt that the chief purpose of these plays was religious and ethical teaching, but between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, these plays, which developed from liturgical dramas became secularised. In such plays, generally a large number of scenes depicting the life of a saint was stringed together and the structure was always loose. But in the process of secularisation, comic scenes with coarse buffoonery found their place. The story of the plays was confined to the two books of the Bible. The Devil had also its part to play, though the plot, if there was any, centered round the main character allowing very little scope to minor figures.

In Marlowe's Doctor Faustus we can easily trace some of the characteristics of the Miracle plays. In Scene IV of Act I we find two devils, Baliol and Belcher, entering just to frighten the clown. Devils also appear in Act II, Sc. I and II and also in Act IV, Sc. Ill and Act V, Sc. II. The tradition of Chorus is also maintained. We find the Chorus introducing the story just before the beginning of the first scene and subsequently filling in the gaps in the narrative and announcing the end of the play with a very solemn moral. The looseness of the structure is quite evident, and as in the Miracle plays the story centres around a single towering figure, Doctor Faustus. From the very name of this type of plays it is obvious that the main figures must have performed some outstanding miracles. And here in this drama we find Faustus performing amazing feats of Miracle.

Morality Plays and "Doctor Faustus": -The Morality play is really a fusion of the medieval allegory and the religious drama, of the Miracle plays. It developed at the end of the fourteenth century and gained much popularity in the fifteenth century. In these plays the characters were personified abstractions of vice or virtues such as Good Deeds, Faith, Mercy, Anger. The outstanding Morality play, Everyman, has characters like Wealth, Good Deeds, Death and others. The general theme of the Moralities was theological and the main one was the struggle between good and evil powers for capturing man's soul and the journey of life with its choice of eternal destinations. Very often the Seven Deadly Sins were found engaged in physical and verbal battle with cardinal virtues. Even though the Morality plays were essentially religious or ethical and didactic, they were also not dull like the Miracle plays. The antics of vices and devils etc., offered a considerable opportunity for low comedy or buffoonery and thus farcical elements developed in a great way.

The Morality play, more or less, disappeared after mid-fifteenth century but the trace of its influences appears in Elizabethan drama. In this respect we may call Marlowe's Doctor Faustus a belated Morality in spite of its tragic ending. And even Shakespeare's Macbeth is not free from its influence as this play also presents a conflict between the good and the evil.

"Doctor Faustus": - Let us take up Doctor Faustus exclusively. If the general theme of Morality plays was theological dealing with the struggle of the forces of good and evil for the soul of man, and the aim was to teach doctrines and ethics of Christianity, then Doctor Faustus may be called a religious or Morality play to a very great extent. The play definitely worked out in a tone of medieval theology. We find Marlowe's hero, Faustus, abjuring the scriptures, the Trinity and Christ. He surrenders his soul to the Devil out of his inordinate ambition to gain super-human power through knowledge by mastering the unholy art of magic. And thus he says to himself to make up his mind regarding the subject he wishes to study in future:

> **"Divinity adieu!**
> **These metaphysics of magicians,**
> **And necromantic books are heavenly."**

By selling his soul to the Devil he lives a blasphemous life full of vain and sensual pleasures just for twenty-four years. He does not shirk from insulting and even assaulting the Pope with the Holy Fathers at Rome. Of course, there is a fierce struggle in his soul between his over-weening ambition and conscience, between the Good Angel and Evil Angel that externalise the inner conflict. But Faustus ultimately surrenders to the allurements of the Evil Angel, thereby paving his way for eternal damnation. And what does happen to this great egotist as well as agonistic with his craze for limitless power and pelf, with his inordinate ambition to unravel all the mysteries of the universe? When the final hour approaches, Faustus, to his utmost pain and horror, realises that his sins are unpardonable and nothing can save him from eternal damnation. And before the devils snatch away his soul to burning hell, the excruciating pangs of a deeply agonised soul find the most poignant expression in Faustus's final soliloquy:

> **"My God, my God, look not so fierce to me!**
> **Adders and serpents, let me breath a while!**
> **Ugly hell, gape not: come not Lucifer:**
> **I'll burn my books: Ah, Mephistophilis!"**

Thus we find Marlowe in keeping with the traditions of Miracles and Moralities, depicts the destiny of a man who denies God to be finally doomed to eternal damnation.

Moral Sermon or Didactic Aim: -The chief aim of Morality plays was didactic—it was a dramatized guide to Christian living and Christian dying. Whoever discards the path of virtue and abjures faith in God and Christ is destined to despair and eternal damnation—this is also the message of Marlowe's Doctor Faustus. And it has found the most touching expression in the mournful monody of the Chorus in the closing lines of the play:

> **"Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight,**
> **And burned is Apollo's laurel-bough,**
> **That sometimes grew within this learned man.**
> **Faustus is gone; regard his hellish fall.**
> **Whose fiendful fortune may exhort the wise.**
> **Only to wonder at unlawful things,**
> **Whose deepness doth entice such forward wits**
> **To practise more than heavenly power permits"**

Hudson has rightly said: "No finer sermon than Marlowe's Faustus ever came from the pulpit. What more fearsome exposure was ever offered of the punishment man brings upon himself by giving way to temptation of his grosser appetites."

Allegory or Personified Abstractions: -It has already been mentioned that in Morality plays the characters were allegorical—they were personified abstractions of vice or virtues. So in Doctor Faustus also we find the Good and Evil Angels, the former standing for the path of virtue and the latter for sin and damnation. Then we have the Old Man appearing in Scene I (Act V) "to guide thy steps unto the way of life."—symbolising the forces of righteousness and morality. The Seven Deadly Sins of good old Mystery and Morality plays are also very much there in a grand spectacle to cheer up the despairing soul of Faustus. And the old favourite and familiar figure of the devil is also not missing. Mephistopheles, an assistant if Lucifer, appears as servile slave of Faustus in many scenes in the guise of a Franciscan Friar symbolizing power without conscience. But Marlowe's Devil is a devil with difference, as he has been endowed with some original traits.

Comic Element: - The comic scenes of Doctor Faustus also belong to the tradition of old Miracle and Morality plays. The comic scenes with its buffoonery were not integral parts of those plays but were introduced to entertain and to raise hoars-laughter, as in the case of a realistic comic scene where Noah was shown beating his wife for refusing to enter the ark. The same is the case with almost all the five comic scenes in Doctor Faustus—especially in Scene I of the third Act where Faustus is found playing vile tricks on the Pope and the 2nd scene of Act IV where the horse-courser is totally outwitted and befooled by Faustus.

Other Elements: - In the earlier plays there is no inter-play of character. In Doctor Faustus, also there is only one towering central figure and all the action and incidents centre round him. Then, just like the earlier Miracle or Morality plays, it also suffers from looseness of construction—especially in the middle part of the play.

Conclusion: - In spite of all its links with medieval Miracles or Moralities, Doctor Faustus can never be treated wholly as a Morality play. It is the greatest heroic tragedy before Shakespeare with its enormous stress on characterization and inner conflict in the soul of a towering personality. We may conclude in the words of a critic: Doctor Faustus is both the consummation of the English Morality tradition and the last and the finest of Marlowe's heroic plays. As a Morality, it vindicates humility, faith and obedience to the law of God; as a heroic play it celebrates power, beauty, riches and knowledge, and seems a sequel to the plays of "Tamburlaine the great."

Autobiographical Note in Faustus

Introduction: A study of Marlowe's great tragedies cannot but convince us that Marlowe possessed the power in its fullest degree of projecting himself into his chief characters. The most important quality of his works is the subjective or autobiography note. Here lies the greatest difference between Shakespeare and Marlowe as dramatists. There is a complete effacement of Shakespeare's personality in his plays. We cannot say that this or that passage reveals Shakespeare's personality or mind. But Marlowe couldn't but project his personality into the chief characters of his plays – especially in his four great tragedies: Tamburlaine, Doctor Faustus, The Jew of Malta and Edward II.

Marlowe's Life and the Spirit of Renaissance: Before discussing the subjective note in his plays any further, we should have a fair idea of Marlowe's life, his career, the influence of the Renaissance on him, and his ambitions. Marlowe came of parents ' base of stock'. He was the son of a shoe maker. But he was fortunate enough to get school

education and had a chance to go to Cambridge to specialize in theology and got Doctorate in Divinity. But his abandoned his career in theology and joined the theatrical companies in London to become a dramatist. But seeing a difference between himself as poor and his companions as rich, though they were much inferior to him in intellect, Marlowe rebelled against the established norms. This was also perhaps the main cause of his rebellion against religion and its normal orders. He was much criticized and branded as the Atheist. He also possessed a dual personality. He was a dramatist and poet in London, but also had relations with the underworld. However, Marlowe was a man of the Renaissance and an embodiment of the spirit of his age. He was a saturated with the spirit of learning, exploring and experimenting with its hankering after sensual pleasure of life and with its inordinate ambition and supreme lust for power and pelf. He was profoundly influenced by Machiavelli, the famous Italian social and political writer, who discarded all conventional moral principles to achieve the end by any means, fair or foul.

Reflection of Marlowe in his tragic Heroes A close and critical study of works of Marlowe convinces us that all his tragic heroes clearly reveal the chief characteristics and temperament of the great dramatist. All his tragic heroes are absolutely dominated by some uncontrollable passion. To achieve their end, they throw overboard all established moral scruples or religious sanctions and never avoid using horrible means, for example, his cruel and tyrant Tamburlaine with his craze for limitless power defies all authorities on earth and in the heaven. His stone-heated Barabas is dominated by a senseless craze for gold and doesn't shirk from committing the worst type of crimes to achieve his end, thus he seems to be an embodiment of Machiavellism. To gain super human powers through knowledge, his Doctor Faustus sells his soul to the Devil in pursuit of his passion. His heroes have a scant regard for religion as Faustus says, " I count religion but a childish toy" another significant point is that all tragic heroes of Marlowe are poets and convey their feelings and emotions to the audience in the superb poetic language, but of all Faustus is a poet par excellence just like Marlowe himself.

Marlowe and Faustus-A Striking Parallelism: Of all the tragic heroes of Marlowe, Faustus bears the most striking reflection of Marlowe's own self. We know that Marlowe was the second child of a Canterbury shoe-maker and in the very beginning of the play, we are told of Faustus' parentage as: Now is he born, his parents base of stock. Harold Osborne has pointed out that Marlowe like Faustus came of parents 'base of stock' and was destined for the church but turned elsewhere. We should not press the analogies too far, but we cannot ignore them as the parallelism is too obvious.

Personal Tragedy: Spiritual Suffering: Doctor Faustus very powerfully expresses Marlowe's innermost thoughts and authentic experiences. So it can be regarded the spiritual history of Marlowe himself. Marlowe's inordinate ambition led him to revolt against religion and society, to defy the laws of man and laws of God and such defiance is bound to bring up acute mental conflict resulting in deep despair and certain defeat. So, both Marlowe and Faustus experience terrible mental pangs and agonies. Osborne has rightly observed:

The descriptions of Faustus' repentance, despair and mental anguish are among the most vivid and poignant parts of the play. It is, of course, possible to suppose that Marlowe had passed through a stage of youthful skepticism in religion and that with a sounder and deeper faith he had come to the knowledge of repentance.

Conclusion Doctor Faustus' tragic death also has resemblance. After living twenty four years in sensual activities, Faustus had to surrender his soul to the Devil. Marlowe's Bohemian and boisterous life, too came to a tragic sudden end in tavern brawl at the hands of a shady character of the London Underworld at the age of twenty nine. Marlowe lost himself into his works.

Doctor Faustus is strewn with unmistakably autobiographical suggestions. Reading the play we cannot refrain from concluding that it is the spontaneous expression of its writer's innermost thoughts and authentic experiences.

Doctor Faustus – a Psychological tragedy

Spiritual Combat: Tragedy is regarded as the highest aspect of the dramatic art as in it our emotions are more profoundly stirred than in comedy thereby rendering it more universal in it appeal. And conflict is the essence of or soul of tragedy. All previous dramas including Tamburlaine had dealt with single-minded individuals. If a struggle in the heart of the hero was introduced, it was like that of Morality plays.

It was external as in the Jew of Malta because it was between the hero and his adversaries. Doctor Faustus attempted something different. It is a drama of spiritual combat within the soul of man. This struggle is certainly somewhat primitive in its expression but it is a foretaste of those inner characteristics towards which a drama in its development inevitably trends. Faustus in this respect is unquestionably the greatest tragic figure in sixteenth century outside the work of Shakespeare. It is also a modern tragedy because Marlowe broke away from the old Aristotelian concept of tragic hero as being a royal figure of some very lofty stature. He introduced Faustus who is not a prince or a king but a common learned man whose parents are base of stock.

Tragic Flaw – cause of his tragedy According to Aristotle, the tragic hero must have some inherent weakness – a tragic flaw which he referred to as Hamartia. He should be neither totally vicious nor good. As per Doctor Faustus, he is puffed with pride and his wisdom. He has studied all branches of knowledge and wants to get infinite knowledge. The boundless mastery of all sciences. So, he acquires necromancy in order to gain the ultimate. He says,

> **A sound magician is a mighty god:**
> **Here, Faustus, tire thy brains to gain a deity.**

Despite all his scholarly personality and his learning, we witness how he surrenders his soul to the Devil for a span of twenty four years and instead of gaining the deity and mastering and commandeering all the elements, he stands doomed and cursed.

Internal Tragic Conflict: Marlowe's contribution to the English or Elizabethan drama was great and many fold. One of his contributions was the introduction of internal tragic conflict in the mind of the tragic hero. Nicoll has rightly observed: "All previous dramas including Tamburlaine had dealt with single-minded individuals. If a struggle in the heart of the hero was introduced, it was like that of Morality plays. In Doctor Faustus, Marlowe attempted something new – the delineation of struggle in the mind of the hero. This struggle is certainly somewhat primitive in its expression but it is a foretaste of those inner characteristics towards which a drama in its development inevitably trends. Faustus in this respect is unquestionably the greatest tragic figure in sixteenth century outside the work of Shakespeare."

So in Doctor Faustus, we find the conflict or the psychological struggle raging in the heart and soul of the hero. In fact, there's hardly any external action. The delineation of a psychological struggle or spiritual conflict in the mind of the hero is the chief thing. Then why is this struggle and to what is it due? Generally, the inner conflict takes places when man is faced with two alternatives, one of which he must have to choose, but he finds himself pulled in opposite directions. Now Faustus is inspired by the spirit of the Renaissance, by dreams of gaining limitless knowledge and super-human powers. These he can attain only by resorting to necromancy, discarding religious dogmas and abjuring the Trinity and denouncing the established religious norms. Doctor Faustus may reject all these intellectually, but he is very much emotionally attached to them. He may be acting like an atheist, but his flesh and blood is saturated with Christianity. Here the conflict starts between will and conscience externalized by the Good and Bad Angel. We can follow this conflict in the play at three stages: The First Stage: we see how pride and ambition lead Faustus into the vicious bargain with the Devil. He convinces himself that: A sound magician is a mighty god. He also says with perfect faith in Mephistopheles, "Had I as many souls as there are stars, I would give them all for Mephistopheles, By him I will great emperor of the world" Nicholas Brooke says: Faustus wants to satisfy the demands of his nature as God has made him. He wants to be the Deity. For this, he must deny Christianity as did Lucifer, but Faustus' attachment to religion is too deep to be rooted out. Throughout the play we find Faustus pricked by his conscience, we find him in tussle between will and conscience in the form of Good and Bad Angel. The Second Stage: At this stage, we see Faustus struggling hard to break away from the impeding doom and he turns to repentance.

When I behold the heavens, then I repent
And curse thee, wicked Mephistophilis,
Because thou hast depriv'd me of those joys

The two angles appear again. One advises him to return to repentance and the other tells him that he is a spirit and God will not help him now and that he will tear his body to pieces if he repents. He has to submit to the will of Lucifer and refresh his bond with him. The show of Seven Deadly Sins and the best of all the apparition of Helen temporarily soothe his damned soul. The Third and Final Scene: In the closing scene, we find the climax culminating into a horrible catastrophe. Faustus knows that he is eternally doomed; but his poignant soliloquy and appeal for redemption is pathetic and pitiable. His last minute frantic appeal, to the ever moving spheres of heaven to stand still or to the sun to rise again to make perpetual day, stirs the readers' soul and refresh in him the spirit of religious faith. Later, his soul is taken away by the devils leaving a short visual scene repeating itself in the reader's mind. The show of Seven Deadly Sins is presented to please Doctor Faustus and remove his internal conflict between the good and the bad. So the seven sins – Pride, Covetousness, Wrath, Envy, Gluttony, Sloth and Lechery. Some critics are of the view that the show is meant for comic relief for the audience. But this is hardly to accept. In fact the show is not meant for a comic relief, but is really meant for bringing back Faustus to the path to hell when he was much irritated by Mephistopheles for not telling him the right answers. In fact, the sins already abide in Doctor Faustus' soul; the show merely symbolizes or externalizes them.

Disintegration: Doctor Faustus is thus the tragedy of a man who in striving boundlessly, misdirects great gifts of mind and spirit and hence progressively loses his soul by disintegration. Progressive disintegration in Faustus brings low comedy into the

tragedy. In the last act, Faustus repents, then despairs and is about to commit suicide. But his distressed soul is comforted by the Old Man. The feeling cannot exist, however, without the support of the Old Man's presence; as soon as he goes Faustus exclaims: I do repent; and yet I do despair. Mephistopheles forces him to sign another bond to strengthen the contract.

Psychological tragedy: Thus we find that in Doctor Faustus, Marlowe reveals for the first time in English drama the full possibilities of psychological tragedy, the anguish of a mind at war with itself. The play depicts the tragedy of the human soul, and in the closing scene it achieves end with a strength and intensity as yet unknown in English drama. We conclude with the words of Una Ellis Fermor: In Marlowe's great tragic fragment the conflict is not between man and man for the domination of one character over another or in the interaction of a group of characters. Thus and in such terms is staged the greatest conflict that drama has ever undertaken to the present.

The Last Scene: Helen of Troy and the Old man in " Doctor Faustus"

Introduction: - Faustus's great final soliloquy consummates the play. The last scene of the play is the most poignant. The last scene, be it in the form of Helen's presence or the final beseeching of Doctor Faustus, makes Marlowe reach the flights imagination. We may divide last scene of the play into three parts: First the Helen Episode, Second the Old Man and the Last soliloquy of Doctor Faustus. The three parts of the play make up the whole last scene to abide in our thoughts.

The Helen Episode: - When 'music sounds' and Helen passes across the stage, her sanctity is mirrored in the awed calm of the scholars. Her "heavenly beauty passeth all compare" She is the pride of the nature's work. Here outburst the eternal words of praise for Helen from Doctor Faustus who, in the most ravishing way, loses himself in the arms of Helen to avoid his imminent doom.

Was this the face that launce'd a thousand ships,
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium? -
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.
Her lips suck forth my soul: see where it flies!
Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again,
Here will I dwell, for heaven is in these lips,
And all is dross that is not Helena.
I will be Paris, and for love of thee.
Instead of Troy , shall Wittenberg be sack'd:
And I will combat with weak Menelaus,
And wear thy colors on my plumed crest;
Yes, I will wound Achilles in the heel,
And then return to Helen for a kiss.
O, thou art fairer than the evening air,
Clad in the beauty of a thousands starts;
Brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter

Faustus's poetry for Helen shows his ultimate desperate condition and his futile effort to evade the eternal doom.

The Old man: - Doctor Faustus is 'But a man condemned to die.' Soon after the appearance of Helen, the old man approaches Doctor Faustus to reconcile him. The Old Man's compassionate advice to Faustus adds a new dimension to our senses of the human predicament.

Yet, yet, thou hast an amiable soul if sin by custom grows not into nature.

The Old Man is, rather the last man trying to pull Faustus from the snaps of death. But Faustus, as he is eternally doomed, must reach his self-imposed torments of hell.

The Last hour: - As Faustus's fascination for Helen, 'The only paragon of excellence' reveals the Renaissance characteristics of love and adoration of classical art and beauty, Helen epitomizes the charms of classical art, learning and beauty. And her shade of apparition may also be the symbol of sensual pleasures of life which is but transient, and leads to despair and damnation. If it is so, the old man represents Christian faith with its obedience to the laws of God and its needs for prayer and penitence that can assure eternal joys and bliss. Doctor Faustus knows that his end is approaching. The proud and puffed scholar of Wittenberg, who once dreamed of becoming a Jove on the earth, ironically craves to be transformed into some mean creature so as to escape his doom. And when the last hour strikes, we find the anguished cry of a terror-stricken man who is facing his damnation.

> **O, it strikes: No body turn to air,**
> **Or Lucifer will bear thee quick to hell,**
> **O, soul, be changed into little water drops.**
> **And fall into the ocean, never be found!**

Critics and scholars of one opinion that the last scene of the play is highly consummate and grim.

Doctor Faustus: Hero, Villain, or Hybrid?

Christopher Marlowe's Doctor Faustus is a complex character. Whether or not to feel pity for the misguided scholar is a debatable issue, but he does seem to possess some "evil" qualities. Some consider him a tragic hero, while others would argue he better fulfills the role of a villain. But really, who is Doctor Faustus? Taking into consideration the defining characteristics of both the tragic hero and the villain while comparing them to the doctor leads one to the conclusion that Faustus does not completely fit into either category, but rather belongs to the more specific genre of the Elizabethan villain-hero, which encompasses both his hero and villain sides.

The concept of the "tragic hero" was defined by Aristotle, and applies to many protagonists in a variety of plays. According to Aristotle's definition, in order to be classified as a tragic hero, the character must fulfill the following criteria: be born into a noble standing, possess a tragic flaw which causes his downfall, experience an unfortunate event as a result of this flaw, eventually acquire an increased sense of self-awareness, and be pitied by the audience. It is important to note that Aristotle also argued that a man cannot be considered a tragic hero without realizing the cause of his downfall (Perrine). Doctor Faustus only fulfills some of these requirements, and falls short of the most important and necessary characteristics needed in order to be classified as a tragic hero. Most importantly, Faustus seems to have too many amoral tendencies in order to be considered a hero of any sort. It seems that Marlowe kept the

distinction between Faustus as a hero and Faustus as a villain so ambiguous as a reflection on the ambiguity of morality itself. Marlowe would argue that many organized religions make morality into a very black and white concept; those that pray and attend church services are good, while those who renounce God and do not repent are bad. In actuality, even someone like Faustus, who sold his own soul to the devil, does not seem one hundred percent evil, nor fully good.

Faustus, on one hand, does possess what can be considered a tragic flaw: ambition. In Act I of Marlowe's Doctor Faustus, Faustus is contemplating his life and suggests to himself,

> **"Be a physician, Faustus. Heap up gold,**
> **And be eternized for some wondrous cure"**

. Here, the audience begins to see that Doctor Faustus has many goals and dreams in his life, and he has already achieved much success as a doctor and a scholar. It seems that Marlowe would not view ambition as a negative trait under usual circumstances. The reason why it became a problem for Faustus was because it was coupled with pride, and a frustration with worldly pursuits. Faustus became bored with mortal matters and felt he could master the realm of dark magic, which ultimately led to his deal with the devil and his own downfall. Ambition alone is not what doomed Faustus. Without his pride and overwhelming desire to go beyond the limits of what man should know, he could have been safe from an eternity in hell.

It could be argued that Faustus both experiences a reversal in fortune and that he is, as a character, pitiable. The ultimate instance in the play in which Faustus' luck takes a turn for the worst is when he first summons Mephistopheles, and subsequently signs the contract with the devil, selling his soul to Lucifer. However, the actual reversal of fortune occurs when Faustus dies and is taken to hell by Lucifer's demons, because when he first sells his soul, Faustus has no problem with what he is done and is not yet affected negatively by his choice, but when he is taken to hell he is extremely upset and panicked. As far as Faustus' pitiable nature is concerned, Marlowe left this rather ambiguous. Again, this is most likely a commentary on how morality, like Faustus, can be extremely ambiguous, and the lines between good and evil are often blurred or unclear. Additionally, the "noble birth" of Faustus is debatable. His social and economic standing is comfortable, probably above average and definitely not impoverished, but he is not of standard nobility. He has no title, and his highest degree of ranking is that he is a scholarly doctor. Most importantly, Faustus never takes full responsibility for his damnation, which Aristotle would argue is the most important quality of the tragic hero.

Doctor Faustus as a villain is a difficult argument to make. For starters, there are no set guidelines for what qualifies a character as a true "villain," like there are qualifications for the tragic hero. Villain is such a broad and vague term that it makes more sense to discuss Doctor Faustus as a subtype of a villain: the Elizabethan villain-hero. Clara F. McIntyre discusses the qualities of this villain-hero in her article for the PMLA journal. Quoting Clarence Boyer, McIntyre notes that a villain is most commonly identified as "a man who, for a selfish end, willfully and deliberately violates standards of morality sanctioned by the audience or ordinary reader" (McIntyre 874). This description fits Doctor Faustus well, but Boyer goes on to comment that if the villain is cast as the main character of the play, than he fulfills the role of the villain as a hero. Since Faustus is quite obviously the main character of Marlowe's Doctor Faustus, it is clear that he would fit into this villain-hero category. Furthermore, he clearly "violates standards of morality"

by selling his soul to the devil, an act which modern audiences still find immoral and reprehensible, feelings which were even stronger for the more religiously-influenced audiences of the Elizabethan time period. After deciding he wants to dabble in black magic, Faustus even proclaims "Divinity, adieu!" clearly turning away from God, the epitome of morality (I.i.78).

McIntyre also explains that the villain-hero is different from the standard villain in that he does not act out of "personal malignity," but rather from "an unwavering determination to further [his] own interests" (McIntyre 878). This describes Faustus extremely accurately, especially when one examines his motives for working with black magic in the first place. Faustus did not want to call upon devils in order to seek revenge, rule the world, or for assistance in any other selfish or evil plan. Ultimately, he was bored with all he had accomplished so far and wanted to learn something new, something which he originally intended to use to help other people.

When he was first contemplating what he would do with the kind of power dark magic would bestow upon him, Faustus fantasizes about what he would have his demons do:

"I'll have them fly to India for gold,
Ransack the ocean for orient pearl,
And search all corners of the new-found world
For pleasant fruits and princely delicates."

Nothing about "princely delicates" seems malignant or malicious in the slightest, proving the Faustus was seeking self-satisfaction in an albeit material, but harmless way. Faustus continues his musings, saying:

"I'll have them fill the public schools with silk,
Wherewith the students shall be bravely clad
I'll levy soldiers with the coin they bring,
And chase the Prince of Parma from out land"

Again Faustus is proving that not only were his original intentions harmless and self-indulgent (an example of "furthering his own interests"), but he also had thoughts of using this power to help other people, such as students.

One of the most interesting points McIntyre makes is that some villain-heroes are capable of genuine remorse, which often is not typical of a regular villain. McIntyre does point out that this remorse is most often on the villain-hero's deathbed, and "seems to proceed less from genuine repentance than from a sense that the game is up" (McIntyre 877). Of all the characteristics of the villain-hero previously discussed, Faustus shows the strongest evidence of this one. In the final hour of his life, Faustus realizes his fate and desperately calls out to the forces of nature and the heavens, begging for more time on earth. Faustus calls out to God, Lucifer, and everyone in between, trying to grapple with the consequences of his actions and see if there is anyone he can appeal to for salvation. He cries out:

You stars that reigned at my nativity,
Whose influence hath allotted death and hell,
Now draw up Faustus like a foggy mist
Into the entrails of yon laboring cloud,
That when you vomit forth into the air,
My limbs may issue from your smoky mouths,

So that my soul may but ascend to heaven.

Faustus expresses his desire for more time to live, for repentance, and yet he never actually repents. Perhaps he does this because he is not physically capable of repenting because of the contract he made with the devil, but more likely it is because his repentance and remorse would not be genuine. He is not actually sorry for what he has done because he still has not taken responsibility for his actions. Ultimately, he just wants to avoid suffering in hell, and only tries to call out to God during the last minutes of his life.

Although many would argue that Faustus fits the mold of the typical tragic hero, close examination of the qualities necessary for this role makes it obvious that Faustus cannot be considered a hero in any sense of the word. He never takes responsibility for his actions, he barely evokes any sense of pity out of the audience, and he gains limited self-awareness and knowledge from his experience. However, he is not a clear-cut villain either. There are no real set guidelines for what makes a character a villain, but in a general sense, Faustus is not fully evil. A more accurate term for Faustus would be a villain-hero, a character typical during the Elizabethan time period. By name alone, a villain-hero sums up Faustus' conflicting personality traits that make the audience see him as both a good man, and also an immoral fool. Neither fully bad nor fully good, Faustus straddles the fence between hero and villain, ultimately combining characteristics of the two to become the Elizabethan villain-hero.

Doctor Faustus : Tragedy of an aspiring intellect doomed to failure

Introduction: - Doctor Faustus, a unique creation of Christopher Marlowe, conveys a deep conception of tragedy. In awe inspiring and terror, the play fulfils one of the true functions of tragedy. It thrills us because there is something of the 'desire of the moth for the star' of Faustus's desire to conquer human limitation, in all of us, and we are fascinated by the audacity with which he persists in his desperate course.

Extraordinary Courage and Indomitable Will: - Doctor Faustus deals with the heroic struggle of a 'great souled' man doomed to inevitable defeat. The entire interest in a Marlovian tragedy centres round the personality of the hero, and the pleasure comes from watching the greatness and fall of a superhuman personality. And ordinary German scholar, in the beginning, Faustus's intellectual endowment raises him to the status of a great hero. He has the genuine passion for knowledge infinite. With his inordinate ambition he soars beyond the petty possibilities of humanity, leagues himself with superhuman powers and rides through space in a fiery chariot exploring the secrets of the universe.

Marlowe's Faustus aspires to be more than man and therefore repudiates his humanity and rebels against the ultimate reality. Being a true Renaissance hero, he surpasses his mortal bounds to be as powerful on earth as Jove in sky. He finds some hope only in Necromancy. He, therefore, turns to Magic and is elated by its prospects of profit, delight, power, honour, for:

All things that move between the quiet poles
Shall be at my command…………
A sound magician is a mighty God……..

Endowed with extraordinary courage and will to pursue his goal relentlessly and recklessly, without caring for good and evil, Faustus is really a tragic hero. He strives to satisfy his overriding desires, rejecting the will of God or servitude, and asserting his will both in opposition to God as well as the Devil.

Tussle between orthodoxy and quest for intellectual freedom: - Marlowe's Faustus, the tragic hero, is afire with an indomitable passion. He discards all moral codes and ethical principles and plunges headlong to achieve his end. But in rejecting Christian values, there arises in his mind a deep conflict between the pull of tradition, the Will of God, and the desire to learn more and more to taste the fruits of the forbidden tree. The heart of Faustus turns out to be the battlefield where the forces of good and evil are trying to overwhelm each other. Faustus makes his own choice to take to the black art of magic deliberately and then sells his soul to the Devil of his free will. Faustus is a modern man whose conscious self is opposed by the subconscious self which is deeply attached to the conventional doctrines and dogmas of Christian theology.

Throughout the play, Faustus staggers between doubt and faith symbolised by the warnings of the God Angel and the seductions of Bad Angel, as he moves towards his inevitable doom. He has been told by Mephistophilis the meaning of Hell, but in his blind arrogance, he refuses to really grasp the implications of his action. Indeed, before the end of the play Faustus undergoes the mental torture born out of the opposing pulls of his rational and emotional selves. To Mephistophilis, he can arrogantly assert:

Thinkest thou that Faustus is so fond to imagine
That after this life, there is any pain?
Tush! these are trifles and mere old wives' tales.

But Faustus cannot avoid the mental tortures that must follow every act of sin or crime. A guilty conscience pricks him almost from the beginning to the end of this tragic drama. Doctor Faustus is a tragedy connected with man's intellectual faculties and his rejection of voluntary subjection of them to an orthodox order of Christianity.

Tragedy: the outcome of the hero's inherent weakness and presumption: -

Marlowe's Faustus prides himself in his great learning and scholarship. He is dominated by ambition to acquire knowledge infinite and through it to gain superhuman power and satisfy his sensuous and mundane pleasures of life. His weakness is not a mechanical outcome of his pact with the Devil. The seeds of decay are in his character from the first, half hidden in the Marlovian glamour cast about him, though he has intense desire to know the truth and he comes to make his rash and fatal bargain. Furthermore, in the true Aristotelian sense, he is blind to the actual implications of his action. This is the tragedy. His sensual pleasures override all other passions and blind him to the dreadful truth. The vision of Helen conceals the vision of Absolute Truth from the eyes of Faustus. Faustus is conscious of the weakness, but he has no control over his overriding desires. 'The vision of Helen' allures him and her unrealisable beauty penetrates his spirits to the depths:

Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.

Faustus, we realize, is doomed, far from being able to reach immortality.

Tragic irony: The essence of all great tragedy, and Doctor Faustus embodies this irony poignantly: - Possessed with supernatural powers to perform great things, Faustus fails due to his uncontrollable human weakness. He sets out to gain a deity, but ends with a wish to be turned into something inanimate. He comes to understand his predicament towards the end and cries: "But Faustus's offence can never be pardoned, the serpent that tempted Eve may be saved, but not Faustus." In the last but one hour of his life, Faustus stands on the brink of everlasting ruin and damnation, waiting for the fatal moment. He realizes that the pact with the Devil has got him nothing. He had sought to control the stars once but they:

> **Move still, time runs, the clock will strike.**
> **The devil will come and Faustus must be damned…….**

The play, in its final twist, turns supremely tragic as Faustus collapses into simultaneous submission to both his bosses, Lucifer and Christ. Doctor Faustus depicts the human soul as a tragic battlefield where the hero meets with tragic failure.

Cathartic effect: the emotions of pity and fear:- In the hands of Marlowe, Faustus acquires a spiritual greatness which, in the finest moments of the play, wins him our sympathy, and at his death arouses that pity and terror which great tragedy demands. Marlowe has felt and conveyed the sense of tragedy in Faustus's aspirations and downfall. Faustus is seen as a symbol of Marlowe's times when wonders of the mind and of the world were being discovered and people's hopes of the attainable were full of ardour.

Faustus's summoning of Mephistophilis, his signing of the contract, his vision of Helen, and his final death and damnation are the outstanding scenes of the play, in which "the medley of desire and fear, the poignancy of regret, the ecstasy and the terror are depicted with sureness and strength which give them a place among the greatest emotional situations in Elizabethan tragedy." Faustus's final monologue is unsurpassed in English drama, in the expression of sheer agony and horror. As he cries with ringing despair:

> **O I'll leap up to my God, who pulls me down?**
> **See, see, where Christ's blood streams in the firmament,**
> **One drop would save my soul, half a drop, ah, my Christ…..**

The tragic emotions of pity and fear at the plight of such a great man tugs at our heart. The tragedy achieves its climatic cathartic effect in Faustus's last shriek, "Mephistophilis."

Conclusion: - Doctor Faustus is a tragedy of an aspiring intellect which seeks to pierce through to the centre of all knowledge. Such ambition is doomed to failure because of its very nature, for man is a limited being. The courage of the challenge, however, is awesome.

Atheism in Doctor Faustus

Christopher Marlowe's theological disposition is one that has been debated and particularly comes into focus in the play Doctor Faustus, where the central theme is the eternal salvation or damnation of Faustus. While it was the common thematic focus of theatre at the time, one might question why a man who was believed to be atheist would

compose a tragedy with heavy religious themes. The reason for this is most likely to critique the Christian belief systems at the time.

The initial instance in which divinity is addressed in the play is in the first scene where Faustus analyzes popular metaphysics. In his rejection of Christianity, he cites that belief in Christianity only leads to death, the result of sin. The irony of this is that he neglected to read the rest of the passage which states that God provides eternal life. Marlowe uses this moment as a hyperbole to draw attention to the Calvinistic belief of predestination. When Faustus states "Che Sera Sera," what will be shall be, he is essentially saying that there's no point in studying religion when the outcome would be determined regardless of your actions. This causes Faustus to believe that religion will cause him to die an eternal death, the logical opposite to eternal life.

The topic of the "eternal death" is also one discussed in the play through the character of Mephistopheles. Mephistopheles states in the fifth scene that he is in hell wherever he is because Hell is not a place, but rejection from the gates of Heaven. Faustus, on the other hand conceives Hell as a location. This is shown through his disbelief of Mephistopheles' statement about hell. This is also portrayed when he swears by Hell's waterways of Styx, Archeron, and Phlegethon, as described by The Divine Comedy. Faustus' represents the proverbial Everyman; he I inherently flawed. This representation applies to man's view of Hell and how it is unsound. Mephistopheles, on the other hand is a heavenly being whose understanding of the afterlife is empirical. Through this scene, Marlowe conjectures that religion is fallible, because the embodiment of Hell, one of its main components, is conceived by man, not created by God. This would mean that Christianity could not be taken seriously.

The most easily recognizable scene that enforces Marlowe's opinions regarding religion is when Faustus plays childish pranks on the pope. Aside from being an entertaining aspect for the largely protestant audience of British theatre, it provides a charge on both Catholicism and the protestant split. Marlowe utilizes the opulence of the Pope's lifestyle to satirize the fact that Catholics venerate the pope, who is no more divine in his ambitions than the next man. Faustus' pranks also serve as a comparison to the protestant church challenging the Catholic Church. The childish antics of Faustus seem to say something about Marlowe's opinions about the schism in the church.

In the end of the play, an old man urges Faustus to repent. While Faustus could still repent according to most Christian beliefs, his refusal to do so results in his eternal damnation. At this point, it appears that Faustus has the ability to repent when the old man attempts to convince him to. The reality of the matter, however, is embodied in Mephistopheles' threat to Faustus. He states that he will "arrest" Faustus' soul if he does not come with him. This means that, while it appears he has had a chance for salvation, his consorting with the devil has made repentance an impossibility.

Throughout the play, Faustus does little wrong in terms of his actions. These are petty pranks with no real negative implications. Despite this, he ends up separated from God. Marlowe uses this point as a satirical commentary of the beliefs of the protestant church. He shows how the Protestants belief that the eternal fate of an individual's soul is not dependant on the dealings that person has done in life, but solely on whether or not the person accepts that Christianity is an absolute truth.

Christopher Marlowe uses his tragedy, Doctor Faustus to contest and satirize Christianity. His commentary addresses many different denominations. The underlying remarks further reinforce the belief that Marlowe was an atheist. Multiple instances throughout the play support his views on the church and explain his motives in writing Doctor Faustus.

Othello

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE; 1564-1616

Personal History

Many books have assembled facts, reasonable suppositions, traditions, and speculations concerning the life and career of William Shakespeare. Taken as a whole, these materials give a rather comprehensive picture of England's foremost dramatic poet. Tradition and sober supposition are not necessarily false because they lack proven bases for their existence. It is important, however, that persons interested in Shakespeare should distinguish between facts and beliefs about his life.

From one point of view, modern scholars are fortunate to know as much as they do about a man of middle-class origin who left a small country town and embarked on a professional career in sixteenth-century London. From another point of view, they know surprisingly little about the writer who has continued to influence the English language and its drama and poetry for more than three hundred years. Sparse and scattered as these facts of his life are, they are sufficient to prove that a man from Stratford by the name of William Shakespeare wrote the major portion of the thirty-seven plays that scholars ascribe to him. The concise review that follows will concern itself with some of these records.

No one knows the exact date of William Shakespeare's birth. His baptism occurred on Wednesday, April 26, 1564. His father was John Shakespeare, tanner, glover, dealer in grain, and town official of Stratford; his mother, Mary, was the daughter of Robert Arden, a prosperous gentleman-farmer. The Shakespeares lived on Henley Street.

Under a bond dated November 28, 1582, William Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway entered into a marriage contract. The baptism of their eldest child, Susanna, took place in Stratford in May, 1583. One year and nine months later their twins, Hamnet and Judith, were christened in the same church. The parents named them for the poet's friends, Hamnet and Judith Sadler.

Early in 1596, William Shakespeare, in his father's name, applied to the College of Heralds for a coat of arms. Although positive proof is lacking, there is reason to believe that the Heralds granted this request, for in 1599 Shakespeare again made application for the right to quarter his coat of arms with that of his mother. Entitled to her father's coat of arms, Mary had lost this privilege when she married John Shakespeare before he held the official status of gentleman.

In May of 1597, Shakespeare purchased New Place, the outstanding residential property in Stratford at that time. Since John Shakespeare had suffered financial reverses prior to this date, William must have achieved success for himself.

Court records show that in 1601-1602, William Shakespeare began rooming in the household of Christopher Mountjoy in London. Subsequent disputes over the wedding settlement and agreement between Mountjoy and his son-in-law, Stephen Belott, led to a series of legal actions, and in 1612 the court scribe recorded Shakespeare's deposition of testimony relating to the case. In July, 1605, William Shakespeare paid four hundred and forty pounds for the lease of a large portion of the tithes on certain real estate in and near Stratford. This was an arrangement whereby Shakespeare purchased half the annual tithes, or taxes, on certain agricultural products from parcels of land in and near Stratford. In addition to receiving approximately 10 percent income on his investment, he almost doubled his capital. This was possibly the most important and successful investment of his lifetime, and it paid a steady income for many years.

Shakespeare is next mentioned when John Combe, a resident of Stratford, died on July 12, 1614. To his friend, Combe bequeathed the sum of five pounds. These records and similar ones are important, not because of their economic significance but because they

prove the existence of William Shakespeare in Stratford and in London during this period.

On March 25, 1616, William Shakespeare revised his last will and testament. He died on April 23 of the same year. His body lies within the chancel and before the altar of the Stratford church. A rather wry inscription is carved upon his tombstone:

Good Friend, for Jesus' sake, forbear
To dig the dust enclosed here;
Blest be the man that spares these bones
And curst be he who moves my bones.

The last direct descendant of William Shakespeare was his granddaughter, Elizabeth Hall, who died in 1670.

These are the most outstanding facts about Shakespeare the man, as apart from those about the dramatist and poet. Such pieces of information, scattered from 1564 through 1616, declare the existence of such a person, not as a writer or actor, but as a private citizen. It is illogical to think that anyone would or could have fabricated these details for the purpose of deceiving later generations.

Shakespeare's Work

In similar fashion, the evidence establishing William Shakespeare as the foremost playwright of his day is positive and persuasive. Robert Greene's Groatsworth of Wit, in which he attacked Shakespeare, a mere actor, for presuming to write plays in competition with Greene and his fellow playwrights, was entered in the Stationers' Register on September 20, 1592. In 1594, Shakespeare acted before Queen Elizabeth, and in 1594-1595, his name appeared as one of the shareholders of the Lord Chamberlain's Company. Francis Meres in his Palladis Tamia (1598) called Shakespeare "mellifluous and hony-tongued" and compared his comedies and tragedies with those of Plautus and Seneca in excellence.

Shakespeare's continued association with Burbage's company is equally definite. His name appears as one of the owners of the Globe (a theater) in 1599. On May 19, 1603, he and his fellow actors received a patent from James I designating them as the King's Men and making them Grooms of the Chamber. Late in 1608 or early in 1609, Shakespeare and his colleagues purchased the Blackfriars Theatre and began using it as their winter location when weather made production at the Globe inconvenient.

Other specific allusions to Shakespeare and to his acting and his writing occur in numerous places. Put together, they form irrefutable testimony that William Shakespeare of Stratford and London was the leader among Elizabethan playwrights.

One of the most impressive of all proofs of Shakespeare's authorship of his plays is the First Folio of 1623, with the dedicatory verse that appeared in it. John Heminge and Henry Condell, members of Shakespeare's own company, stated that they collected and issued the plays as a memorial to their fellow actor. Many contemporary poets contributed eulogies to Shakespeare; one of the best known of these poems is by Ben Jonson, a fellow actor and, later, a friendly rival. Jonson also criticized Shakespeare's dramatic work in Timber: or, Discoveries (1641).

Certainly there are many things about Shakespeare's genius and career that the most diligent scholars do not know and cannot explain, but the facts that do exist are sufficient to establish Shakespeare's identity as a man and his authorship of the thirty-seven plays that reputable critics acknowledge to be his.

Shakespearean Tragedy

Nature and Definition: Tragedy is a very difficult concept to define. Despite what modern critics have labored on the subject, Aristotle's definition of tragedy in his Poetics, still remains the best and comprehensive with some minor difference in the 21st century. Tragedy is a representation of an action which is serious, complete in itself, and of a certain magnitude; it is expressed in speech made beautiful in different ways in different parts of the play; it is acted, not narrated and by exciting pity and fear gives a healthy relief to such emotions.

However, A.C. Bradley most perceptively comments the Shakespearean Tragedy: A tale of suffering and calamity conducing to death. Although this remark captures what is common to Shakespearean Tragedies. It must be noted that ever Shakespearean Tragedy in unique in its way. There are very few observations which one may make about one of them which are applicable to others.

The Tragic Hero: Shakespeare's tragedies are built of a single man who towers above the other characters. So Shakespeare's major tragedies such as Hamlet, Othello, King Lear and Macbeth are all tragedies of character. The central character, for the most part, may be regarded as a double entity. Shakespeare's tragic heroes have many qualities in common. One of the qualities are their intense concern for someone, some thing or some aspect of life. In the case of Othello, we find the character to be deeply concerned about Desdemona. It is doubtful whether Shakespeare knew Poetics; all his heroes except the possible exception of Macbeth are good. His tragic heroes are of an extremely sensitive and poetic nature. Hamlet being the most intellectual and Othello being the most poetic and romantic of them. They also belong to the higher order of society. The lowest in rank is Othello who is at least general whose progeny may be traced to kings. Still he is no common man. In every one of Shakespeare's tragedies, the hero is either faced with making a moral choice of grave consequences or initiating some action which has far-reaching consequences.

The Tragic Flaw: Shakespeare's tragedy is above all a tragedy of character, though environment, coincidences and chance play their parts. However, it is some flaw in the tragic hero which causes his tragedy. The example being Othello whose tragic flaw is jealousy. The tragic flaw is not always a shortcoming in itself. It is only in the particular situation in which the hero is placed that the particular quality of the hero becomes damaging to him. For example, Hamlet's habit of carefully weighing the pros and cons of everything before taking action would have proved an asset to Othello, while precipitateness of action would have cut-short Hamlet's agonies.

The Role of Chance and Fate: Chance and fate, the latter sometimes in the form of supernatural, also play their part in Shakespearean tragedies. However, they are never the starting point of tragedies, but are led into when the story has taken a definite course. The incident of handkerchief in Othello is an example of pure chance which is exploited by the villain, but this chance crops up when the seeds of jealousy in Othello's mind have become strong trees

Theme and Action: Shakespearean tragedies have well-defined themes which are also capable of being expressed in moral terms. For example, the theme of King Lear is regeneration while that of Othello is one of making a choice. His stories involve themes such as murder, madness, duels etc. Shakespeare doesn't conform to the classical view of tragedy which insisted on the purity of genres and the unities of time and space. For Shakespeare, the prime unity is the tragic effect created by a strong sense of inevitability.

Characterization: Shakespearean tragic hero is the only and the one in the play; however, there is at least one character near him which is also highlighted. In his tragedies, male characters have a dominant role and female characters, although unforgettable, usually play little action. Shakespeare also uses double plots and comic scenes for comic relief.

Tragic Effect: Even without knowing the Poetics, Shakespeare is able to arouse strong pity and fear in the minds of his readers and theatre viewers. In Shakespearean tragedies, only these emotions are not aroused; but according to A.C. Bradley, the characteristic emotion aroused by Shakespeare’s tragedies is a profound sense of waste. This is derived from the idea of human worth and dignity which the plays express and the missed opportunities or wrong choices which lead to man’s defeat without affecting his essential dignity. Shakespearean tragedies embody a sense of profound suffering and sadness and some of them end in a number of deaths which enhance Shakespeare’s intended tragic effect. For example, Hamlet and King Lear end in so many deaths that the stage is littered with dead bodies in the last scene.

Passion versus Reason: The predominantly tragic conflict in the minds of Shakespearean heroes is between passion and conflict. The opposition between reason and passion, first isolated – through Othello and Iago - in a dramatic conflict of personalities and then projected in Macbeth and Lear, beyond the original hero to the state and universe which surround him in an eternal fight between good and evil.

Shakespeare’s Personal Views: Many books have been written on subjects such as ‘Shakespeare’s Religion’, but there’s nothing definitely coming from his own plays. On the whole, Shakespeare is the most impersonal writer. That’s perhaps what makes him the greatest writer in the world. Shakespeare was greatly religious and compassionate; but we don’t know his brand of Christianity. It is, however, very difficult to get insight into Shakespeare.

Othello : Background

The plot of Shakespeare's Othello is largely taken from Giraldi Cinthio's Gli Hecatommithi, a tale of love, jealousy, and betrayal; however, the characters, themes, and attitudes of the works are vastly different, with Shakespeare's play being a more involved study of human nature and psychology. There are, however, a few deviations from Shakespeare's source, one of which being the motivations of the Iago figure. Cithio's Iago was driven to revenge when Desdemona refused to have an affair with him; Iago's motivations are not nearly so plain in Shakespeare's version.

Othello also touches upon a major issue in Europe of this time period; the intermingling of Muslim religion and culture with the West. Written just a century after the Muslims were driven out of Spain as a part of the Reconquista, there are obvious threads of hostility within the play about Othello's Moorish origins, and his differences in religion and culture. The hostility between the West and the East is also shown in the conflict between Venice and the Turks; the Christian Venetians want to protect Christendom from the influence of the Muslim Turks, and ironically, Moorish Othello is the one sent to complete this mission.

Othello is considered to be a prime example of Aristotelian drama; it focuses upon a very small cast of characters, one of the smallest used in Shakespeare, has few distractions from the main plot arc, and concentrates on just a few themes, like jealousy. AS such, it is one of the most intense and focused plays Shakespeare wrote, and has also enjoyed a great amount of popularity from the Jacobean period to the present day.

The character of Iago is a variation on the Vice figure found in earlier morality plays; he deviates from this model because of his lack of a clear motivation, and because of his portrayal as a very malignant figure. However, Iago is less of a character than a changeable device for the plot, and in this sense, he is a clear descendant of the omnipresent "vice" figure. Iago's great cunning, manipulative abilities, and almost supernatural perception mean that he is a very formidable foe, and this makes Othello's fall seem even more inevitable and tragic.

One reason for the overwhelming popularity of the play throughout the ages is that it focuses on two people who defied society in order to follow their own hearts. Shakespeare scholar Walter Cohen cites the popularity of Othello during times of great rebellion and upheaval; the play was most popular during the European wars of the mid-19th century, the fall of Czarist Russia, and also during World War II in America. These productions tended to emphasize the nobility and love of Othello and Desdemona, and made their fall seem more tragic and ill-deserved.

Othello : Summary

Act I:

Othello begins in the city of Venice, at night; Roderigo is having a discussion with Iago, who is bitter as being passed up as Othello's lieutenant in favor of the Venetian gentleman Cassio. Iago says that he only serves Othello to further himself; he is playing false, and admits that his nature is not at all what it seems. Iago is aware that Desdemona, the daughter of Brabantio, a Venetian nobleman of some stature, has run off with Othello, the black warrior of the Moors. Brabantio and many others know nothing of this coupling; Iago decides to enlist Roderigo, who lusts after Desdemona, and awaken Brabantio with screams that his daughter is gone.

Roderigo is the one speaking most to Brabantio, but Iago is there too, hidden, yelling unsavory things about Othello and his intentions toward Desdemona. Brabantio panics, and calls for people to try and find his daughter; Iago leaves, not wanting anyone to find out that he betrayed his own leader, and Brabantio begins to search for her.

Iago joins Othello, and tells him about Roderigo's betrayal of the news of his marriage to Brabantio. Cassio comes at last, as do Roderigo and Brabantio; Brabantio is very angry, swearing that Othello must have bewitched his daughter, and that the state will not decide for him in this case. Othello says that the Duke must hear him, and decide in his favor, or else all is far from right in Venice.

Brabantio and Othello address the assembled Venetian leaders, who are discussing this military matter, and Brabantio announces his grievance against Othello for marrying his daughter. Othello addresses the company, admitting that he did marry Desdemona, but wooed her with stories, and did her no wrongs. Desdemona comes to speak, and she confirms Othello's words; Brabantio's grievance is denied, and Desdemona will indeed stay with Othello. However, Othello is called away to Cyprus, to help with the conflict there. Othello and Desdemona win their appeal to remain together, and Desdemona is to stay with Iago, until she can come to Cyprus and meet Othello there.

Roderigo is upset that Desdemona and Othello's union was allowed to stand, since he lusts after Desdemona. But Iago assures him that the match will not last long, and at any time, Desdemona could come rushing to him. Iago wants to break up the couple, using Roderigo as his pawn, out of malice and his wicked ability to do so.

Act II:

A terrible storm has struck Cyprus, just as the Turks were about to approach; this bodes badly for Othello's ship. A messenger enters, and confirms that the Turkish fleet was broken apart by the storm, and that Cassio has arrived, though Othello is still at sea. They spot a ship coming forth; Iago, Desdemona, and Emilia are on it. Somehow, Iago and Desdemona enter into an argument about what women are, and Iago shows how little praise he believes women deserve. Othello arrives at last, and is very glad to see his wife arrived, much earlier than expected. Iago speaks to Roderigo, convincing him that Desdemona will stray from Othello, as she has already done with Cassio. He convinces Roderigo to attack Cassio that night, as he plans to visit mischief on both Othello and Cassio.

Iago and Cassio are on the watch together; Iago gets Cassio to drink a bit, knowing that he cannot hold his liquor at all. Iago also tries to make Desdemona seem tempting to Cassio; but Cassio's intentions are innocent and friendly, so this approach fails. Iago says that he intends to get Cassio drunk, which will hopefully cause a quarrel between Cassio and Roderigo, who has been stirred up against Cassio. Iago wants to see Cassio discredited through this, so that he might take Cassio's place. Montano and others come, and Iago entertains them with small talk and song. Cassio fights offstage with Roderigo, and comes forth, chasing him; Montano tries to hinder Cassio, but Cassio just ends up injuring him. All the noise wakes Othello, who comes down to figure out what has happened. Montano tells what he knows of it all, and Iago fills in the rest making sure to fictionalize his part in it all too.

Cassio laments that he has lost his reputation along with his rank, which is very dear to him. Iago tries to convince him that a reputation means little; and, if he talks to Desdemona, maybe he can get her to vouch for him with Othello. Iago then gives a soliloquy about knowing that Desdemona will speak for Cassio, and that he will be able to turn that against them both.

Act III:

Iago enters, and Cassio tells him that he means to speak to Desdemona, so that she may clear things up with Othello. Emilia comes out, and bids Cassio to come in and speak with Desdemona about his tarnished reputation. Desdemona believes Cassio is a good person, and has been wronged in this case; she pledges to do everything she can to persuade her husband to take Cassio back. Cassio leaves just as Othello enters because he does not wish for a confrontation. Iago seizes on this opportunity to play on Othello's insecurities, and make Cassio's exit seem guilty and incriminating. Desdemona expresses her concern for Cassio; she is persistent in his suit, which Othello is not too pleased about.

Iago then gets Othello to believe, through insinuation, that there is something going on between Desdemona and Cassio. Othello seizes on this, and then Iago works at building up his suspicions. Soon, Othello begins to doubt his wife, as Iago lets his insinuations gain the force of an accusation against her. Desdemona enters, and they have a brief conversation; Othello admits that he is troubled, though he will not state the cause.

Desdemona drops the handkerchief that Othello gave her on their honeymoon; Emilia knew that her husband had wanted it for something, so she doesn't feel too guilty about taking it. Emilia gives it to Iago, who decides to use the handkerchief for his own devices. Othello re-enters, and tells Iago that he now doubts his wife; Othello demands "ocular proof" of Desdemona's dishonesty, so Iago sets about making stories up about Cassio talking in his sleep, and says that Cassio has the handkerchief that Othello gave to Desdemona. Iago knows how important this handkerchief is to Othello; it was his first gift to Desdemona, and was given to him by his mother. Othello is incensed to hear that Desdemona would give away something so valuable, and is persuaded by Iago's insinuations and claims to believe that Desdemona is guilty. Othello then swears to have Cassio dead, and to be revenged upon Desdemona for the non-existent affair.

Desdemona is looking everywhere for the handkerchief, very sorry to have lost it. Othello enters, and asks for Desdemona's handkerchief; she admits that she does not have it, and then Othello tells her of its significance and alleged magical powers. Desdemona interrupts Othello's inquiry by bringing up Cassio's attempt to get back into Othello's favor; Othello becomes angry, and storms out. Desdemona and Emilia both note that Othello is much changed; he is unkind and seems jealous, and they are suspicious of the change in him.

Cassio then enters, with Iago; he laments that his suit is not successful, and that Othello does not seem likely to take him back. Desdemona tells Cassio and Iago that Othello has

been acting strange, and is upset, and Iago goes to look for him, feigning concern. Emilia thinks that Othello's change has something to do with Desdemona, or Othello's jealous nature; they still cannot fathom what has happened, and exit, leaving Cassio. Bianca comes in, and Cassio asks her to copy the handkerchief that he found in his room; it is Desdemona's handkerchief, though Cassio has no idea. He claims he does not love her, and gets angry at her for allegedly suspecting that the handkerchief is a gift of another woman. But, Bianca is not disturbed, and leaves with the handkerchief.

Act IV:

Othello is trying, even after swearing that Desdemona was unfaithful, not to condemn her too harshly. He is talking with Iago about the handkerchief still, and its significance in being found; but, soon, Iago whips Othello into an even greater fury through mere insinuation, and Othello takes the bait. Othello falls into a trance of rage, and Iago decides to hammer home his false ideas about his wife. Iago calls Cassio in, while Othello hides; Iago speaks to Cassio of Bianca, but Othello, in his disturbed state, believes that Cassio is talking of Desdemona, which is the last "proof" he needs before declaring his wife guilty.

Now, Othello is resolved to kill Desdemona himself, and charges Iago with murdering Cassio. Lodovico, a noble Venetian whom Desdemona knows, has recently landed; Desdemona and Othello welcome him there. But, when Desdemona mentions Cassio, Othello becomes very angry and slaps her in front of everyone; she rushes off, very upset. Ludovico especially is shocked at this change in Othello, and has no idea how such a noble man could act so cruelly.

Othello questions Emilia about Desdemona's guilt, or the chance she has had an affair with Cassio. Emilia swears that she has seen and heard all that has gone on between Cassio and Desdemona, and that Desdemona is pure and true. Othello believes that Emilia is in on all this too; he accuses Desdemona, and her insistence that she is innocent only infuriates him further. Emilia thinks that someone has manipulated Othello into accusing Desdemona, and has poisoned his mind; however, Iago is there to dispel this opinion. Upon leaving the women, Iago comes across Roderigo; he is not pleased with how Iago has failed to deliver on his promises regarding Desdemona. Iago quiets him by making him believe that if he kills Cassio, then he will win Desdemona; Roderigo decides to go along with it, but Iago is coming dangerously close to being revealed.

Othello tells Desdemona to go to bed, and dismiss Emilia; Emilia regrets Desdemona's marriage, although Desdemona cannot say that she does not love Othello. Desdemona knows that she will die soon; she sings a song of sadness and resignation, and decides to give herself to her fate. Desdemona asks Emilia whether she would commit adultery to win her husband the world. Emilia, the more practical one, thinks that it is not too big a price for a small act; Desdemona is too good, and too devout, to say that she would do so.

Act V:

Iago has Roderigo poised and ready to pounce on Cassio, and kill him; if either of them is killed, it is to Iago's benefit, so that his devices might not be discovered. Roderigo and Cassio fight, and both are injured badly. Iago enters, pretending that he knows nothing of the scuffle; Gratiano and Lodovico also stumble upon the scene, having no idea what has happened. Roderigo is still alive, so Iago feigns a quarrel, and finishes him off. Bianca comes by, and sees Cassio wounded; Iago makes some remark to implicate her; Cassio is carried away, and Roderigo is already dead.

Othello enters Desdemona's room while she is asleep; and though she is beautiful, and appears innocent, he still is determined to kill her. Desdemona awakens, believes there is nothing she can do to stop him from killing her, and continues to assert her innocence.

Othello tells her that he found her handkerchief with Cassio, though Desdemona insists it must not be true; she pleads with Othello not to kill her right then, but he begins to smother her. Emilia knocks, curious about what is going on; Othello lets her in, but tries to conceal Desdemona, who he thinks is already dead. Emilia brings the news of Roderigo's death, and Cassio's wounding.

Emilia soon finds out that Desdemona is nearly dead, by Othello's hand; Desdemona speaks her last words, and then Emilia pounces on Othello for committing this horrible crime. Othello is not convinced of his folly until Iago confesses his part, and Cassio speaks of the use of the handkerchief; then, Othello is overcome with grief. Iago stabs Emilia for telling all about his plots, and then Emilia dies; the Venetian nobles reveal that Brabantio, Desdemona's father, is dead, and so cannot be grieved by this tragedy now. Othello stabs Iago when he is brought back in; Othello then tells all present to remember him how he is, and kills himself. Cassio becomes temporary leader of the troops at Cyprus, and Lodovico and Gratiano are supposed to carry the news of the tragedy back to Venice.

Battle of Good vs. Evil in Othello

Shakespeare presented the classic battle between the deceitful forces of evil and the innocence of good in Othello. The forces of evil ultimately lead to the breakdown of Othello, a noble Venetian moor, well-known by the people of Venice as an honourable soldier and a worthy leader. His breakdown results in the murder of his wife Desdemona who is representative of the good in nature.

The evil contained within the play is represented by the character of Iago who is cunning, untrustworthy, selfish, and plotting. He uses these traits to his advantage by slowly planning his own triumph while watching the demise of others. It is not only his own nature of evil that he succeeds but also the weaknesses of the other characters. He uses the weaknesses of Othello, specifically jealousy and his devotion to things as they seem, to conquer his opposite in Desdemona. From the start of the play, Iago's scheming ability is shown when he convinces Roderigo to tell about Othello and Desdemona’s elopement to Desdemona's father, Brabantio. Confidentially Iago continues his plot successfully, making fools of others, and himself being rewarded. Except Roderigo, no one is aware of Iago's plans. This is because Iago pretends to be an honest man loyal to his superiors.

The fact that Othello himself views Iago as trustworthy and honest gives the evil within Iago a perfect unsuspecting victim for his schemes. The opportunity to get to Desdemona through Othello is one temptation that Iago cannot refuse. He creates the impression that Desdemona is having an affair with Cassio in order to stir the jealousy within Othello. It is this jealousy and the ignorance of Othello that lead to the downfall of Desdemona; the one truly good natured character in the play.

Iago has been appointed the position of servant to Othello instead of the more prestigious position of lieutenant. Michael Cassio has been appointed this position. Iago feels betrayed because he considers himself more qualified than Cassio to serve as lieutenant. Iago then foreshadows his plans for Othello to Roderigo,

> **“O, sir, content you;**
> **I follow him to serve my turn upon him"**

Iago already realizes that Othello thinks about him as an honest man. Roderigo is used by Iago as an apprentice and someone to do his “dirty” work. Roderigo is naively unsuspecting. As the play shifts from Venice to Cyprus there is an interesting contrast. Venice, a respectful and honourable town is overshadowed by the war torn villages of Cyprus. It could be said that Venice represents good or specifically Desdemona and that Cyprus represents evil in Iago. Desdemona has been taken from her peacefulness and brought onto the grounds of evil. Iago commits his largest acts of deceit in Cyprus,

fittingly considering the atmosphere. Ironically, the Venetians feel the Turks are their only enemy while in fact Iago is in hindsight the one man who destroys their stable state. Act II Scene III shows Iago's willing ability to manipulate characters in the play. Iago convinces Montano to inform Othello of Cassio's weakness for alcohol hoping this would rouse dissatisfaction by Othello. Iago when forced to tell the truth against another character does so very suspiciously. He pretends not to offend Cassio when telling Othello of the fight Cassio was involved in, but Iago secretly wants the worst to become of Cassio's situation without seeming responsible. Cassio is relieved of his duty as lieutenant. With Cassio no longer in the position of lieutenant, this gives Iago the opportunity to more effectively interact with and manipulate Othello. By controlling Othello, Iago would essentially control Desdemona.

To reach Desdemona directly is unforeseeable for Iago considering that Othello is superior to him. It is for this reason that Iago decides to exploit Othello. If Iago can turn Othello against his own wife he will have defeated his opposition. Act III Scene III, is very important because it is the point in the play where Iago begins to establish his manipulation of Othello. Cassio feels that it is necessary to seek the help of Desdemona in order to regain his position of lieutenant and therefore meets with her to discuss this possibility. Iago and Othello enter the scene just after Cassio leaves, and Iago wistfully tries to make it look like Cassio left because he does not want to be seen in the courtship of Desdemona. Iago sarcastically remarks:

> **"Cassio, my lord! No, sure, I cannot think it**
> **That he would steal away so guilty-like,**
> **Seeing your coming."**

When Desdemona leaves, Iago takes the opportunity to strengthen Othello's views of honesty and trust towards him by saying ironically,

> **"Men should be what they seem;**
> **Or those that be not, would they might seem none!"**

This cleverness by Iago works upon one of the **tragic flaws** of Othello. **Othello has a tendency to take everything he sees and everything he is told at face value without questioning the circumstances.** Iago wonders why someone would pretend to be something they are not, while in fact that is the exact thing he represents. Finally, after hearing the exploits of Iago and witnessing the events surrounding Cassio, Othello for the first time is in conflict about what is the truth. This is the first stage of Iago's scheme to control Othello. As Emilia becomes suspicious about Othello's development of jealousy, Desdemona defends her husband by blaming herself for any harm done. This once again shows Desdemona's compassion and willingness to sacrifice herself for her husband. Othello begins to show his difficulty in maintaining his composure:

> **"Well, my good lady.**
> **[Aside] O, hardness to dissemble --**
> **How do you, Desdemona?**

Act IV, Scene I is a continuation of the anxiety and indifference Othello is undergoing. Iago takes advantage of this by being blunt with Othello about his wife Desdemona. Iago suggests that she is having sexual relations with other men, possibly Cassio, and continues on as if nothing has happened. This suggestion put Othello into a state of such emotional turmoil that he is lost in a trance. Iago's control over Othello is so strong now that he convinces him to consider getting rid of Desdemona and even suggests methods of killing her. Iago, so proud of his accomplishments of underhandedness:

> **"Work on.**
> **My medicine work! Thus credulous fools are caught;**
> **And many worthy and chaste dames even thus,**
> **All guiltless, meet reproach."**

As a result of Desdemona's mention of Cassio, Othello commits his first act of violence against Desdemona by hitting her. This shows now Othello's other tragic flaw. He made himself susceptible to Iago and the jealousy within him begins to lead to the demise of others. By his actions Othello has isolated himself from everyone except Iago. This gives Iago the perfect opportunity to complete his course of action. Iago does not tolerate any interference in his plans, and he first murders Roderigo before he can dispel the evil that Iago represents. Finally, Othello is so full of the lies told to him by Iago that he murders his wife. Desdemona, representative of goodness and heaven as a whole blames her death on herself and not Othello. Iago's wife, Emilia, becomes the ultimate undoing of Iago. After revealing Iago's plot to Othello, Iago kills her. This is yet another vicious act to show the true evil Iago represents. Othello finally realizes after being fooled into murder:

> **"I look down towards his feet; but that's a fable**
> **If that thou best a devil, I cannot kill thee."**

Iago says: **"I bleed, sir, but not killed,"**

This is the final statement by Iago himself that truly shows his belief in evil and that he truly thinks he is the devil. That is the destruction of all that is good. Hell over heaven and black over white.

Iago has one major motivational factor that leads him to lie, cheat, and commit crimes on other characters. This motivation is the destruction of all that is good and the rise of evil. This contrast is represented between Iago and Desdemona. Desdemona is described frequently by other characters as "she is divine, the grace of heaven", while Iago in contrast is described as hellish after his plot is uncovered. Iago uses the other characters in the play to work specifically towards his goal. In this way, he can maintain his supposed unknowingness about the events going on and still work his scheming ways. Iago's schemes however at times seem to work unrealistically well which may or may not be a case of witchcraft or magic. Iago's major mistake, ironically, is that he trusted his wife Emilia and found that she was not as trustworthy as he thought. Although not completely victorious at the conclusion of the play, Iago does successfully eliminate the one character representative of heaven, innocence, and honesty. Finally, everything Iago pretended to be led to his demise: Honesty, Innocence, and Love.

Othello as a Tragedy of evil : Evil in Iago

In Othello, **evil** it is **personified** in one character who wears the mask of seeming virtue. In the character of Iago, we see evil as deception and as a direct challenge to the order and harmony of the universe. Iago's superficial brilliance and self-control is the 'reason' for renaissance skepticism which in Shakespeare's day was challenging the great vision of harmony and order.

Despite his hypocrisy, **Iago** reveals himself to the reader as an **active force of evil** right from the first scene of the play. It is Roderigo alone who is given the insight into Iago; but he is foolish and doesn't understand the implications of Iago's plans. Iago stands for **social disintegration**. He is not one of the servants who get paid by their masters for their service and are loyal to them. He is the wicked one whose loyalty is a mask.

The supreme **egotism of Iago** is a manifestation of the code of 'reason' by which he lives. True human reason in terms of Renaissance Christian humanism was a reflection of the supreme wisdom of God and it consisted in submitting one's will to the purposes of Go. **Iago's reason is the sin of pride**, for it **denies the supremacy** of God and sees man as the sole author of his destiny, able to control himself and others by the power of his mind. It is expressed in his speech to Roderigo which begins the words **"Virtue! A fig! 'tis in ourselves that we are thus or thus."** In denying the purposes of the power of God, Iago strikes at the very roots of Christian Humanism. He has a lust

for the blood and a permission of the will. He is conceited and excessively proud of his intelligence and wisdom which ultimately cause the fall of his personality.

Iago's **betrayal** of **himself** is quite expected and possible despite Bradley's wonder that how his supreme intellect should finally betray him into such colossal errors as his misjudging the relationship between Othello and Desdemona and the character of his own wife, Emilia. But it is in the very nature of Iago's intellect that he should be so. He sees that Desdemona's love for the Moor was only animal lust and nothing else. He can perceive only the outward appearance of Othello; he can't see the qualities for which Desdemona married him; and thus their relationship seems only a product of lust which lust must destroy. Out of Iago's failure of perception will come his own destruction, but his failure is inherent in the very 'reason' by which he lives.

The **audience** doesn't have the same **views about Iago** as the other characters in the play do. The audience knows him to be a Semi-devil, the very incarnation of Devil and the negation of moral values. To the audience, he is devil; but to Othello, he is 'Honest Iago.' Honest is very much like that of Claudius in Hamlet. He stands for false appearance and it is fitting that Shakespeare should give the celebrated lines:

> **Who steals my purse steals trash**
> **But he that filches from me my good name**
> **Robs me of that which not enriches him**
> **And makes me poor indeed.**

Such a concern for reputation is a manifestation of pride

Iago personifies evil in the guise of good whereas in **Othello** himself, we have **a depiction of true virtue** which seems to be wearing many of the signs of evil. As in Cinthio's story, Othello's wedding with Desdemona was unnatural. Cinthio doesn't mention the blackness of the Moor, mentioning it only once in the story. In the Renaissance, the color black was a symbol of lechery. It was so commonly used in the books that it was also the color of the devil whose redness is a fairly recent innovation. To Shakespeare's audience, Othello would have all the outward appearance of the blacker devil which Amelia calls him. His marriage to Desdemona would appear as aberration in nature. Iago awakens Brabantio with a description of the marriage in these terms, punctuated by images of brute sexuality - comparing Othello to a black ram that is going to take advantage of Brabantio's white ewe.

Finally, the **unnaturalness** and **Appearance** plays a vital role in the paly. The first two acts of the play these themes, the evil of the unnatural marriage and that of Iago's mask of seeming virtue. Othello has the blackness of Satan, Iago the whiteness of truth and virtue. True virtue bears the mark of evil and evil is marked with the semblance of honesty. Shakespeare assures the audience that of the falsity of these outward sign, that Iago is seemingly honest and that Othello, despite his appearance, is a man of true nobility whom Desdemona can love for his 'honours and his valiant parts'. We see his dignity before the consul where he denies the very lechery which his outward color represents. Shakespeare's deliberate reversal of normal appearance is so shocking that the audience must be left till incredulous, with an uncertain fear that appearance be still be truth. This fear is supported by Brabantio's warning:

> **Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see**
> **She has deceived her father, and may thee**

Upon this seeming violation of nature, Iago will work his temptation of Othello and under Iago's influence; Othello will see Desdemona exactly Brabantio has seen her. So we can conclude that the play is filled with the combat between good and evil and the heinous acts of evil to dominate the good are exposed beautifully by master dramatist William Shakespeare.

Othello: Shakespeare's Aristotelian Tragedy

Aristotle described a tragedy as "an imitation of an action of high importance, complete and of some amplitude: in language enhanced by distinct and varying beauties…by means of pity and fear effecting its purgation of these emotions". William Shakespeare's famous play Othello is concerns the downfall of a Moorish general having the elements of jealousy, suspense, intrigue, murder, and suicide to create a magnificent tragedy of the highest Aristotelian order. Aristotle prescribed three main ingredients for a tragic drama recipe: **hamartia**, or a **tragic flaw** in the **tragic hero's character** that brings about his downfall; **catharsis**, or a **purgation** of the audience's emotions so that they feel that they have learned something from the play; and anagnorisis, or the character's revelation of some fact not previously realized.

Shakespeare's protagonist Othello fulfills all of Aristotle's requirements for **a tragic hero**, as Othello is a character of noble status who falls from that position of power to one of shame because of his hamartia. Moreover the **plot** of Othello contains a powerful **catharsis** through its **climax** and conclusion, and an anagnorisis when Othello realizes that Iago and Desdemona are not who they seemed to be.

First of all, the Moorish general Othello, fits Aristotle's definition of a tragic hero. Aristotle states that a tragic hero must have three dominant qualities: he must be a **person of high estate**, he must **fall from that position into unhappiness**, and his downfall must be **brought about by his hamartia**, or his **tragic flaw** . Othello is not only a successful general in the Venetian army but is also well respected, admired, and well liked. Since Othello enjoys a position of power and happiness at the beginning of the play, this status makes his **downfall** from beloved general to despised murderer infinitely more tragic and moving.

According to Aristotle, however, the tragic hero's collapse cannot be a simple deterioration from success to misery. The most distinctive feature of the Aristotelian tragic hero is **hamartia**; his downfall must be brought about by a character flaw or flaw in judgment that leads to his destruction. Hamartia is more than a moral weakness; it is a crucial mistake on the part of the tragic hero that causes him to plunge from greatness to grief. Othello's mistake as a tragic hero is that he **believes Iago's treacherous lies about Desdemona's unfaithfulness**. Instead of investigating the matter further, he rashly jumps to the worst conclusions about his wife and believes every lie that Iago whispers into his ear.

Iago recognizes that he can use these weaknesses of Othello's to hasten his downfall. Therefore Othello fits Aristotle's description of a tragic hero who has descended from high estate to destruction because of his **hamartia**.

A true Aristotelian tragedy also contains what the Greeks called a **catharsis**, or a **purgation** that leaves the audience feeling justified and uplifted. In a tragedy like Othello, where almost all of the characters wind up dead, the audience is certainly not expected to feel happy or cheerful about the play's conclusion, but they do feel a sort of justification at the lessons learned by the play's characters and satisfaction in the villain's punishment. Aristotle said, "The tragic pleasure is that of pity and fear, and the poet has to produce it by a work of imitation". The drama must arouse feelings of pity and fear in the audience and then expunge those feelings through a satisfactory conclusion. In Othello, Shakespeare certainly moves the audience to feel pity for Othello, for Desdemona, for Cassio, and even for Iago. They also fear for the fate of the happy couple, and realize their worst fears when Othello smothers his innocent wife in a jealous rage. Once more the audience pities Othello when he recognizes afterwards that Desdemona is innocent and stabs himself in remorse. Even though the play does not end "happily ever after," the deaths of the unhappy couple and the punishment of the villain Iago bring a sort of closure to the drama.

The **ultimate purpose of catharsis in a tragedy** is to purify our feelings, refining them into something more ennobling. The audience certainly feels as though they have

learned something important and witnessed an epic drama that has affected them morally and spiritually. This is the purpose of tragedy – to dramatize the weaknesses, despair, and failings of the human spirit and to demonstrate how to better ourselves through this experience. Through this emotionally charged plot filled with intrigue and conflict, Shakespeare has certainly met all of Aristotle's requirements for catharsis.

The **last element of Aristotelian tragedy** found in Shakespeare's Othello is **anagnorisis**, a fact that was previously unknown to the tragic hero. Aristotle's literal Greek definition of **anagnorisis consists of two parts**; "The first part of the definition characterizes **recognition as a change from ignorance into knowledge, leading either to friendship or enmity**". Shakespeare brings out this particular feature of anagnorisis towards the end of the play when Othello realizes that his **trusted friend Iago has trapped him in a web of lies and has deceived him into thinking Desdemona is unfaithful**. Iago's wife Emilia cries out before she dies,

> **"Moor, she was chaste. She loved thee, cruel Moor.**
> **So come my soul to bliss as I speak true" (5.2.258-259)**

and suddenly Othello understands that it is Iago who has misled him, not Desdemona. This anagnorisis causes Othello to cry,

> **"Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!**
> **O Desdemona! Dead, Desdemona! Dead! O! O!" (5.2.289-290),**

to stab and wound the villain Iago, and then to kill himself in remorse.

The **second aspect of the Greek word anagnorisis** is its more superficial, general connotation. Anagnorisis usually involves revelation of the true identity of persons previously unknown, as when a father recognizes a stranger as his son, or vice versa". It is the simple epiphany experienced by the tragic hero as he realizes something significant, like the fact that he has killed the woman he loves for no reason.

This **moment of revelation** for Othello is the **climax** of Shakespeare's play as everything comes together before the tragic hero's eyes and the full extent of Iago's treachery and deceit is made clear to him. For the audience, the moment is especially climactic, because we have known the truth all along. In the tragedy of Othello, we witness an imitation of an action. The audience knows that Desdemona is innocent; thus, Othello's baseless accusations and crime against her arouse special pity and loathing. This makes the Othello's anagnorisis at the end of the play exceptionally touching.

Shakespeare's great play depicting the downfall of a Moorish general through jealousy and deceit is such a tragic drama. Aristotle's influence upon the sixteenth-century English playwright is evident in Othello. Through the character of Othello as a tragic hero with a fatal flaw, the purgation of emotion through the couple's deaths and the punishment of Iago, and the epiphany Othello experiences at the end of the play, Shakespeare demonstrates with eloquence each and every one of Aristotle's qualifications for tragedy. Othello is a tragic drama of epic proportions that has stood the test of time and continues to move audiences with its powerful themes of jealousy, intrigue, betrayal, faithfulness, death, and remorse.

Othello as a Tragic Hero

In Shakespeare's Othello, Othello can be considered a tragic hero because he follows Aristotle's six elements of a tragedy. Based on Aristotle's six elements of a tragedy, position, flaw, prophecy, recognition, catastrophe, and reversal, the character of Othello from Shakespeare's Othello can be considered a tragic hero.

The first element of tragedy is **position**, or status, that the hero is in. In Othello, Othello is the leader of the Italian army and is very important to the people of Italy. "Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you against the general enemy Ottoman." This quote

shows how important Othello is to the army and to the war. When Othello is chosen to lead the army overseas, he also makes Brabantio mad by marrying his daughter, Desdemona, without his permission.

"And, noble signior, if virtue no delighted beauty lack, your son- in-law is far more far than black (17)."

This quote shows that Othello is so respected that the Duke of Venice can see through the color of Othello's skin and gives him praise.

The second element of tragedy is **prophecy**, which can be seen when Othello is telling Desdemona the story about when he received the handkerchief.

"She told me her, while she kept it't would make her amiable and subdue my father entirely to her love, but if she lost it or made a gift of it, my father's eye should hold her loathed and his spirits should hunt after new fancies (56)."

This quote lets the reader know that the handkerchief is not only important to Othello and Desdemona but it is also important to the play because it's the reason why Othello gets jealous. This prophecy leads to the downfall of the tragic hero. Another incident where prophecy occurred in the play was when Desdemona tells the story of Barbara, Desdemona's mother's maid, who sang a song of "willow". "An old thing 't was, but it express'd her fortune, and she died singing it: that song to-night will not go from my mind (75)." This quote is an example of prophecy because it's foreshadowing that Desdemona will die because she won't let the song go from her mind.

The third element of a tragedy is **flaw**. Flaw can be either hubris or anger. "By heaven, that should be my handkerchief (64)!" This quote shows the jealousy that Othello has over the fact that Desdemona is being unfaithful to him. In Oedipus the king anger can be seen when Tiresias tells Oedipus that he is the evil that haunts the town. "Good riddance too! You're nothing but a nuisance here, and one I can do without." This is an example of how powerful anger can be because of the anger that Othello feels, he can't even stand to look at the woman that he loves. Once Othello finds out that Desdemona is being unfaithful to him, he approaches her looking for an explanation. "O devil, devil! If that the earth could teem with woman's tears, each drop she falls would prove a crocodile. Out of my sight (67)!" This quote shows how Othello's jealousy has turned into rage, a form of anger.

The fourth element of a tragedy is **recognition**, which can be seen when Emilia hears Othello mentions the handkerchief, after he killed Desdemona. " with that recognizance and pledge of love which I first gave her; I saw it in his hand: It was a handkerchief, an antique token my father gave my mother (87)." Once Othello says this, Emilia knows that Iago is the person who set up Desdemona and Othello isn't the one to blame. Recognition can also be seen in Oedipus the King after the shepherd tells the story of the baby. "For if you are the one he says you are, make no mistake: you are a doom-born man (Sophocles 67)." At this point in the play, Oedipus knows that he is the one who is causing the problems in Thebes because the Tiresias was right.

The fifth element of a tragedy is **catastrophe**, which can be seen when Othello dies. "I kiss'd thee ere I kill'd thee: no way but this, killing myself, to die upon a kiss (91)." This is the last thing that Othello says before he dies which is the catastrophe in the play. Oedipus' catastrophe happens when Jocasta kills herself after she finds out that the prophet of Oedipus was true. "He frees the noose and lays the wretched woman down, then rips from off her dress the golden brooches she was wearing (Sophocles 70)." This quote shows the severity of the fact that Jocasta kills herself because it leads right into reversal.

The sixth element of a tragedy is **reversal** which can be seen when Desdemona kills herself. "Whip me, ye devils, from the possession of this heavenly sight! Blow me about

in the winds! Roast me in sulphur! Wash me down in steep-down gulfs of fire! O Desdemona! Desdemona! Dead! Oh! Oh! Oh (88)!" This quote shows the pain that Othello felt when everything turned bad. In Oedipus the King, Oedipus went through the same kind of pain when he went through reversal. "Aah! A nightmare mist has fallen adamantine black on me-abomination closing. Cry, cry, oh cry again (Sophocles 72)!" Oedipus and Othello are in so much pain and suffering that they both inflict sever wounds upon themselves. When Othello finds out that Desdemona was being faithful to him, he asks for forgiveness. "I do believe it, and I ask your pardon. Will you, I pray, demi-devil why he hath thus enslaved my soul and body (90)? This quote shows that Othello is in so much pain that he feels enslaved in his own body.

Othello can be seen as a tragic hero because he follows all of Aristotle's six elements of tragic hero. These are the same six elements that define Oedipus as a tragic hero. The six elements of a tragedy can be seen throughout the plays Othello and Oedipus the King. That is why Othello is seen as a tragic hero through the eyes of the reader.

Othello's Hamartia

A Shakespearean tragedy is one that encompasses many different elements. Shakespeare presents all of these elements spectacularly in Othello. For a tragedy to occur there are five conditions. The protagonist, Othello in this case, must experience a death or a total loss of ranking in society. The audience must also be captured by the actors and feel some sort of connection to them. This is known as **catharsis**. In Shakespearean tragedies the protagonist always has a character defect or a **tragic flaw**. This tragic flaw along with pride will cause the protagonist to make an error in judgement leading him to his downfall and eventual death. These two elements are called hubris and hamartia. The unities of time, space, and action must also be followed. This means that the play must take place in a very short period of time, occur in one general area, and follow one main character throughout the play. Shakespeare orates for us a tragic occurrence in the life of a man who once had it all, throws it all away in a fit of jealous rage.

The **downfall of the central character** is the main concept of the tragedy. Without the main character s downfall there is no reason for the reader to **feel pity**, therefore, no tragedy. **The downfall of the protagonist in Shakespearean tragedies always originates from their tragic flaw**. Othello’s **tragic flaw** is his **jealousy**, which Iago constantly reminds him about. This is first brought about in act III, scene 3 when Iago asks Othello if he has seen a handkerchief spotted with strawberries. At this point Othello is jealous at Cassio for having won the heart of Desdemona and earned the handkerchief. Upon hearing this Othello flies into a mad fit by saying: **O, that the slave had forty thousand lives! (III, 3, 439**). By his jealousy Othello makes himself very prone to many attacks on him by Iago.

Catharsis is the part of the play that moves the audience and attempts to put them in the actor’s shoes. Shakespeare does this by attacking the issue of love. It is a very touchy and emotional subject. Anyone who has ever fallen in love can relate to Othello and Desdemona. They are viewed as the perfect newly-weds who have each other as compliments. Desdemona shows us this by protesting to the Duke and her father that she saw Othello’s visage in his mind, “**And to his honor and his valiant parts Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate”**. The **love** between **her** and **Othello** is one of **great passion and breaking barriers**. They were many years apart, came from different races, and were different colors of skin, something that was unheard of in their time. Obstacles such as these, even in our day, are very difficult to overcome. When reading or watching Othello one cannot help but to feel envy for the love they have. In this tragedy, catharsis presents something the audience cannot avoid.

Hubris and Hamartia are two components of a Shakespearean tragedy that are very much intertwined because of their basis on pride. Hubris is when the protagonist is consumed with pride and believes that fate can be beaten. Evidence of Othello's pride is based on the thought; **No one messes around with Othello!** This becomes his eventual downfall. The reader remembers in act III, scene 3 when Iago had planted false evidence of Desdemona s unfaithfulness; Othello reacted in a very calm way, mostly in disbelief. In act IV, scene 1 when Iago brings more evidence of Desdemona s infidelity Othello reacts in a very different and violent way. **Let her rot, and perish, and be damned tonight; for she shall not live** (IV, 1, 183-184). This statement stems from Othello's pride in being a man of high standing who will not be cheated on. Hamartia also comes into play where Othello believes that **fate can be beaten by killing Desdemona.** Even if Othello had escaped death here he would have been removed of his high military status and thrown in jail. Othello was truly a man consumed with pride and wrongly believed that he could defy fate and come out on top by killing what he loved most.

Othello could be considered not to be a tragedy because of its **violation of the unities of time, space, and action**. The unities of time, space, and action state that the story must take place in one city, occur in a short period of time more than 24 hours, and must follow one central character throughout the entire play. Othello does not occur in one city through the entire story. Othello went to war in Cyprus and spent most of his time living in Venice. Although there is very little time spent in Cyprus Othello, the story, does not work along the same lines as Hamlet. In Hamlet almost the entire story took place between the castle walls. As for the unity of action we see something quite different here. The play we studied is titled Othello; therefore, the reader assumes that Othello is the central character. If the book were not named this, it would be quite possible that many readers would believe the title could be Iago and not Othello. Although, Iago is not the good guy but he is in the play just as much or even more than Othello. At the beginning of the play Iago is present and Othello is absent. This is how it is many scenes are in the play.

To conclude, we can say that Othello is Shakespeare's most perfect tragedy because it encompasses all of the elements of a tragedy so wonderfully. The love shared between Othello and Desdemona at the beginning of the play is so much more spectacular than that of Claudius and Gertrude in Hamlet or Macbeth and Lady Macbeth in Macbeth. The guilt and wrong felt by Othello after he realizes his errors in judgement are incomparable to the drama in Shakespeare s other tragedies. Any audience viewing Othello for the first time would be captured by the characters because of their relation to the audience. Any experienced Shakespeare reader would have no problem giving Othello the title of most perfect tragedy because it covers all of the elements of a tragedy so wonderfully.

The Themes of Othello

The play Othello is one of the works written by William Shakespeare. It is written approximately in 1603 and was published in 1622, whereas the first performance of this play is in November 1604 (Wikipedia, Chronology of Shakespeare's play). The main themes of Othello revolve around the issue of love, jealousy, fidelity, the incompatibility of military heroism and love and also pride. But as the play unwraps, much more issues come to visible and these will be discuss in details throughout this essay.

The first theme that can be found in this play is **jealousy**. This theme can be said act as the backbone of the entire play. All the events that happen in the play until that leads to Othello's downfall are actually triggered by this form of mischief- jealousy. In this play, jealousy portrays by three characters which are Iago, Roderigo and Othello. Iago's jealousy originates from his dissatisfaction towards Othello who happens to promote the lieutenant post to Michael Cassio, the less experience soldier, instead of him (line 8-22).

This then drives Iago to plan revenge on Othello in order to gain back his reputation. Iago's jealousy is actually the most critical issue in this play. Things would goes differently if Iago has respond in positive way about the promotion and Othello and Desdemona would have live happily with their marriage.

In Roderigo's case however, his jealousy is derives from his disappointment of watching Desdemona (his first love) falls into Othello's hands. In comparison to Iago, Roderigo's jealousy basically is harmless because looking back at Roderigo's ability, he is incapable to plan or even to perform evil tricks on his own. His jealousy is mostly fuels up by Iago who uses him as a pawn in order to play his evil tricks. For instance, in Act II, Iago purposely provokes Roderigo by telling him about Cassio's feeling towards Desdemona so Roderigo will take action and create a trouble that he knows will put Cassio's reputation at risk.

Still, Roderigo is not the only person who is affected by Iago's jealousy. Jealousy is like a disease that will spread from one person to another which if not prevent can cause destruction to all. This is exactly what happens in this play. Iago's hatred and jealousy towards Othello drives him to deceive many people around him including Othello. As part of his evil plans, Iago cunningly uses both Roderigo and Othello's weakness which is Desdemona to entrap them in his wicked schemes. The story he makes up to Othello about Desdemona and Cassio results to another form of jealousy in the play which at the end leads to the death of Desdemona and finally Othello himself. These events show that Iago's character plays as the main contributor to the theme jealousy.

Besides jealousy, the second theme of this play is **reputation** which also relates to **pride**. This play has abundance of characters that progress alongside the theme reputation. This includes Othello, Brabantio, Cassio and last but not least Iago. All of these characters depicts their reputation is as important as their pride through the way they reacts towards the situations that comes up to them. For examples, in the first act we have been introduce to Brabantio who much worries that his daughter's elopement will mark him as a careless father despite his rank as a senator (191-197), while Othello on the other hand becomes depress after suspecting he has been cheating by his wife. The more obvious event that conveys the importance of reputation as one's pride can be found in act II. In this scene, Cassio is at dismay after losing his rank as a lieutenant (253-256). For Cassio, his reputation is what makes him feels better about himself because it let people see him in positive ways.

But, above all the three characters, Iago relatedness with reputation is much stronger than the others. His jealousy, hatred, betrayal and the dark mischievous he creates are all arouses from the idea of reputation. In fact, as part of his revenge's scheme, Iago trickily plays with words and actions to cover up his real intentions in order to gain and maintain his reputation in people's eyes. Iago's action conveys to us that reputation means a lot to him and he is willing to do anything to gain it. From these situations, it suggests that the theme reputation is importance in both domestic and political level.

The third important theme in this play is **fidelity**. In analysing this theme, it is crucial to understand the underlying keys of 'what it is' and 'what is perceived to be' (Maurer, K. 2000) because this is what actually the play Othello is all about. In Othello, fidelity can be analyse between husband-wife, father-daughter, friends and general-servants relationship. For example, in Desdemona's case, although she is wrong by turning away from his father and elope with Othello, but she is the most faithful character of all. Desdemona's love towards Othello is real but if only Othello has faith in her, she would not have become the innocent victim of Iago's evil tricks.

Fidelity would not be complete without thrust and vice versa. Lacks of one of these elements will not promise a strong relationship. This for instance relates to Cassio-Othello-Iago of general-servants relationship. In scene II, Othello thrusts Iago more than Cassio, while as a matter of fact, Iago (the Janus faces) only pretends to be loyal to him.

Although Cassio is the truly faithful servant to Othello yet Othello shows that he lacks of faith in Cassio when he easily thrust Iago's words and unprofessionally removes Cassio from his Lieutenant rank without further investigation. It is indeed an irony that someone with military skill like Othello fails to differentiate between the real enemy and friend. His careless at the end brings about to his own destruction.

Other theme that can be found in this play is **woman status**. In this play, the woman status is represent by two characters which is Desdemona and Emilia where both is similar in the way they are married. In Othello, women has lower status and always powerless than man. What is worse, the unmarried woman is often regards as a property to her father. This actually proves in Act I where Iago and Brabantio indicates Desdemona as if she is one of the properties "Look to your house, your daughter, and your bags!" (80- Act I scene I) and "she is abused, stol'n from me and corrupted (60- Act 1 scene III). Besides, men's thought of woman is always weak and powerless can also be trace in this play. During the hearing at the court, it is Othello who voices up to call upon Desdemona and let her speak on her behalf. Desdemona proves that men are wrong and she actually is braver and confidence in voicing up her thought even though the truth will hurt her father.

Last but not least, the **incompatibility of military heroism and love** is also a notable theme of the play. Before and above all else, Othello is a soldier. From the earliest moments in the play, his career affects his married life. Asking "fit disposition" for his wife after being ordered to Cyprus, Othello notes that

"the tyrant custom ...
Hath made the flinty and steel couch of war
My thrice-driven bed of down".

While Desdemona is used to better "accommodation," she nevertheless accompanies her husband to Cyprus. Moreover, she seems unperturbed by the tempest or Turks that threatened their crossing, and genuinely curious rather than irate when she is roused from bed by the drunken brawl in Act II, scene iii. She is, indeed, Othello's "fair warrior," and he is happiest when he has her by his side in the midst of military conflict or business. The military also provides Othello with a means to gain belonging in Venetian society. While the Venetians in the play are generally fearful of the prospect of Othello's social entrance into white society through his marriage to Desdemona, all Venetians respect and honour him as a soldier. Mercenary Moors were, in fact, commonplace at the time.

Othello predicates his success in love on his success as a soldier, wooing Desdemona with tales of his military travels and battles. Once the Turks are drowned—by natural rather than military might—Othello is left without anything to do: the last act of military administration we see him perform is the viewing of fortifications in the extremely short second scene of Act III. No longer having a means of proving his manhood or honour in a public setting such as the court or the battlefield, Othello begins to feel uneasy with his footing in a private setting, the bedroom. Iago capitalizes on this uneasiness, calling Othello's epileptic fit in Act IV, and scene I, "[a]passion most un suiting such a man." In other words, Iago is calling Othello unsoldierly. Iago also takes care to mention that Cassio, whom Othello believes to be his competitor, saw him in his emasculating trance.

Desperate to cling to the security of his former identity as a soldier while his current identity as a lover crumbles, Othello begins to confuse the one with the other. His expression of his jealousy quickly devolves from the conventional—"Farewell the tranquil mind"—to the absurd:

Farewell the plumed troops and the big wars
That makes ambition virtue!
O, farewell, Farewell the neighing steed and the shrill trump,
The spirit-stirring drum, th'ear piercing fife,

The royal banner, and all quality,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!"

One might well say that Othello is saying farewell to the wrong things—he is entirely preoccupied with his identity as a soldier. But his way of thinking is somewhat justified by its seductiveness to the audience as well. Critics and audiences alike find comfort and nobility in Othello's final speech and the anecdote of the "malignant and … turbaned Turk", even though in that speech, as in his speech in Act III, scene iii, Othello depends on his identity as a soldier to glorify himself in the public's memory, and to try to make his audience forget his and Desdemona's disastrous marital experiment.

Like any others of Shakespeare's works, the themes in Othello is equally revolves around the issues of human life. Besides love, jealousy, and pride are the common themes that can be found in his work. In conclusion, in Othello, jealousy is the main theme that is proves to be very harmful and can leads to destruction in one's life. It is almost as disastrous as men greediness in gaining reputation. Men willing to do anything to secure their reputation but it still do not promise them that they will get it in the end. What is best is to always be grateful in what one has. The third theme is fidelity which is important in a relationship either between husband and wife, father and daughter, friends or servant and his master. Last but not least, woman has very low status in society compare to men. Their powerless state makes them the easy target to be use by men and easily been discriminate as unchaste which explain why Othello and Iago could be so suspicious with their wife.

Theme of Jealousy in Othello

Throughout Shakespeare's Othello, the major theme of jealousy is apparent. The tragedy Othello focuses on the doom of Othello and the other major characters as a result of jealousy. "Othello" represents jealousy as one of the most corrupting and destructive of emotions. It is jealousy that prompts Iago to plot Othello's downfall; jealousy, too, is the tool that Iago uses to arouse Othello's passions. Roderigo and Bianca demonstrate jealousy at various times in the play, and Emilia demonstrates that she too knows the emotion well. Only Desdemona and Cassio, the true innocents of the story, seem beyond its clutches.

Like a classical tragic hero in the tragedy Othello falls from his position due to his 'tragic flaw' jealousy. **Jealousy** is the main **tragic flaw** that brings about Othello's misfortune, suffering, and death. Though this flaw is fuelled by the external force like the witches in Macbeth, but jealousy seems to have a deep root in Othello's character. It is the main factor that appears to destroy Othello. Iago is the initiator of the chain of events that sparks jealousy in Othello, and eventually leads to the downfall of not only the main character, but also of most of the significant characters of the play.

In Othello Shakespeare presents us with the tragic spectacle of a man who, in spirit of jealous rage, destroys what he loves best in the entire world. We will be able to best realize the tragic effect of jealousy if we consider first the **nature of the relation between Othello and Desdemona**. The marriage between Othello and Desdemona is a real 'marriage of true minds', a true love based on a mutual awareness and a true appreciation of each other's worth, a love that has in it none of the element of sensual lust. The love of Othello and Desdemona transcends the physical barriers of colour, nationality and age. But this love is destroyed as soon as jealousness enters into the mind of Othello.

It is **Iago** who **plants the seeds of suspicion and jealousy in Othello's mind**. In Act III: Scene 3, Cassio speaks to Desdemona, asking her to intercede with Othello on his behalf. Desdemona willingly agrees, knowing that Cassio is an old friend of Othello's. She promises to speak of him with her husband repeatedly until the quarrel is patched up and Cassio is recalled.

In the meantime, Othello and Iago enter and Cassio, who is embarrassed because of his antics the previous night, embraces Desdemona and departs. Iago seizes the opportunity to make an undermining comment — "Ha, I like not that" — that rankles in Othello's mind. Iago further insinuates that Cassio was not just leaving, but that he was "steal[ing] away so guilty-like" (39). Iago's words here are filled with forceful innuendo, and as he pretends to be a man who cannot believe what he sees, he introduces jealousy into Othello's subconscious.

Desdemona greets her husband and, without guilt, introduces Cassio's name into their conversation. Here, fate plays a major role in this tragedy; not even Iago wholly arranged this swift, coincidental confrontation of Othello, Desdemona, and Cassio, and certainly the pathos of Desdemona's position here is largely due to no other factor than fate. Desdemona speaks of Cassio, and Othello, to please her, agrees to see him, but he is distracted by his private thoughts. As Desdemona leaves, Othello chides himself for being irritated by his wife. Lovingly he sighs,

> **"Excellent wretch! Perdition catch my soul,**
> **But I do love thee! and when I love thee not,**
> **Chaos is come again" (90–92).**

A **conversation** follows between **Othello** and **Iago**, in which Iago continues to imply that he knows something that he refuses to divulge, Othello denies that he would give himself over to jealousy. In his denial, he shows himself most vulnerable. He is consumed with doubt and suspicion. Othello voices his old fears that Brabantio was right, that it was unnatural for Desdemona to love him, that he was too horrible to be loved, and that it could not last. Iago leaves, and Othello contemplates his situation: He could be tricked, married to a woman who is already looking at other men, and he fears that he must wipe her out of his heart. He tries to tell himself that it is not true.

Iago also **urges** Othello to **recall** that **Desdemona deceived her own father** by marrying Othello. To Brabantio, Desdemona pretended to be afraid of Othello's dark looks; she pretended to shake and tremble at Othello's exotic demeanor, yet "she lov'd them [Othello's features] most" (207). The implication is clear; Iago does not have to state it: If Desdemona deceived her own flesh and blood, she might just as naturally deceive her husband.

When Desdemona re-enters, Othello's aspect is changed; he watches her intently, looking for signs, and brushes away her handkerchief when she seeks to sooth him. They go in to dinner, and Emilia picks up the fallen handkerchief, one that her husband, Iago, often urged her to steal from Desdemona. Emilia decides to have a copy made to give to Iago, but he enters, sees the handkerchief, and snatches it from her.

When Othello enters, Iago sees that Othello cannot regain his peace of mind. His speech is fevered, sweeping and frantic; he believes that his wife has been unfaithful to him. Othello then turns on Iago with savage intensity and demands to see the proof of Desdemona's infidelity. Cornered, Iago produces the dream story: Cassio spoke in his sleep, embraced him, called him Desdemona, and cursed the Moor. Iago tells Othello that he has seen Cassio wipe his brow with a handkerchief embroidered with strawberries; Othello recognizes this handkerchief as the one he gave to Desdemona.

Othello **dismisses love** and **calls for vengeance**. Certainty has freed his mind from doubt and confusion. Now he swears action, and Iago swears to help him. Othello wants Cassio dead, Iago agrees to do it, and then Othello wonders how to kill Desdemona.

The **fire of jealousy** is further inflamed in Othello **in Act III:** Scene 4.When Othello enters, he claims a headache and asks her for a handkerchief to bind his head, but he will have only the embroidered strawberry handkerchief. Desdemona cannot produce the handkerchief and tries to deflect his questions about the handkerchief, speaking again of Cassio. Othello walks out in fury.

But Othello is totally **engulfed by his jealousy in Act IV:** Scene 1,in which he Sees his wife's **handkerchief** in the hands of Cassio's mistress Bianca. It is, for Othello, the "ocular proof" he sought. He is now convinced of Desdemona's infidelity and knows he must kill both Cassio and Desdemona that very night. This is the second time Othello has sworn to kill both Cassio and Desdemona.

Othello goes directly to the point: "How shall I murder him, Iago?" Othello swears also to kill his wife this night, he curses her and weeps over her at the same time, mingling love and murder: "for she shall not live; no, my heart is turned to stone . . . " (178–179).

Still Othello knows the **pull of love and asks for poison** so that he might kill her at a distance, but he sees justice in Iago's idea of strangling her in her bed, imagining that she has dishonored that bed. Again the agreement is made: Iago is to kill Cassio, and Othello is to kill Desdemona.

Thus we see how the **passion of jealousy**, which **derives from pride and breeds anger**, **gradually gains control over Othello**. The decline in the moral and spiritual stature of Othello goes hand in hand with the destruction of his love for and faith in Desdemona. The theme of jealousy is prominent throughout the play as it motivates the characters' actions.

The dramatic irony is that the most **jealous indignation is expressed over offenses that did not happen**: Othello **jealous** about his **wife**; Bianca **jealous** about **Cassio**; **Iago** formerly **jealous** about **Emilia**. Each character attempts to cope as an individual, except Emilia, who has a theory that jealousy is a constituent part of masculinity. The evidence before her own eyes backs up her assessment.

The theme of 'otherness' in Othello

In this post-colonial context it is impossible to read Shakespeare's Othello without considering the issues of race, color and hegemonic ideologies as they are presented in the play. As we go through the play we see a complex relation between a black man, a white woman and the state.

The **racial conflict** in Othello is evident from the very beginning of the play. Othello is depicted as an 'other' or outsider from the beginning of the play. Within the opening lines of the play, we see how Othello is distanced from much of the action that concerns and affects him. He is ambiguously referred to as "he" or "him" by Roderigo and Iago for much of the first scene and when they do begin to specify just who they are talking about, they use racial epithets, not names.

Iago uses racism in the opening scene of the play as a spark to inflame Desdemona's father, Senator Brabantio, against Othello. After Iago and Roderigo raise a clamour outside Brabantio's house late one evening, the senator awakens and comes to a window. Iago then uses vulgar animal imagery to slur Othello, telling Brabantio that the black Moor has seized his greatest treasure, his daughter, and at that very moment is defiling her.

Iago shouts to Brabantio

> **... now, very now, an old black ram**
> **Is tupping your white ewe. Arise, arise!**

There is an obvious racism in this quote. When Brabantio reacts with incredulity, Iago replies with a metaphor that this time compares Othello to a horse: 'you'll have your daughter covered with a Barbary horse'

Roderigo, whom Iago uses as a cat's-paw, supports Iago's story. Iago then says, **"I am one, sir, that comes to tell you, your daughter and the Moor are now making**

the beast with two backs". Roderigo adds that Desdemona is indeed in the "gross clasps of a lascivious Moor".

Brabantio, now convinced of the truth of the story, tells Roderigo to summon help. Roderigo also refers to Othello as 'Thick lips' and Iago continually uses the word 'slave', which are both racist terms.

The use of **animal imagery** is used to help convey **Othello as a monster** and the choices of animals shows the underlying racism: "Old Black ram" and "Barbary horse". The references to witchcraft and the devil also help to emphasize Othello's differences: "The devil will make a grandsire of you", "the beast with two backs". The playwright uses these characters to paint a picture of Othello as the embodiment of the black stereotype held by people at this time, labeling him as "different" to everyone else.

By and by, Brabantio and others appear. The senator, after denouncing Othello for taking Desdemona to his "sooty bosom" , accuses the Moor of having used "foul charms" and "drugs or minerals" to weaken Desdemona's will.

The **marriage between Othello and Desdemona** was an **inter-racial marriage.** Previously Othello was a favourite to Brabantio and he along with Desdemona had had dinner many times with Othello. But why does he instantly react to the news of the marriage of Othello and Desdemona? It is because Othello is a Black. Instantly the matter becomes an issue in the Venetian council chamber, where the Duke and other senators are preparing for war against the Turks.

There is a clear **theme of racism** throughout, one which was firmly embedded in the Venetian society which rejects the marriage of Othello and Desdemona as wrong, 'against all rules of nature'. Nothing separates Othello from, 'the wealthy curled darlings of our nation,' except skin-colour. Iago, Roderigo, and Brabantio combine to give us a portrait of Venetian racism.

After Othello speaks eloquently of his love for Desdemona and she speaks on his behalf, the Duke exonerates Othello. But in doing so, the Duke obliquely denigrates Othello because of his race–apparently unintentionally, in a Freudian slip–telling Brabantio, **"Your son-in-law is more fair than black",** implying that **fairness** is **superior** to **blackness**. Brabantio reluctantly accepts the ruling.

The racial conflict becomes clearer when we consider of **Iago's 'motiveless malignity'** against Othello. Iago seems to have few motives for his devious actions. Although he resents Othello being promoted before himself, it seems that from his speech that the thing he hates most about Othello is the colour of his skin. Because of this he uses unintelligent and colloquial racism to insult Othello. He refers to Othello as, "Thick lips,".

Essentially, **Iago is a representative of the white race**, a pre-Nazi figure who tries to inform the public of the impurity of Othello and Desdemona's marriage. He demonstrates how this miscegenation is threatening to the existing social order.

Having lost a battle, **Iago** continues to plot to win the war, still **using racism** as one of his **weapons**. Consider that in referring to Othello, he sometimes inserts the word black to remind listeners that the Moor is different, a man apart, a man to be isolated. For example, after referring to Othello in Act 1 as a "**black ram**," he tells Michael Cassio in Act 2, Scene 2, "**Come**, **lieutenant**, **I have a stoup of wine, and here without are a brace of Cyprus gallants that would fain have a measure to the health of black Othello" (25).**

Iago's scheme would not have worked without the **underlying atmosphere of racial prejudice in Venetian society**, a prejudice of which both Desdemona and Othello are very aware. Shakespeare's Desdemona copes with prejudice by denying it access to her

own life: Her relationship with Othello is one of love, and she is deliberately loyal only to that.

The **Jealousy** and **racism** are both **inter**-**connected**. The thing that fuelled Othello's jealousy was his belief that he is black and Desdemona is white. That he is unfit to retain her attention for long. Othello, in a fundamentally ethnocentric and racist society, finds himself confronted with the horrible reality of this **self-contempt** when there is cause to believe that Desdemona, whose loved had been the shield against his self-contempt, now betrays him too. Thus, Shakespeare's Othello is a psychoanalytic view of a self-loathing man and his doomed attempts to defend himself against a painful reality.

The **society** and culture, Othello finds himself, is one where **racism** and **ethnocentrism prevailed** and **prejudices** abounded. Othello, however, is not aware how deeply prejudice has penetrated into his own personality. This absorbed prejudice undermines him with thoughts akin to "**I am not attractive**," "I **am not worthy of Desdemona**," "It **cannot be true that she really loves me,"** and "**If she loves me, then there must be something wrong with her."** These thoughts, inflamed by Iago's hints and lies, prevent Othello from discussing his concerns and fears directly with Desdemona, and so he acts on panicked assumption. In order to survive the combined onslaught of internalized prejudice and the directed venom of Iago, Othello would have had to be near perfect in strength and self-knowledge, and that is not a fair demand for anyone.

Thus racism plays a significant part in bringing the tragedy of Othello. Shakespeare is also sending an anti-racist message through his play Othello. Those who discriminate people racially are the truly devious characters and Shakespeare shows this clearly through Iago and Brabantio. Iago is portrayed as the most evil villain and also the hateful racist. By presenting the main villain of the play to have such deep-rooted racism, Shakespeare is denouncing those who attack people purely on the basis of the colour of their skin or their nationality.

Theme of Honesty in Othello

Shakespeare's well-known play Othello, first performed in 1604, explores the theme of honesty in detail. The words 'honest' and 'honesty' themselves are used 52 times in the text. On a deeper level, the characters in this play and their actions help to support the theme of honesty. The play's villain, Iago, is the epitome of dishonesty and his untruthful nature is contrasted with the innocent Cassio and Desdemona. Emilia, Iago's wife, is neither fully honest nor fully dishonest in her actions and dialogue, providing an interesting role in the play. The central theme of honesty is linked to motifs in the play, including reputation and irony.

Iago is an extremely manipulative character and a very good liar. He uses his skills in deception to lie to almost every other character in the play – in particular Othello, but also to Roderigo and Cassio. It is only the audience that knows of Iago's true intentions and feelings. Iago tells the viewers in a soliloquy – **"I do hate [Othello] as I do hell's pains**" and **"nothing can… content my soul till I am even'd with him".**

Despite his consistent lying, he holds a **reputation for being honest**. It is this reputation that makes Othello believe every word Iago says, even calling him "honest Iago". Othello's appointment of Iago as an officer (because "a man he is of honesty and trust") and also him giving Iago the duty of transporting his beloved wife to Cyprus clearly show that Othello had full trust in Iago. This ultimately leads to Othello's death. Although certain aspects of Othello's personality played a part in his downfall, Iago's skill and care in his dishonest deeds could have fooled the biggest disbeliever. The original Elizabethan audience of Othello would have known that Satan is called 'the father of lies',

so Iago's dishonesty increases his villain status. The Elizabethan connection between the devil and lying is also seen when Othello "look[s] down toward [Iago's] feet" when he discovers the truth about him – Othello was seeing whether or not Iago had devils hooves (the foot of a horse, deer, cow, or similar animal, covered with horny material) for feet. **Iago** is a **main character** whose **dishonesty results** in **several main events** in Othello. His personality emphasizes the central theme of honesty because his complete lack of it highlights the truthfulness of other characters.

Honesty in the 21st century is usually defined as telling the truth, but in the context of Othello is also means chastity. **Desdemona is honest in both senses of the word**. She remains completely faithful to her husband Othello and never tells a lie in the play. However, her secret marriage to Othello can be seen as deceptive. One can assume that she may have had to lie, or at least hide the truth from certain people, in order for her marriage to be carried out. She redeems herself somewhat when she whole-heartedly professes her love towards Othello in front of her father and the court. Still, the cunning Iago uses the fact that Desdemona betrayed her father to his advantage when trying to convince Othello of Desdemona's unfaithfulness – "she did deceive her father, marrying you". The one thing that Desdemona does which is somewhat untruthful is used by Iago, in a way that eventually leads to her murder. There is much irony in the fact that Othello chooses to believe everything the lying Iago says, while not believing anything the truthful Desdemona has to say. Furthermore, the more Desdemona tells the truth, the less Othello is inclined to trust her. When she repeatedly tries to convince Othello to reinstate Cassio, she thinks that she is doing a good thing, when she is really just increasing Othello's suspicions. Shakespeare shows in Othello that though honesty is a worthy trait to have, there are many other factors that will affect other's opinions of oneself. In the case of Desdemona, her honesty was not enough to save her life.

Iago's dishonesty is **contrasted** with **Desdemona**, but is also contrasted with the character of **Cassio.** The word honest is used several times to describe Cassio. Although Cassio considers Desdemona to be "indeed perfection" he never pursues Desdemona, knowing that she and Othello are in a loving relationship. He is also the only attendant at their wedding. The **differences** in **Iago** and **Cassio** in terms of **honesty** relate well to the **motif of reputation**. Despite his lying ways, **Iago** retains his **honest cover-up** right until the end of the play. On the other hand, **Cassio's reputation is ruined** when he takes part in a drunken fight, costing him his esteemed military position. From this point onwards, Othello no longer fully trusts Cassio. This demonstrates the importance of reputation, whether one's reputation is actually valid or not. Othello continued to trust Iago throughout the play because Iago was still seen as a very honest man. If Othello ever doubted Iago, the play could easily have been very different. Iago may not have been honest but his honest reputation served him well and allowed him to carry out his scheming plans.

Emilia is an **interesting character** in Othello in regards to **honesty**. She did take Desdemona's handkerchief and give it to Iago, which he then used to fully convince Othello of Desdemona's infidelity. As Iago's wife for a number of years, one assumes that she must have had some idea of Iago's dishonesty. However, we must remember that in Shakespeare's time women were always inferior to their husbands, and if Emilia were to risk her marriage she would also risk any hope of leading a respectable life. When Emilia does find out that Iago lied about Desdemona and Cassio, she is horrified **– "My husband say that she was false?..If he say so, may his pernicious soul rot**

half a grain a day! He lies to the heart." Despite threats from Othello she is the one that tells everyone that of Iago's lies and that Othello killed Desdemona. There is irony when she speaks of the consequences of dishonesty in front of the most dishonest character in the play, Iago. She says that the person who lied about Desdemona is an **"eternal villain, some busy and insinuating rogue, some cogging, cozening slave".** Emilia is important to the central theme of honesty in Othello because while she was technically, though unknowingly, Iago's accomplice, she clearly did not stand for deceitfulness and was brave enough to tell the truth, even when it cost Emilia her life.

In Othello, the stark **contrast** between the **innocence** of **Desdemona** and **Cassio** and the **double nature** of the **villainous** Iago promotes the central theme of honesty. Through Iago's plans, much tension is created as Othello continues to trust Iago due to his honest reputation, while holding his disbelief in the honest characters, Cassio and Desdemona. The irony of this situation keeps the audience engaged, while the role of Emilia as the truth teller of the play provides interest and also is another contrast with her lying husband Iago. The interactions between honesty and dishonesty are vital to the play Othello because they lead to the occurrence of significant events, most notably the event that makes this play a tragedy, the suicide of the protagonist Othello.

The Role of Women in Othello

In Othello by William Shakespeare, the role of Desdemona, Emilia, and Bianca portray how women were during the 15th century. Women were portrayed as being **loyal** to their **husbands**; **doing what they are** told, and **not going against their husband's judgment** or **actions**. These women represent three different characteristics in which women are being recognized in Othello. The women in Othello represent various levels of **class, virtue, and intelligence**. **Desdemona** is aristocratic, virtuous, and makes her own decisions; **Emilia** is the middle **class**, a **maid**, **manipulated** by Iago and loyal to Desdemona; and **Bianca** is the **bottom** of the line, being represented as a **strumpet** (prostitute). Iago states how women are weak, lazy, and inane and only desire physical pleasure.

Throughout the play **Desdemona symbolizes innocence and helplessness**. The first encounter with Desdemona, Shakespeare describes her as being mature and quite perceptive of events around her, especially when we meet Desdemona and how mature she is when she defends her love for Othello to her father Brabantio. Iago often tells Othello that she is unfaithful because Iago is implementing into Othello's head that Desdemona is committing adultery with Cassio. She has a tendency to be sympathetic towards other people's situations, like Cassio. This also further inspired Othello's jealousy when Iago pointed out they were speaking in privacy. She often pays attention to other people's thoughts yet remains cynical if they differ to her own. She's loyal to her husband in all aspects of life, whether it is mental or physical.

Desdemona is like a **peacemaker** because when Othello wanted to "fire" Cassio, she wanted peace between them. Therefore she talks to Cassio in private, which this leads to her husband accusing her of cheating. After the fight between Othello and Cassio, Desdemona wants to make peace between them. In today's society, Desdemona is known as a housewife who cares for her husband and is behind him every step of the way. However, when it comes to the arguing with Othello, she becomes a woman being emotional abused by her husband, leading her death by her own husband at the end.

Emilia is Iago's wife, which says something about her **submissive** character already. She is also Desdemona's handmaiden; this is a vital part in her role in the play. She is the wife of pure evil, Iago, and the maid of the most kind, Desdemona. Emilia unknowingly plays a large role in Iago's plan and is never suspicious. Emilia is, in some

cases, the opposite of Desdemona. Even though women should be faithful and loyal to their husband, she considers that women should have a voice; be more independent and not relying on their husbands' all the time.

Emilia gets angry at the fact that Othello calls Desdemona an unfaithful wife, hence her stating, in Act 4, Scene 3, "But I do think it is their husbands' faults/ If wives do fall. Say that they slack their duties, /And pour our treasures into foreign laps; /Or else break out in peevish jealousies, /Throwing restraint upon us; or say they strike us, /Or scant our former having in despite: /Why, we have galls; and though we have some grace, /Yet have we some revenge…" (217). Here Emilia is questioning men and how men can't be without women. Yes, men say that women are lazy and this and that, but women have more of a saying in this world then men do. The speech that Emilia gives talks about how women should not be a "slave" to their husbands. All women have a voice and that we should be independent and be respected.

Bianca is very **obedient** and **sweet**-**tempered**, leading her to have a good number of suitors. Bianca is the strumpet who Cassio is with; her role seems small but significant. Bianca, even though called a strumpet, she is also considering as a woman with a goal. Her goal is to feel love and trusted by a man, but she is deceived as a whore, especially from Emilia. Bianca is brought into this play as Cassio's jealous mistress; he gives her Desdemona's handkerchief, not realizing whose handkerchief it really was. She was aware of the great risk involved when she married a moor. All three characters feel that they, as women, should not be judge nor treated with any less respect as a man does because women have a voice and they need to be heard.

Desdemona, Emilia, and Bianca live in a society where women can't do the thing men do. Desdemona generously nature tries to help Cassio retrieve his spot as Lieutenant back. Emilia had illusions about men or love or marriage vows, even after Desdemona explains the importance of the handkerchief. But, these three women live by their own wills. As Iago reminded Othello in Act 3, Scene 3 the faithless wife is a well-known member of Venetian society. Somewhat like Iago, Othello also see women as strumpets and unfaithful after the Iago convinces Othello in the adultery that Desdemona is committing. In Act 4, Scene 2, Othello says "Was this fair paper, this most goodly book, /Made to write "whore" upon? What committed? /Committed? O thou public commoner. /I should make very forges of my cheeks, /That would to cinders burn up modesty, /Did I but speak thy deeds" (197). As mentioned in this quote, Othello see women as being unfaithful and mostly consider them as whores, especially his wife.

Both Desdemona and Emilia are **loyal to their husbands**, however, Desdemona is more of a person who hides her true self because she feels that a women should not argue with her husband, the one she loves because during the Renaissance women were seen more as being the house wife and do agree to every decision and action their husband make. Hence the reason why she doesn't defend herself as well as she supposed to when Othello believes that she has committed adultery. Emilia is also respectful and loves her husband Iago, but when Othello calls Desdemona a whore we see another side of Emilia in which she thinks that calling his own wife a whore, is basically crossing a line. She questions the role of men because once you're married a trust and loyal bond is born; there shouldn't be any type of disrespect within "soul mates". Bianca is just a woman who is looking for some affection, but is independent to be with whoever she wants because she is not really committed with anyone.

Women during the 15th century were considered more as being a house maid/house wife. Desdemona, Emilia, and Bianca represent the three different sides of women: the **noble and loyal one**, the one who **believes in having a voice**, and the **one who wants affection from a guy who is easy** (strumpet). These stereotypes, women are still being compared to in today's society. We learn something about each of these female stereotypes. Over a period of time, women have fought for the respect and equality; even though these stereotypes still exist today, women are stronger in

defending themselves and more respected. Shakespeare brings the theme of women roles because we learn how women felt during that time and how history brought women to be equal to men.

Gender and Race in Othello

In many of his works, William Shakespeare explores ideas of gender differences and racial tensions. Othello, a play whose characters are judged again and again based on appearances and outward characteristics, is one such work. The protagonist's different ethnic background provides a platform for probing ideas of racial conflict. Similarly, the presence of well-developed yet opposing female characters adds a dimension of gender conflict and feminist views. These seemingly separate themes of Othello-sexual difference and racial conflict-are closely connected because of similar ties of prejudgment and stereotype. The play's treatment of sexual difference and gender roles strengthens Othello's racist tones and complicates ethnic tensions.

Women are an integral part of Othello. The chastity of a woman is highly valued, and Desdemona's perceived infidelity helps drive the action of the play, ultimately leading to the deaths of many characters, including herself and her husband Othello. Iago's hatred of women is evident throughout the play and could be part of his motivation to lead Othello to such jealousy. Desdemona and Emilia, her waiting lady, provide the central conflict for feminist and gender ideas. Women in Othello are portrayed with complexity and an obvious tension between feminist and anti-feminist ideals.

Desdemona, Othello's wife and Brabantio's daughter, is portrayed as the ideal woman. She is beautiful, chaste, and virtuous. Cassio describes her as "divine" (2.1.74) and tells Iago that "she is indeed perfection" (2.3.25). When her father questions her about her love for Othello, she gives the acceptable answer and professes loyalty to both Brabantio and Othello, claiming that the Moor is now her lord (1.3.183-191). Desdemona is eloquent and independent. She asserts herself and boldly professes her love for Othello to her father and the duke. She is honest in her love for her husband, wishing that "our loves and comforts should increase even as our days do grow" (2.1.193-194). Desdemona does not profess any feminist ideals or notions about love or relationships. She claims she would never cheat on her husband, not even "for the whole world" (4.3.82). She also appears to be submissive and passive in her marriage. She even identifies her own "simpleness" (1.3.249). On many occasions, Desdemona obeys her husband unfalteringly and calls herself obedient (3.3.97). Even after Othello hits her, she does is bidding and leaves because she "will not stay to offend" him (4.1.250). Later after she has been abused, she asks Iago, "What shall I do to win my lord again?" (4.2.155). Desdemona remains subject to her husband even until he murders her, going so far as to tell Emilia that she killed herself (5.2.128), an admission of guilt for a crime she clearly did not commit. Desdemona is ideal in the sense that she is chaste and virtuous throughout the entire play. She also appears to be intelligent and is willing to stick up for herself to her father and defend her love for Othello. In her relationship with Othello, however, she is passive and submissive, the stereotypical meek wife.

Emilia, Iago's wife, is a stark contrast to Desdemona. In some respects, she too seems to be obedient to her husband. She picks up the handkerchief that Othello gave Desdemona because Iago "hath a hundred times wooed [her] to steal it" (3.3.308-309), also saying that she does "nothing but to please his fantasy" (3.3.315). In the same speech, however, Emilia also calls her husband "wayward" (3.3.308). After she gives him the handkerchief, she asks Iago why he wants it and threatens to take it back if it is not for some good purpose (3.3. 333.335). Earlier in the play, Emilia talks back to Iago, asserting her independence when she says to him, "You shall not write my praise" (2.1.118). In her conversation with Desdemona about infidelity, Emilia informs her friend that she would commit adultery, giving the tongue-in-cheek response of "Nor I neither by this heavenly light; I might do 't as well i' the dark" (4.3.68-69). She professes her

opinion that if the wife falls, it is her husband's fault (4.3.89) and asserts her belief that women have "some revenge" (4.3.96-97). Emilia provides the feminist voice of Othello, asserting her independence from her husband and even admitting that she would commit adultery if the price were right. Her attitude towards men is somewhat cynical, as she says "They are all but stomachs, and we all but food; They eat us hungerly, and when they are full They belch us" (3.4.106-108).

The male characters of the play view women in varied ways. Cassio often idealizes Desdemona, praising her positive characteristics, even believing that she is "perfection" (2.3.25). Iago's attitude towards women is largely critical and negative. He tells Emilia that women are "pictures out of doors, Bells in your parlors, wildcats in your kitchens, Saints in your injuries, devils being offended, Players in your huswifery, and huswives in your beds" (2.1.111-114), meaning that women are often deceptive. He later says, "She never yet was foolish that was fair, For even her folly helped her to an heir" (2.1.137-138). Iago's cynical attitude towards women continues throughout the play, as he talks of women as being foolish and unfaithful creatures. Othello's views on women are more complex than Iago's. Othello loves and praises Desdemona often in the play. He tells Iago, "But that I love the gentle Desdemona, I would not my unhoused free condition Put into circumscription and confine for the sea's worth" (1.2.25-28). Othello tells his wife that he "cannot speak enough of this content…it is too much of joy" (2.1.196-197). After he believes that Desdemona is being unfaithful, however, his attitude changes dramatically. He becomes cynical and hostile, even hitting his wife (4.1.243). He accuses her, calls her a strumpet, and murders her because of her perceived infidelity (5.2). Othello's attitudes towards women transform from idealization into hatred.

There is a conflict in Othello between traditional views of women and more feminist views, as well as a conflict between the idealization of women and the resentment of women. Emilia is a feminist, assertive, independent model of womanhood, while Desdemona plays the ideal and passive female character. Women are portrayed in a varied and complex way in Othello.

The racial tension in the play is similar to the gender role tension because of opposing views. While Othello's specific ethnic background is not clear, he is obviously an outsider to Venetian society, of Northern African or African descent. His portrayal in the play is complicated, with evidence supporting both a racist view of the text and a non-racist view.

While Othello is the protagonist of the play, he is also responsible for Desdemona's murder. Iago holds strongly racist views towards him. He describes Othello and Desdemona's consummation as "an old black ram…tupping…a white ewe" (1.1.90-91) and "making the beast with two backs" (1.1.119-120). Iago calls him "an erring barbarian" (1.3.358) and claims that he is lacking in "a fresh appetite, loveliness in favor, sympathy in years, manners, and beauties" (2.1.230-231). He also describes Othello as "rash and very sudden in choler" (2.1.273). Iago is not the only character who holds racist attitudes towards Othello. Roderigo refers to him as "thick-lips" (1.1.68) and calls him "lascivious" (1.1.129). Brabantio cannot believe that his daughter could be happy with this outsider (1.1.167), and he thinks that the only way Othello could have wooed Desdemona is with charms (1.1.175-177). He accuses Othello, calling out, "O thou foul thief, where hast thou stowed my daughter?" (1.2.63). Brabantio claims that now Desdemona is "abused, stol'n…and corrupted By spells and medicines" (1.3.62-63). Othello himself says that he is "black and [has] not those soft parts of conversation" (3.3.279-280). When Othello believes that his wife has been unfaithful he claims that he will "tear her all to pieces" (3.3.446). In Act 4, he hits Desdemona, evidence of his violent temper and proneness to abuse (4.2.242). Othello could easily be read as a racist play. Its hero is often described in racist, degrading tones, and he is portrayed as abusive, jealous, and even murderous.

This play, however, also provides a contrasting view. While Othello is portrayed as violent in some scenes, he is the victim of the evil manipulation of Iago. Many characters in the play deeply respect Othello. Cassio entreats the "heavens [to] Give him defense against the elements" (2.1.46-47) and asks Jove to guard him (2.1.79). Iago himself admits that Othello is "of a constant loving, noble nature [and] will prove to Desdemona A most dear husband" (2.1.290-292). Montano describes him as "noble," (2.3.132) and many of his subordinates admire him. Othello is eloquent, as evident in his many speeches, such as the one in Act 1, Scene 3 (l.78-96). He claims that he won Desdemona's heart through his stories and words. He is confident, professing that his "parts, [his] title, and [his] perfect soul Shall manifest [him] rightly" (1.2.31-32). Othello asserts that he has "done the state some service" (5.2.349). While Othello is an outsider to this society in many ways, he is not completely excluded. He is a Christian, meaning he has accepted the religion of his society. He is a general in the army, so he has a respectable social status, and the majority of the population likes and admires Othello, even Brabantio, until he discovers the marriage of Othello and Desdemona. He is portrayed as courageous and honorable, and his love for his wife seems to be genuine. It is obvious throughout the play that Othello's jealousy and even his violence are a result of Iago's evil.

Racial tension in Othello is complicated because there are both racist and non-racist strains in the play. Iago is the most vocal racist character, but his racism and judgments are not portrayed positively. Other characters, however, also voice negative attitudes towards Othello because of his ethnicity. Although the protagonist is thought of as a brave and noble character, he is also portrayed as rash and violent, a common stereotype of "Moors." Othello's sexual relationship with Desdemona is described in carnal, beastial terms.

The negative language used to describe Othello is far stronger than the positive language used, and the images of Othello hitting and even murdering Desdemona are highly powerful. This language portrays Othello as animalistic and not as highly civilized because he cannot control his passions. These associations serve to perpetuate stereotypes of Africans and others of different ethnic identity. While Othello is certainly a victim of Iago's evil in this play, he is not a primarily sympathetic character. His deeds and his rage are not the result of any noble motivation, but simply mad jealousy. The racist tones of Othello are overpowering and outweigh the non-racist tones of the play.

Sexual difference and racial difference are both at the center of conflicts in this play. Women are judged by some characters as unfaithful and deceptive, simply because they are women. Othello is judged harshly simply because he is black. There is tension between the traditional ideal of woman and a more progressive view, just as there is tension between a racist society and an accepting society. The play's treatment of feminist tension and gender difference only serves to add to the racial overtones.

Women are treated as harshly as Othello is by Iago and other characters in the play. Women are assumed to be unfaithful, even by Othello himself, who has no real proof with which to accuse Desdemona of infidelity. Both Desdemona and Emilia are abused, either verbally or physically or both, by their husbands and other male characters in the play. Women are prejudged as guilty and wanton in Othello. These quick conclusions add to the overall tone of stereotyping, thereby strengthening the racist strains in the play.

Feminist and anti-feminist ideas are presented very clearly, with Desdemona representing one extreme, the passive ideal wife, and Emilia representing the other extreme, a progressive, independent, assertive woman. It is Desdemona, however, who is Othello's wife. It is Desdemona who is unfairly accused, abused, and strangled. While Emilia is also murdered by her husband, Desdemona is smothered (5.2.87), which suggests that she is controlled and manipulated to a greater degree than Emilia, whose murder is more rash and passionate. The portrayal of Desdemona's and Othello's

marriage plays up the stereotype of the violent Moor and the passive wife. This adds to the racial tones of the play and strengthens the racist view that Othello takes.

Gender differences and the tension between Emilia's feminist viewpoints and Desdemona's traditional ones serve to reinforce racism against Othello in this play. These tensions strengthen the view of Othello as a violent, even animalistic outsider. While Othello presents conflicting views on racism and stereotypes, the overall picture is one in which the play's protagonist is treated with an edge of racist overtones.

Role of Chance and Coincidence in Othello

Othello is, among all the tragedies of Shakespeare, one in which the role of chance and accident is the most prominent. Iago's skill was extraordinary, but so was his good fortune. Throughout the play we have instances of chances favouring Iago's plot which otherwise would not have succeeded so easily.

A chance **words from Desdemona**, a chance **meeting of Othello and Cassio**, a question which starts to our lips and which anyone but Othello would have asked, would have destroyed Iago's plot and ended his life. In their stead Desdemona drops her **handkerchief** at the moment most favourable to him, Cassio blunders into the presence of Othello only to find him in a swoon (loss of consciousness), Bianca arrives precisely when she is wanted to complete Othello deception and incense his anger to fury. All this and much more seems to us quite natural, so potent is the art of the dramatist; but it confounds us with a feeling (that) there is no escape from fate, and even with a feeling, absent from that play, that fate has taken sides with villainy".

However all of these are not due to mere chance or accident. The dropping of Desdemona's handkerchief at the moment when it is just right for Iago's plot, Cassio's arrival in front of Othello when he is in a swoon, and Bianca's arrival when it suits Iago happen so close together that they appear as a single stroke of "the devil's luck" for Iago. They can be called coincidences, deliberately contrived.

Many of the events that seem to be "accidents" are actually due to Iago's brilliant contrivance. Brabantio is deliberately brought in, after being inflamed by both Roderigo and Iago at Desdemona's deception, to embarrass Othello with his outcry and also to pave the way for later accusations to encourage Othello's distrust of her:

Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see:
She has deceived her father, and may thee.

Through **Iago's skilful manipulation** Cassio gets drunk, lapses from the duty assigned to him and gets involved in a brawl and Othello comes in the middle of the night to demote him. This develops the situation further leading to Desdemona's pleas on behalf of Cassio's reinstatement, thus providing Iago opportunity for counter-insinuations regarding Desdemona and Cassio's relationship. Desdemona drops her handkerchief by accident; Emilia is there to pick it up and gives it to Iago.

From then on **Iago guides** the ensuing events. He takes the handkerchief and leaves it in Cassio's chamber, uses it as evidence with which to convince Othello, and supplies the construction Othello places upon the subsequent history of the handkerchief. Othello, beguiled as he is by Iago, at this point, has no independent judgment regarding the "evidence" provided by Iago. He does not try to investigate further the circumstances but blindly follows Iago's insinuations and suggestions.

These accidents do not in any way diminish the **importance of "character**" in the tragedy. Despite the accident, Othello carries the full responsibility of his actions on his shoulders. He allowed human reason tube over ruled by passions and the will. We see how Iago infects Othello, corrupt his power of reasoning, makes him "passion's slave" so that he commits a tragic murder without realizing his mistake. Such is the power of evil

and the deliberate malice of Iago. Othello recognizes his fatal error and accepts full responsibility of the wrong he has done and the remorse he feels finally destroys him, which makes him a tragic hero.

The **role of accidents** in Othello is less significant because they are not simply the workings of fate but **situations cleverly manipulated and exploited by a human agent**-Iago. Iago plans most of the events, calculates the motives and responses of his victims, and profits with diabolical cleverness from the chances, which occur and uses them to serve his purpose. Desdemona happened to be a Venetian and woman of Venice did not have a good reputation:

In Venice they do let God see the pranks
They dare not show their husbands, their best conscience
Is not leave't undone, but keep't unknown?

These are Iago's words as he pollutes Desdemona's character by his vulgar insinuations. Also,

She did deceive her father, marrying you.

Iago **uses the circumstances** to his **own advantage**, which is how his evil mind works. Othello is a Moor and Iago also uses this racial difference and his advanced age to imply that Desdemona has lost interest in him. Being a man of vehement feelings he trusts Iago completely, which is his undoing. Once the doubt is planted in his mind it takes complete control over him and he is carried along in a whirlwind of jealousy and emotion. He admits,

"No, my heart is turn'd to stone;
I strike it, and it hurts my hand".

Iago builds a cruel hatred in his heart against Desdemona and in his agony Othello cries,

"O, blood, blood, and blood!"
Once he is resolved, there is no turning back for him. He compares his desire for revenge to the "icy current and compulsive course" of the Ponitc Sea that keeps moving forward:
"Even so my bloody thoughts, with violent pace,
Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,
Till that a capable and wide revenge
Swallow them up".

Othello had not known Desdemona long and she was the first woman in his life. All his life he had spent in camps and campaigns, which gave him no experience where women were concerned. Iago on the other hand, was also a professional soldier and had served with Othello so he knew how his mind worked. It was easy to plant a doubt in Othello's mind that young girl of Desdemona's beauty and gentle breeding could feel more than a passing fancy for a Moor like him, no matter how great and noble he was. Othello's jealousy rises to uncontrollable passion that blinds him making him fall into trance-like state, totally unlike his normal calm self. Iago spends much of his time, in his soliloquies, attempting to explain to us how and why it all happened. It is this element of credibility which minimizes the so-called role of chance. The end of this tragedy only vindicates human worth and dignity in the justice that Othello bravely administers to himself.

The Theory of 'Double Time' in Othello

We experience both a long and a short passage of time while reading or witnessing the play. The double impression is not troubling us while actually reading or seeing the play. In fact several plays of Shakespeare seem to produce the same effect. This is bound to be so in any powerful play because the actual time, in which a play is staged, is definitely shorter than the time required for the events in the real life. This is so in all romantic plays as compared with the 'classical' plays in which the unities of time and place are observed.

"Short time" is also needed in Othello to make the action credible. The intensity of the passion of jealousy cannot be prolonged for the reason that, if delayed, it will either cool down, or the plot of Iago will surely be revealed to Othello by Cassio who is not allowed to meet his master in the play after he (Cassio) is dismissed. For these reasons, it is necessary that the action of the play must be made to move most speedily. This is what happens in the play from scene to scene particularly from act two onwards when the main characters of the tragedy arrive from Venice to the Island of Cyprus.

It is indeed from this point onward that the tragic action begins. It is on the same day of their arrival in Cyprus that at night the marriage festivities take place. It is during these Cassio is involved in a drinking and is dismissed.

Next morning Iago makes Cassio to go and request Desdemona to plead his case to Othello. At the next meeting Iago brings Othello, and Desdemona, surprised and confused, requests Othello to restore Cassio. It is in this scene that Iago begins to poison the mind of Othello with suspicion of Desdemona's love for Cassio. It is here; too, that Desdemona drops her handkerchief, which Iago picks up. He then tells Othello that the he saw Cassio whipping his lips with the handkerchief. Othello asks Iago to kill Cassio.

Next, Cassio meets Bianca and asks her to copy the design of the handkerchief, which he found dropped in his own room. Iago now proves Cassio's guilt by concealing Othello in such a way that he could overhear Cassio's talk with Iago. In this conversation, Cassio talks of his affairs with Bianca and Othello is made to believe that Cassio is talking about Desdemona.

Soon after this, Iago gets Cassio killed by Roderigo who is himself killed by Iago. Othello then orders Desdemona to go to bed alone and smothers her in the bed. Before she dies, he learns the truth about her innocence, and thus it happens that Othello kills himself.

All these actions are shown to be done on the same night, that is to say, on the night following the arrival of Othello and party on the Island of Cyprus. The time covered by is a day and a night. This is the impression of 'short time' as dramatized on the stage in Othello.

However, this impression of 'short time' is made on us against a background of 'long time', converging several days pass before the tragic action takes place. For example, Roderigo complains that Iago has made him several promises, which have not been fulfilled. He complains that he has been following him for several days and that all his money (and all his patience too) has been exhausted. Nest, Bianca complains that Cassio has not met her for more than seven days and seven nights. Besides these, we also note that some weeks should have passed before Othello was recalled from Cyprus. The voyage between Venice and Cyprus certainly took several days.

Thus we get an impression of a longer time of married life before Othello kills Desdemona. Any delay or long time would surely have brought out the truth of Desdemona or Cassio's innocence.

Such an effort reveals to us the dramatic genius of Shakespeare who is able to play astonishing tricks is played at all. This is the willing suspension of disbelief, which is the essence of artistic illusion. We are not aware of the presence of double time while we are actually witnessing the performance of the play. We are aware of it when we critically examine the details of the text. We should clearly understand that Shakespeare is deliberately compressing the action of the play in order to achieve the speed and intensity of the same, which are necessary for the powerful tragic feelings they produce. The action and passion of jealousy should be quick in order to be credible and powerful. In the case of Othello's jealousy we need to assume to have in the text of the play. The cause of his passion is evidently adultery, but there is no time during, which this could

have happened during the tempestuous voyage. As we know, Cassio and Desdemona sail in different ships. And in Venice itself there was no occasion for adultery because Desdemona starts for Cyprus on the very day of marriage.

Where, then could such a crime have happened? It is to answer such a question that Shakespeare produces the impression of a longer time for the action of the play. He throws several suggestions, gives several hints and indications in the course of the text, which point to the probability of such longer time. What he does is that he presents a series of continuous and unbroken events on the stage, but these events are presented against a back ground of other events, which are not presented but narrated, and it is because of these events that we suppose that a longer time was needed to create the suspicion of crimes—of adultery in particular. It is not real adultery but the supposition and suspicion of it which causes the real tragedy. Iago makes Othello imagine that adultery has been committed. It is in his efforts to produce this impression that the impression of long time is suggested.

Shakespeare's dramatic art is precisely seen in taking this 'long time 'story and combining it with the impression of 'short time' –without letting the audience realize that such a combination is at all made. So we conclude that there is evidently in Othello a parallel of 'short 'and 'long' time impression, and that both these are necessary for a fuller appreciation of the tragedy.

Othello as a Domestic Tragedy

The story and theme of Othello is one that comes home to the business and bosoms of mankind that again, is to say that Othello dramatizes an emotion with which we are familiar, and which some of us might very well be expected to experience, namely, the doubt and suspicion whether wives are always loyal in conjugal relations—Or husbands, for that matters, jealousy in married life is a common experience and therefore a play that deals with it might very well be regarded as a domestic one. The problem of happiness in married life is closely related with the harmony existing at home between husband and wife. And this is precisely the harmony that Iago, in his aside, intends to destroy when he exclaims. "**I will set down the pegs that make this music**," this is what he says as he sees Othello in raptures with Desdemona, and hears him say:

And this, and this, the greatest discords be.
That ever our hearts will make.

That is how we also see Othello on the stage with Desdemona in his arms as they both arrive in Cyprus after the terrible stormy voyage they undertook from Venice. Othello is playfully, yet passionately, kissing Desdemona and utters these words as he does so. This is a domestic scene of exquisite joy and sweetness, and it is an emotion, which we can share.

Besides this principal theme, which is a domestic one, we meet with, in Othello the people who are not far removed from us on social position. They are not kings and queens and princes and princesses but common subjects of the state, where they serve in several capacities. In other words, we can understand and share their joys and sorrows; we are at home with them and their problems. Hence, it is that note of intimacy is struck between the dramatis persona and us. This account for the 'domestic' atmosphere of Othello. (The Moor of Venice)

It is interesting to note that **marital jealousy** was a very popular theme on the Elizabethan stage. Othello, thus, could very well be described as a domestic and private life do not rise to the heights of great tragedy and that they lack the emotive force of the latter where the figures belong to high life such of kings and queens. It may be said of this criticism that it is not sound. As Dr. Johnson long ago pointed out,

"Shakespeare is always thinking primarily on men and their emotions however exalted their lives on the worldly plane might be. Hamlet and Lear do not affect us because they are kings and sons of kings but because they are mortals with all the errors and weakness to which mortal life in there. Secondly, even if Othello and Desdemona and Roderigo and Cassio do not belong on the political plane to the same order as Hamlet and Lear do, they are still endowed with a dignity and virtue, which do distance them from the merely average human nature, which we ordinarily known. The agony and passion of Othello is jealousy, the pitiful innocence and grace of the pleading Desdemona, the beauty and frankness of Cassio, which even his worst enemy, Iago, has to acknowledge even Roderigo the fool, with his worship of beauty, which Desdemona inspires these certainly cannot be described as lacking in emotive force. If anything, their fate and fortunes affect us most powerfully because we recognize in their natures, which we share and understand. Life is life—whether lived in private or in public and in Shakespeare's tragedies in particular life is piled on life, and therefore domestic story dealing with the private lives of common human nature is capable of exciting feelings of pity and terror as powerful as those that are excited by the lives of kings and queens. It all depends how life is dramatically presented. Shakespeare is perfect because he knows how to exploit life at all levels for the purpose of moving the hearts of his audience. Hence we conclude that private life can be as emotionally stirring and uplifting as life on any other level."

The tragedy of Othello and Desdemona is made by Shakespeare one of the most soul-stirring subjects in this play. It is not merely the story of jealous husbands but the type and symbol of fate, which causes the suffering of people who are really innocent Othello a great figure worthy of our awe and admiration on account of which we feel his tragedy as one that might as well happen to every one of us. The turning of a loving husband into a vindictive Iago as the cause of tragic misunderstanding. Iago is indeed the type of tragic fate. And his villainy is so subtle that there is an element of universality in his evil nature.

So Othello is not the type of domestic drama that appeals merely to our sense of pathos and satire but it arouses in us the true emotions of pity and terror. It is not the private life of married people that affects us in this tragedy, but the fate and fortune of true lovers turned tragic by the forces of evil embodied in Iago.

Conflict between Morality and Immorality in "Othello"

Shakespeare's drama 'Othello' is one of conflicting morals, ethics and values, and the consequences of these conflicts. Shakespeare focuses these conflicts on the character of Othello and his actions, which are the results of complex moral dilemmas. In Othello, societal influences are used as a catalyst to conflicting situations, and contribute to the character development of Othello and his actions. Through these factors, Shakespeare reveals the underlying theme of morality in conflict.

When pressured to select between two alternatives which both end negatively, the individual faces a conflict between morality and immorality, and their feelings and actions towards this conflict highlight the state of society. The quest for a moral resolution in Othello is a result and reflection of the 1570s society. Protagonist Othello is the great general of the Venetian Army, and during a majority of the duration of the play, is in Cyprus, Venice to fight the battle between the Turks. **"I swear 'tis better to be much abused, than but to know't a little"**.

Othello is in an **agonising state** of **jealousy** and **fury** after learning about his wife **Desdemona's** extra-marital affair, which is in fact a **false accusation** made by villain Iago. 'Ignorance is bliss' could be the most appropriate translation to what Othello wishes had stopped him from entering a moral conflict. Outraged by Desdemona's supposed act of infidelity, Othello decides that killing his wife would be the solution to eliminate the sources of evil in the world. To **eliminate evil, Othello commits evil**.

This is a classic example of morality trapped in a conflict of epic proportions, fuelled by the war-enraged society.

The crime which had been committed would seem considerably more outrageous now than it did in the era of Shakespeare's writing of Othello. This is due to Othello being set in Cyprus which was attacked by Turks in 1570, leading to the wars between Venice and Turkey. The exposure to mass killings and lingering misery in the overall atmosphere was a major catalyst to the loss of faith and morality in society. It was perhaps this change in social behaviour which had resulted in Othello being trapped in conflict, and being able to consider even the idea of murdering his own wife. In fact war was a major catalyst to morality being questioned in literature. In Othello, the characters view the explicit nature of the wars between Venice and Turkey, leading to immoral acts being committed even in the absence of negative intentions.

The character of Othello is also one which has been interestingly developed with the leverage of Othello's morals in conflict; killing the evil he sees in his wife Desdemona in the hope of 'cleaning out evil' in the world. Protagonist Othello is depicted not as a generic, fair-skinned perfectionist, but rather in a way which defies the physical norm for a "hero". Othello is Moorish, a descendant from Northern Africa, hence the colour of his skin. He is a man of great passion, and a physique suited to his title. However, we as an audience are instantly challenged by the portrayal of Othello, whose characteristics sway well away from those of a typical hero protagonist. Shakespeare attempts to question our morality. In the sixteenth century where racial equality was far from understood, a dark-skinned man is unquestionably deemed and given the same rights as an "average" but "higher status" citizen. This challenging portrayal of Othello is further challenged when he murders his wife. It is the "**hero**" of the play who commits the **inhumane** act, bringing forward the situation of a positive character facing confusion with a negative act, hence a moral dilemma. Shakespeare suggests that the character whose morals are in conflict is uncontrollable, performing overwhelmingly immoral acts.

The internal moral conflict faced by Othello can also be observed through his change of language throughout the play. Desdemona claims to have married Othello because of his ability to tell magnificent stories of his adventures, therefore it can be seen that Othello is very good with his words.

> **"But I love the gentle Desdemona,**
> **I would not my unhoused free condition**
> **Put into circumscription and confine**
> **For the sea's worth" (1.2.25-28)**

Othello's language at the beginning is very powerful and heroic as he compares the nature of his love for Desdemona with the treasures of the sea. The use of dramatic imagery of the sea is successful in depicting Othello's certainty and confidence in Desdemona's love. However, this certainty and confidence is long gone in the later stages of the play after Iago has corrupted Othello's faith by making him believe that Desdemona has been unfaithful. Othello no longer speaks with pride and wholesomeness; his language becomes uncertain and chaotic - **"O misery!", "O monstrous, monstrous!"** Shakespeare makes it clear that Othello is heavily weakened by the moral dilemma through his drastic change in language. This is the result of Othello being stuck between believing Desdemona and believing Iago. The two poles of morality in this situation are so extreme, i.e. killing Desdemona or letting Desdemona live but risking a tarnished reputation, that Othello becomes engulfed by the pressure. His strong language in the initial stages shows a strong natured man, and his incoherent remarks in the later stages are the outcome of a man who has been weakened by conflicting morality.

In Othello, Shakespeare reveals conflicting morals through the character of Othello. The aspects of the play which give rise to moral dilemmas are influences of society, the portrayal of Othello, and a change in Othello's behaviour through language. Shakespeare

combines these aspects to give the audience insight into deep conflicts of morality, both internal and external.

The Symbolic Meanings of the Handkerchief in 'Othello'

The handkerchief in William Shakespeare's 'Othello' is best-remembered as the damning, though circumstantial evidence of Desdemona's infidelity. Planted in Cassio's room by the scheming Iago, his possession of the handkerchief convinces Othello of Cassio's affair with Desdemona. Subsequently, Othello is driven mad by jealousy and murders his wife. In addition to this crucial function in the plot, the handkerchief serves as a powerful symbol with multiple meanings. The symbolic meaning of the handkerchief is changeable throughout the play and is dependent on the perspectives of the characters who exchange it. Although a seemingly trivial item, the many symbolic meanings of the handkerchief play an invaluable role in Othello.

As a gift given by Othello to Desdemona during their courtship, the initial symbolism of the handkerchief is love. For Othello, the handkerchief holds sentimental value because it had belonged to his mother, making the gift of it to Desdemona even more meaningful. The spirit of Othello's gift is not lost on Desdemona, and she always has the handkerchief in her possession "to kiss and talk to" (III.iii.296). The love Desdemona and Othello associate with the handkerchief leads Iago to covet it for use in his plot to ruin Othello.

The first mention of the handkerchief comes in Act III, when following a conversation with Iago, Othello complains of a headache. Desdemona produces the handkerchief and offers to bind his head, but Othello dismisses her efforts: "Your napkin is too little:" (III.iii.287). At this time, the handkerchief is fatefully dropped and lost, falling into the hands of Emilia. Because Emilia knows that her husband Iago wants the handkerchief, in her possession the handkerchief becomes a symbol of her husband's hard-won favor. Emilia gives the handkerchief to Iago who immediately implements it into his plan. With the handkerchief in his pocket, Iago plants further suspicion in Othello's mind when he claims that he saw it in Cassio's possession. Because of the special symbolism the handkerchief holds for Othello, Iago's allegation that Cassio had wiped his beard with the handkerchief serves to further embroil Othello's jealousy.

Moments prior to this conversation, Desdemona had attempted to bind Othello's head with the handkerchief, making Iago's story implausible. Had Othello recognized this inconsistency, Iago's deceit would have been revealed. However, Othello is blinded by his jealousy and taken in by Iago's manipulation. In this way, the handkerchief is symbolic of Othello's willingness to believe the lies and blindness to the truth. Othello sees the handkerchief only when it implicates Desdemona's guilt.

Iago's accusation concerning the handkerchief causes its transition from a token of love to a symbol of Desdemona's fidelity (or infidelity). Equating Desdemona's faithfulness with the tangible handkerchief, Othello asks her for it. When she admits she does not have it, Othello tells Desdemona that the handkerchief has been given to his mother by an Egyptian charmer. Othello goes on to tell Desdemona that the handkerchief has "magic in the web of it" and the embroidery of strawberries "(III. Iv. 69) was dyed in mummy which the skilfil/Conserv'd of maidens' hearts" (II.iv.74-75). Although Othello's story appears sincere, it is inconsistent with Othello's confession at the end of the tragedy that the handkerchief was "an antique token" (V.ii.216) given to his mother by his father.

The grisly mention of the embroidery being dyed with the mummified hearts of virgins is a metaphor for virginal blood and the handkerchief a metaphor for the wedding sheets. For Othello's mother, the handkerchief possessed the power to "subdue" (III.iv.59) his father "Entirely to her love" (III.iv.60), much as Desdemona's fidelity gives her power over Othello.

The handkerchief again changes hands when Iago plants the handkerchief in Cassio's room. The appearance of the handkerchief is a mystery to Cassio who gives it to the prostitute, Bianca to copy. As it does for Othello, the handkerchief inspires Bianca's jealousy and in her eyes a symbol of Cassio's infidelity: "O Cassio, whence came this?/This is some token from a newer friend" (III.vi.180-181). A later argument between Bianca and Cassio over the handkerchief is witnessed by Othello. Refusing to copy the work in the handkerchief, Bianca returns it to Cassio telling him: "This is some minx's token, and I must take/out the work? There; give it your hobby-horse: /wheresoever you had it, I'll take out no work on't" (IV.i.153-155). Having witnessed this exchange, Othello is convinced Desdemona is the "minx" and "hobby-horse" Bianca refers to and plots the murder of his wife and Cassio.

The murder of Desdemona takes place in the bedchamber she shares with Othello. Keeping with the symbolism of the handkerchief, Emilia has made the bed with their wedding sheets as Desdemona requested. When Othello wakes and confronts the sleeping Desdemona, he throws several accusations at her, the worse of which is that she gave the handkerchief to Cassio. The weight of this accusation is found in the meaning of handkerchief to Othello - Desdemona's love and fidelity; both of which Othello believes Desdemona has given to Cassio.

After the death of Desdemona, the evidence that served to seal her fate ironically clears her name. When Emilia at last reveals the truth, the handkerchief becomes the evidence of Desdemona's innocence and the indictment of Iago's guilt:

> **O thou dull Moor! that handkerchief thou speak'st of**
> **I found by fortune and did give my husband;**
> **For often, with a solemn earnestness,**
> **More than indeed belong'd to such a trifle,**
> **He begg'd of me to steal it (V.ii.225-229).**

Emilia refers to the handkerchief as a "trifle" (V.ii.228). Emilia is pointing to the absurdity of murder over a handkerchief, but her choice of words is also ironic given the many complex and weighty meanings the handkerchief represents throughout the play: love, infidelity, jealousy, deceit and so forth. Although a seemingly inconsequential item, the handkerchief's many symbolic meanings are imperative to the execution of the plot and its tragic conclusion.

Starting out as a token of love, the handkerchief in William Shakespeare's Othello becomes the fabricated evidence of Desdemona's infidelity. Exchanging hands throughout the play, the handkerchief morphs again and again into different symbolic representations. In this manner, the handkerchief ceases to be the "trifle" Emilia deems it to be and becomes a central plot device. The symbolism attached to the handkerchief makes it indispensable to the execution of Othello and earns it its reputation as an item of infamy.

Dramatic Irony in Othello

In Othello, written by Shakespeare, dramatic irony is used to develop our understanding of characters in the play. Through soliloquies and asides, dramatic irony gives the audience knowledge and information that other characters do not have. This creates tension and suspense because the audience wonders if the truth will come out in time. In Othello, Iago’s soliloquies reveal his plans and also give us an understanding into his true nature that we would not get from his interactions with Othello. Through the soliloquy’s, we also learn how trusting and easily lead Othello is.

Dramatic irony is used to develop our understanding of Iago as a character, it reveals who he is, not the mask of an honest follower he puts up for Othello. Iago is a

Machiavellian character. A Machiavellian character is deceitful, expedient and cunning. They are clever and ruled by their goals. Machiavellian characters are quite common in Shakespeare's plays with Hamlet and Richard II from their eponymous works having the same characteristics as Iago. They are all out for themselves as exampled in Iago's own soliloquy: **"Others there are who, trimmed in forms and visages of duty, keep yet their hearts attending on themselves… and such a one I do profess myself."** In that passage, we learn that although Iago seems that he has a duty to someone, he is really only out for himself, so he can get somewhere in life. We learn of Iago's cunningness in another soliloquy: "After some time, to abuse Othello's ear that he is too familiar with his wife; he hath a person and a smooth dispose to be suspected, framed to make woman false." The audience learns of Iago's clever plan to destroy his enemies. This teaches the audience of Iago's deceitful nature.

As a true Machiavellian character, Iago is shown to be honest, reliable and people count on him for his opinions. But, as the audience learns through his soliloquies, he embodies the opposite of these qualities, which gives the play some dramatic irony. Here the audience is hoping that Othello can see his fault in relying and trusting in Iago before it is too late. The jealous part of Iago's complicated character is revealed to the audience when he divulges to us why he detests Michael Cassio and Othello. "**I hate the Moor, and it is thought abroad that 'twixt my sheets he's done my office. I know not if't be true yet I, for mere suspicion in that kind, will do as if for surety."** This shows the audience that Iago suspects Othello has slept with his wife, Emilia. Iago's jealousy is displayed when Iago admits that he doesn't know for sure if Othello has done what is rumoured but he will get back at him anyway in case it is true. The audience see that he doesn't have any sustainable evidence against Othello but he will accuse him of sleeping with his wife anyway. Iago also makes it clear of his jealousy for Cassio: **"Cassio's a proper man: let me see now; to get his place and to plume up my will in double knavery."** Iago wants Cassio's placing at lieutenant and believes he is better for the job. The audience can also see through this part of the soliloquy how depraved Iago is as he wants to "plume up my will", meaning he wants to have a little fun while destroying Cassio, showing us that this is a game to him and he gets enjoyment out of his plan. Through dramatic irony, we get an understanding of Iago's evil, deceitful and jealous character.

The audience also gets a deeper understanding of the character of Othello, the eponymous protagonist, through dramatic irony. We learn how trusting Othello is of others as he relies on his ensign Iago for advice and trusts him greatly. He mentions the words '**honest'** or '**honesty'** in relation to Iago over 50 times in the play. This shows the audience how assured he is that Iago is a reliable and reputable man. But what the audience knows that he doesn't is how corrupt and untrustworthy Iago is. Through dramatic irony we know that Iago, in fact, despises Othello and the audience discovers that Othello must be very trusting not to see or want to see through the mask of honesty and companionship that Iago shows Othello. Othello is also very easily led, despite his title as Army General. Because of his fatal flaw, jealousy, he chooses to see what he wants to see. This makes him easily manipulated by Iago into believing that Desdemona has cheated on him with Cassio. The audience knew that Desdemona had been faithful and saw how easily Othello was tricked into believing that she wasn't because of the weak evidence Iago gave him. "**but such a handkerchief- I am sure it was your wife's- did I today see Cassio wipe his beard with."** And Othello was quick to believe him: "**O that the slave had forty thousand lives! One is too poor, too**

weak, for my revenge. Now do I see 'tis true. Look here, Iago, All my fond love thus do I blow to heaven; 'Tis gone." Because of dramatic irony, we see how easily manipulated Othello is into believing what isn't true.

In Shakespeare's play Othello, dramatic irony creates an understanding of character. We get to understand how cunning, deceitful and jealous Iago really is while he is perceived to be very honest and trustworthy. Through dramatic irony, the audience also understands Othello as a character because we see how trusting and easily led he really is. Dramatic irony shows us parts of characters we would not get to see otherwise, through dialogue with other characters.

Stages of Iago's attempt to seduce Othello

Introduction: - Conventionally Morality drama has a temptation scene in which man is subjected to the Devil's allurements. The third act of Othello has a scene that corresponds to it. Othello is entangled in a situation where he must choose between the two, Iago's poisoning or his love for Desdemona. At the end of the scene, he is embraced by Iago in a spiritual union and Desdemona is ultimately rejected. He sees through the eyes of Iago. The tools and threads, with which he will weave his net, have already been prepared. Othello has not yet learnt to question and he will by the code of Iago and will be guided by him to the point of his devastation.

Credibility: - Although the temptation scene has been criticized as incredible, it is quite convincing in its dramatic context. Shakespeare's artistry infuses the scene with an illusion of reality which is remarkably effective in the theatre. The very speed of the action carries the audience along in Iago's spell and gives it no opportunity to consider questions of logical probability. Shakespeare has certainly provided certain elements in the first two acts which make seduction of Othello plausible. He has stressed his simple trust in Iago, his unfamiliarity with civilized life and particularly with Venetian women, his role as an alien ever potentially hostile society. Perhaps most significantly, by a series of events, Shakespeare has caused Othello to doubt his own powers of judgment and perception. His marriage to Desdemona has resulted in an accusation of witchcraft from one who has always been his friend. Cassio, the officer he has so carefully chosen, in his drunkenness has caused Othello to question the wisdom of his choice. Othello is now ready to question the goodness of Desdemona in which he had believed as firmly as in the friendship of Brabantio and the soldiership of Cassio.

Iago's Offensive: - Iago excites Othello's natural curiosity by his veiled remarks touching the honesty of Cassio and by the implication that he has secret knowledge which he will not reveal. There's no evidence of jealousy on Othello's part; however, until Iago himself raises the issue. O, beware, my lord, of jealousy. This suggestion Othello at first resists with the memory of Desdemona's virtue and with a true awareness of his own excellence for which she married him. Othello's awareness of how jealousy operates is in effect a rejection of jealousy. To this point of the scene, Iago has been unsuccessful. He has not been able to shake Othello's faith in himself and Desdemona. Now he turns to Othello's ignorance of Venus.

In Venus they do let God see the pranks
They dare not show their husbands; their best
Conscience
Is not to leav't undone, but keep't unknown

Here Othello’s belief is shaken and he tends to doubt whether the virtue of Venetian girls is a mask seeming virtue only and not the inner one for which he married Desdemona.

She did deceive her father, marrying you;
And when she seem’d to shake and fear your looks,
She lov’d them most.

Here, presenting the motifs of evil wearing the mask of apparent virtue, Iago is gains his first victory, for Othello is forced to reply ‘ **And so she did.’** It is Othello who first raises the question of Unnaturalness which had earlier been pleaded by Brabantio before the Venetian Council. He is now inseparably stuck to the point of unnaturalness and is drawn to the side of Iago. He is fully convinced of Iago’s expertise in human psychology and dealing.

This fellow’s of exceedings honesty,
And knows all qualities, with a learned spirit,
Of human dealing.

After this attack of Iago, his spiritual union with Desdemona appears to him only a sensual appetite and he begins to see things through the eyes of Iago.

Othello’s Struggle: - There are moments in which, we find Othello breaking the net laid down by Iago. When Desdemona is before him, he finds her again the same beautiful and virtuous Venetian girl who saw Othello’s visage in his mind and not in his face. He rejects all doubts attached to her by Iago and says,

If she false, O, then heaven mocks itself!
I’ll not believe it.

But when she tries to bind his temples, he is overcome by the poison fed by Iago. His honour is at stake and he farewells the soldier’s life. He says that he is ready to accept all evil attach to her; but hidden from him.

Othello’s Surrender: - Although, Othello still demands proof, jealousy has so maddened him and benumbed his reason that he is willing to accept whatever proof and evidence, Iago has to present as truth. Iago’s lie about Cassio’s dream and his sensuous descriptions are all enough for Othello to dig his own grave. He renounces his love for Desdemona and accepts hatred and revenge. Iago’s words have so worked upon him that Othello ends up with Desdemona as evil and Iago as his Lieutenant again and he even gives orders for the death of Cassio.

Othello’s Delusion: - Despite the fact that Othello has allowed himself to be ensnared by Iago, there is awe and solemnity in the culmination of the surrender scene. Othello, in his delusion, would convert his sinful vengeance into the guise of a lawful justice and his hatred into duty. Truth will appear as falsehood, love and loyalty as lust and betrayal. Always in his delusion, Othello will see himself as the instrument of justice executing his duty his duty in a solemn ritual, although his court-room will be brothel and his act of justice the destruction of love and truth.

Iago : Evil Personified

William Shakespeare has always been known for creating notable characters, who through sheer will and perseverance greatly affect the structure of their respective story worlds; Iago is no exception. He is widely considered to be one of the most prolific

villains in all of Shakespeare's plays. Iago is not only one of the greatest villains of Shakespeare but also one of the cleverest. If Iago had used his incredible abilities for good, he would most likely be considered one of the greatest heroes in all of Shakespeare, instead of the greatest villain. However, this is not the path he chooses.

Iago is considered to be one of the greatest Shakespearean villains because he uses his **incredible logic** to **deceive many characters** in the play, his goals never change no matter how many times his motives might, and he does not stop until everyone in his way has been eliminated.

Without a doubt, Iago possesses a gift: the **ability to instantly assess any situation** he is in and then **adapt to the situation to twist it in his favor**, thus being able to deceive anyone without much trouble. This skill is first revealed in his first soliloquy:

"After some time, to abuse Othello's ear
That he is too familiar with his wife.
He hath a person and a smooth dispose
To be suspected, framed to make women false.
The Moor is of a free and open nature
That thinks men honest that but seem to be so,
And will as tenderly be led by th' nose
As asses are" (1.3. 338-445).

Iago hadn't already thoroughly organized his revenge at this point. He was only beginning to plot. He exhibits masterful thinking by devising a plan to destroy Othello on the spot. His goal quickly becomes to bring Cassio's affection towards Desdemona to light. The realization that Cassio is a perfect target of Othello's jealousy only furthers Iago's enthusiasm. He understands that Cassio is a well-spoken and handsome gentleman, and it would seem completely natural that Desdemona would fall for him.

Then Iago makes a crucial **discovery**: **Othello's weakness**. Othello is straightforward and never thinks twice about what he believes. Iago thinks that because Othello trusts men that seem honest without question, he can easily befriend him with his ability to deceive. After Iago has spoken to Othello about Cassio and Desdemona, he has another revelation and delivers yet another soliloquy:

"will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin
And let him find it. Trifles light as air
Are to the jealous confirmations strong
As proofs of holy writ. This may do something.
The Moor already changes with my poison.
Dangerous conceits are in their natures poisons
Which at the first are scarce found to distaste,
But with a little act upon the blood
Burn like the mines of sulfur" (3.3. 369-377).

His objective here is to cause Cassio to believe that Desdemona has feelings for him. When more than one person is deceived, the truth is much harder to find. Othello wouldn't be able to detect a lie because Cassio was well convinced as well; the one person Othello believes could reveal the truth doesn't even know the truth himself. Iago knew that if Othello hadn't already been jealous, the handkerchief would not have been a successful endeavor. However, Iago points out here that the smallest thing to a jealous man can blow up in his face, leaving him scarred with hatred.

Iago is pure evil because once he loses his main motive for revenge he continues the path of destruction anyway. He begins the play jealous of Cassio because Othello promoted Cassio to Lieutenant instead of him. Iago then goes about getting Cassio drunk so that he will be seen as unfit as a Lieutenant (2.3. 40-43). Once Othello had demoted him, Iago's quest for revenge should have stopped there. Instead, Iago decides to ruin Othello. He also goes about ruining Desdemona and Cassio even further. Iago seems to be having too much fun with himself to stop at this point. He leads Othello on and convinces him that his wife is cheating on him (4.1. 190-196). This ruins Desdemona's reputation to Othello as being pure and faithful. Desdemona will eventually be ruined beyond repair when a jealous Othello finally murders her. Iago apparently didn't have enough with Cassio once he had gotten him demoted. Iago brings Cassio aside within earshot of a hidden Othello as he gets him to "admit" to sleeping with Desdemona. He is actually talking about Bianca when he says,

"I marry her! What? A customer? Prithee bear
some charity to my wit. Do not think it so unwhole-
some. Ha, ha, ha!" (4.1. 138-140).

He calls Bianca a whore, but Othello believes that he is talking about Desdemona. So not only does Othello believe that Cassio has slept with Desdemona, he also thinks that Cassio doesn't even respect her so he would turn around and cheat on her as well. He then vows to kill Cassio.

Iago plans to eliminate all opposition. Othello approaches Iago and says,

"How shall I murder him,
Iago?" (4.1. 188-189).

Othello is willing to get rid of Cassio for Iago. Othello also plots to kill Desdemona. Othello gives the task of murdering Cassio to Iago who then gives the task to his loyal and naïve friend Roderigo. Roderigo fails and is killed by Cassio, but Iago stabs Cassio and flees without being seen. When Othello tells Desdemona that Cassio has been killed, she weeps for him: "**Alas, he is betrayed, and I undone"** (5.2. 96), which is the last straw and Othello makes up his mind. He then smothers her to death. Emilia begins to realize what is going on and tells Othello that Iago only spoke of lies. To shut her up, Iago stabs her; he kills his own wife. Only true evil could possess someone to kill their own wife only to preserve their own self-image.

There is no character more evil than Iago. He will do anything and everything to get what he wants and he does not care who he hurts in the process. He also has basically no motive for the majority of the play. He might've realized that what he was doing reached a point where it no longer had a meaning, but he simply shrugs his shoulders as if to say, **"I might as well finish what I started".** This mentality when incorporated with jealousy can only stem from a truly evil and disturbed man.

The Importance of Being Ernest

OSCAR WILDE; 1854-1900

Oscar Wilde, celebrated playwright and literary provocateur, was born in Dublin on October 16, 1854. He was educated at Trinity College, Dublin and Magdalen College, Oxford before settling in London. During his days at Dublin and Oxford, he developed a set of attitudes and postures for which he would eventually become famous. Chief among these were his flamboyant style of dress, his contempt for conventional values, and his belief in aestheticism—a movement that embraced the principle of art for the sake of beauty and beauty alone. After a stunning performance in college, Wilde settled in London in 1878, where he moved in circles that included Lillie Langtry, the novelists Henry James and George Moore, and the young William Butler Yeats.

Literary and artistic acclaim were slow in coming to Wilde. In 1884, when he married Constance Lloyd, Wilde's writing career was still a work in progress. He had gone on a lecture tour of North America and been lampooned in the 1881 Gilbert and Sullivan operetta Patience as the self-consciously idiosyncratic philosopher-poet Reginald Bunthorne, but he was celebrated chiefly as a well-known personality and a wit. He may have been the first person ever to become famous for being famous.

During the late 1880s, Wilde wrote reviews, edited a women's magazine, and published a volume of poetry and one of children's stories. In 1891, his only novel, The Picture of Dorian Gray, appeared and was attacked as scandalous and immoral. In that same year, he met Lord Alfred Douglas, who would eventually become his lover, and Wilde finally hit his literary stride. Over the next few years, he wrote four plays: Lady Windermere's Fan, A Woman of No Importance, An Ideal Husband, and The Importance of Being Earnest.

Lady Windermere's Fan and A Woman of No Importance enjoyed successful runs in the West End in 1892 and 1893, respectively. An Ideal Husband opened in January 1895, but it was The Importance of Being Earnest, which opened a month later, that is regarded by many as Oscar Wilde's masterpiece. Its first performance at the St. James's Theater on February 14, 1895 came at the height of Wilde's success as a popular dramatist. Wilde was finally the darling of London society, a position he had striven for years to attain.

In many ways, The Importance of Being Earnest was an artistic breakthrough for Wilde, something between self-parody and a deceptively flippant commentary on the dramatic genre in which Wilde had already had so much success. Wilde's genre of choice was the Victorian melodrama, or "sentimental comedy," derived from the French variety of "well-made play" popularized by Scribe and Sardou. In such plays, fallen women and abandoned children of uncertain parentage figure prominently, letters cross and recross the stage, and dark secrets from the past rise to threaten the happiness of seemingly respectable, well-meaning characters. In Wilde's hands, the form of Victorian melodrama became something else entirely. Wilde introduced a new character to the genre, the figure of the "dandy" (a man who pays excessive attention to his appearance). This figure added a moral texture the form had never before possessed. The character of the dandy was heavily autobiographical and often a stand-in for Wilde himself, a witty, overdressed, self-styled philosopher who speaks in epigrams and paradoxes, ridicules the cant and hypocrisy of society's moral arbiters, and self-deprecatingly presents himself as trivial, shallow, and ineffectual. In fact, the dandy in these plays always proves to be deeply moral and essential to the happy resolution of the plot.

The Importance of Being Earnest was an early experiment in Victorian melodrama. Part satire, part comedy of manners, and part intellectual farce, this play seems to have

nothing at stake because the world it presents is so blatantly and ostentatiously artificial. Below the surface of the light, brittle comedy, however, is a serious subtext that takes aim at self-righteous moralism and hypocrisy, the very aspects of Victorian society that would, in part, bring about Wilde's downfall.

During 1895, however, a series of catastrophes stemming from Wilde's relationship with Lord Alfred, also a poet, led to personal humiliation and social, professional, and financial ruin. On February 28, 1895, two weeks after The Importance of Being Earnest's opening night, Lord Alfred's belligerent, homophobic father, the Marquess of Queensberry, publicly accused Wilde of "posing as a somdomite." The nobleman meant "sodomite," of course, an insulting and potentially defamatory term for a homosexual. Queensberry had for some time been harassing Wilde with insulting letters, notes, and confrontations and had hoped to disrupt the opening night of The Importance of Being Earnest with a public demonstration, which never took place. Against the advice of his friends, Wilde sued for libel and lost. Wilde probably should have fled the country, as the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885 had made homosexual acts punishable by up to two years' imprisonment. However, Wilde chose to stay and was arrested. Despite information about Wilde's private life and writings that emerged at the trial, the prosecution initially proved unsuccessful. However, Wilde was tried a second time, convicted, and sentenced to prison for two years.

Wilde may have remained in England for a number of reasons, including self-destructiveness, denial, desperation, and a desire for martyrdom. However, some historians have suggested that Wilde's relentless persecution by the government was a diversionary tactic. Lord Alfred's older brother was reportedly also having a homosexual affair with Archibald Philip Primrose, Lord Rosebery, the man who would become prime minister. Queensberry was apparently so outraged that he threatened to disclose the relationship, and the government reacted by punishing Wilde and his lover in an effort to assuage the marquess. In any case, Wilde served his full sentence under conditions of utmost hardship and cruelty. Following his release from prison, his health and spirit broken, he sought exile in France, where he lived out the last two years of his life in poverty and obscurity under an assumed name. He died in Paris in 1900.

For sixty or seventy years after Wilde's death, critics and audiences regarded The Importance of Being Earnest as a delightful but utterly frivolous and superficial comedy, a view that partly reflects the mindset of a period in which homosexuality remained a guarded topic. The decriminalization of homosexuality in England in 1967 and the emergence in American of an interest in gay culture, and particularly in the covert homosexual literature of the past, has made it possible to view the play in a different light. The play's danger and subversion are easier to see from a twenty-first-century perspective. In the ambiguity over exactly what people refer to when they speak of "wicked" or immoral behavior, we can detect a system of coded references to homosexuality, just as we can infer a more general comment on the hypocrisy of late Victorian society.

Five Major Types of Comedy

The main trends of English comedy can broadly be classified into Five groups, namely 'romantic comedy', 'comedy of manners', 'comedy of hunours', 'sentimental comedy' and the 'tragi-comedy' or 'dark comedy'.

Romantic Comedy

The term 'romantic comedy' is a somewhat vague appellation, which denotes a form of drama is which love is the main theme and love leads to a happy ending. The team 'romantic comedy' is generally applied to plays developed by Shakespeare and some of his Elizabethan contemporaries. These plays are generally concerned with love affairs that involve a beautiful and idealized heroine; the course of this love does not run smooth, but ultimately overcomes all difficulties to end in a happy union. In the Anatomy of Criticism (P.P 182-183) Northrop Frye points out that some of Shakespeare romantic comedies involve a movement from the normal world of conflict and trouble into the 'green world' – the idyllic, pastoral world of the Forest of Arden as in As You Like It, on the fairy haunted wood of A Midsummer Night's Dream – in which the problems and troubles of the real world are magically dissolved, enemies reconciled and true lovers united. Frye regards this phenomenon (together with other aspects of these comedies, such as their festive conclusion in the social – ritual of a wedding, a feast, a dance) as evidence that comic plots reflect Primitive myths and rituals celebrating the victory of spring over winter.

Comedy of Humours

Another important type of English comedy, conceived and pupularised by Ben Jonson, is the 'comedy of Humours'. The word 'humours' refers to bodily fluids to which medieval medicine attributed to the various types of human temperament according to the predominance of each within the body. Thus a preponderance of blood would make a person 'sanguine', while excess of phlegm would make him or her 'plegmatic', too much choler (yellow bile) would produce a melancholy one. In Jonson is 'Comedy of Humours' each of the major characters instead of being a well-balanced individual, has preponderant humour that gives him a characteristic distortion or eccentricity of disposition. Jonson expounds in his theory in the 'Introduction' to the play Every Man In his Humour (1598) and exemplifies the mode in his later comedies as well. Jonson himself wrote in his 'Introduction' to Every Man Out of his Humour:

> As when some one particular quality
>
> Doth so possess a man that it doth draw
>
> All his affects, his spirits, and his power
>
> In their confluxions, all to run way,
>
> This may be truly said to be a humour.

For example in Every Man in his Humour, the rich merchant kitely has a young and pretty wife, of whom he is madly jealous; jealously is his humour, the passion that rules has whole life, the young hero's father, Old Knowell, is always worried about his son's safety; anxiety is his humour; captain Bobadill is the talkative but cowardly old soldier; boastfulness is his humour. In Bartholomew Fair, Jonson shows us how the humours of various types Londoners are taken advantage of by the quick witted market people.

Comedy of Manners

The Phrase 'Comedy of manners' is particularly applied in English to the plays of the Restoration dramatists, and especially to Congreve (1670 – 1729) and Wycherley (1640-1716), but is a type of comedy which can flourish in any civilized urban society and we see it again in Sheridan (1751-1816) and Oscar Wilde (1854-1900). The 'comedy of manners' was early exemplified by Shakespeare's Love's Labour Lost and Much Ado

About Nothing. This form deals with the relations and intrigues of gentlemen and ladies living in a sophisticated society. It relies upon comic effect in great part on the wit and sparkle of the dialogues, and to a certain degree, on the ridiculous violations of social conventions and decorum by stupid characters such as would be wives, jealous husbands, foppish dandies. Excellent examples are Congreve's The Way of The World, Wycherley's The Country Wife. The main thrust in The 'comedy of Manners' is to make fun not so much of individual human being as of social groups and their fashionable manner. It is generally more or less satirical, though in a good-natured way. It is how ever a highly artificial drama, full of verbal with and sometimes inclined to be cynical and hard. This type of comedy was revived in the 18th century by Goldsmith (She stoops to Conquer) and Sheridan's The school for scandals and The Rivals). In the turn of the 19th century, Oscar Wilde rejuvenated this form of comedy in plays like The Importance of Being Earnest and Lady Winter Mere's Fan.

Sentimental Comedy

A middleclass reaction against the immortality of situation and the frequent indecency of dialogue in the rise of the 'sentimental comedy' of the 18th century. Jeremy Collier (1650-1726) protested against the permissiveness of the 'comedy of manners' specially those of Congreve and Vanbrugh, and wrote his treatise entitled Short View of The Immortality and Profaneness of The English Stage. One result of this was the appearance of the new 'sentimental comedy'. This form achieved some popularity with respectable middle-class audiences of the 18th century. It showed virtue rewarded by domestic bliss; its plots usually involved unbelievably good middle-class couple and emphasized pathos rather than humour. Pioneered by Richard Steele in The Funeral (1710) and more fully in The Concious Lovers (1722), it flourished in the mid-century with the French comedia larmoyonete (Tearful comedy) and in such plays as Huge Kelly's False Delicacy (1768). The pious moralizing of this tradition also involved an element of preaching as a result of which the entertainment values of these plays was reduced.

Tragi-Comedy

There are many plays which do not totally subscribe to the spirit of comedy, nor do they embody the tragic emotions. In parts, they may be cheerful but they point to some darker aspects of life as well. But generally these plays are also classified as comedies. Shakespeare's Measure for Measure and Eliot's The Cocktail Party, for example, might both be called comedies but they have very little in common with the main stream of the English comedies. To these plays, the term 'tragi-comedy' or 'black comedy' or 'dark comedy' have been applied. Shakespeare's later plays like The Winter's Tale and Cymbeline are 'tragi-comedies' with the pattern of sudden release from delay danger involved in the sudden release from delay danger involved in the plots. In modern drama, the term black comedy is often used to describe a kind of drama in which disturbing or sinister subjects like death, disease, or warfare are treated with bitter amusements usually in a manner calculated to offend and stock. Prominent in the 'Theatre of The Absurd', 'black comedy' is best represented in Beckett's Happy Days and Joe Orton's The Loot.

Historical Background to The Importance of Being Earnest

The Importance of Being Earnest is first and foremost a farce, a comedy of manners whose main goal is to amuse the audience, rather than to make them think. As a

comedy, it is rooted much less in a specific history or place than many plays. Nevertheless, the play does contain a few references to contemporary historical events, which suggest a troubled society underneath the glossiness of the characters that Wilde portrays. One of the primary critiques of Wilde's play is that it is form without content, and does not deal seriously with any social issues (this, of course, is consistent with Wilde's doctrine of Aestheticism). In a contemporary review, the socialist playwright George Bernard Shaw reacted to The Importance of Being Earnest's seeming heartlessness--he would prefer to think that people are capable of speaking something other than nonsense.

However, some of the topics mentioned briefly in the play indicate larger political issues that were the subject of heated debate at the time that it was produced. One such subject was the issue of Home Rule for Ireland. William Gladstone created a controversy in 1886 when he committed the British Liberal party to support Home Rule--self-governance for Ireland within the framework of the British Empire. A contentious Home Rule Bill was suppressed by the House of Lords only two years before the production of the Importance of Being Earnest. As Lady Bracknell examines Jack's suitability as a partner for Gwendolen, she inquires about his politics. Jack is a Liberal Unionist, meaning that he is a Liberal who does not support Home Rule. Lady Bracknell appears relieved, saying: "Oh, they count as Tories. They dine with us." The political distinction matters only insomuch as it affects Lady Bracknell's social engagements, rather than having to do with the right or wrong of Home Rule for Ireland.

The only reason for Wilde's characters to get incensed about politics is if politics threaten to disturb their hedonistic lifestyle or the social hierarchy that they have grown comfortable with. The threat of a revolution like the French revolution continuously hangs over British society. Lady Bracknell is exceedingly alarmed to hear that the imaginary Bunbury died by explosion. "Exploded! Was he the victim of a revolutionary outrage? I was not aware that Mr. Bunbury was interested in social legislation. If so, he is well punished for his morbidity." Her unease reflects a general feeling of fear regarding social unrest in the 1890s, particularly after a working-class riot in Trafalgar Square in 1885. The word morbidity does well to describe Wilde's characters' attitudes toward politics. It is difficult for them to understand an interest in something that is so far removed from their daily pleasures.

In last analysis, it is unfair to suggest that The Importance of Being Earnest is a shallow, universal farce which has no ties to the historical context in which it was created; however, Wilde's references to the crucial issues of his time are usually overshadowed by his characters' own petty concerns.

Character Map

The Importance of Being Earnest ; Play Summary

The play begins in the flat of wealthy Algernon Moncrieff (Algy) in London's fashionable West End. Algernon's aunt (Lady Bracknell) and her daughter (Gwendolen Fairfax) are coming for a visit, but Mr. Jack Worthing (a friend of Algy's) arrives first. Algernon finds it curious that Jack has announced himself as "Ernest." When Jack explains that he plans to propose marriage to Gwendolen, Algy demands to know why Jack has a cigarette case with the inscription, "From little Cecily with her fondest love." Jack explains that his real name is Jack Worthing, squire, in the country, but he assumes the name "Ernest" when he ventures to the city for fun. Cecily is his ward. While devouring all the cucumber sandwiches, Algernon confesses that he, too, employs deception when it's convenient. He visits an imaginary invalid friend named Bunbury when he needs an excuse to leave the city.

Lady Bracknell and Gwendolen arrive. Algernon explains that he cannot attend Lady Bracknell's reception because he must visit his invalid friend, Bunbury, but he offers to arrange the music for her party. While Algernon distracts Lady Bracknell in another room, Jack proposes to Gwendolen. Unfortunately, she explains that she really wants to marry someone named Ernest because it sounds so solidly aristocratic. However, she accepts his proposal, and he makes a mental note to be rechristened Ernest. Lady Bracknell returns and refutes the engagement. She interrogates Jack and finds him

lacking in social status. On her way out, Lady Bracknell tells Jack that he must find some acceptable parents. Gwendolen returns for Jack's address in the country. Algernon overhears and writes the address on his shirt cuff. He is curious about Cecily and decides to go "bunburying" in the country.

In the second act, the scene shifts to Jack Worthing's country estate where Miss Prism, Cecily Cardew's governess, is teaching Cecily in the garden. Miss Prism sings Jack's praises as a sensible and responsible man, unlike his brother Ernest, who is wicked and has a weak character. She teaches Cecily that good people end happily, and bad people end unhappily, according to the romantic novel Miss Prism wrote when she was young. The local vicar, Canon Chasuble, arrives and, sensing an opportunity for romance, takes Miss Prism for a walk in the garden. While they are gone, Algy shows up pretending to be Jack's wicked brother Ernest. He is overcome by Cecily's beauty. Determined to learn more about Cecily while Jack is absent, Algernon plans to stay for the weekend, then make a fast getaway before Jack arrives on Monday. However, Jack returns early in mourning clothes claiming that his brother Ernest has died in Paris. He is shocked to find Algy there posing as Ernest. He orders a dogcart — a small horse-drawn carriage — to send Algy back to London, but it is too late. Algernon is in love with Cecily and plans to stay there. When Jack goes out, Algernon proposes to Cecily, who gets out a diary and letters that she has already written, explaining that she had already imagined their engagement. She has always wanted to marry someone named Ernest, so Algy, like Jack, needs to arrange a rechristening.

Just when it seems that Jack and Algernon couldn't get into worse trouble, Gwendolen arrives, pursuing Jack, and discovers that his ward, Cecily, is unpleasantly beautiful. In conversation, they discover that they are both engaged to Ernest Worthing. A battle follows, cleverly carried out during the British tea ceremony. The situation is tense. Jack and Algernon arrive, and, in attempting to straighten out the Ernest problem, they alienate both women. The two men follow, explaining that they are going to be rechristened Ernest, and the women relent and agree to stay engaged.

Lady Bracknell shows up demanding an explanation for the couples' plans. When she discovers the extent of Cecily's fortune, she gives her consent to her engagement to Algernon; however, Jack's parentage is still a stumbling block to her blessings. Jack tells Lady Bracknell that he will not agree to Cecily's engagement until she is of age (35) unless he can marry Gwendolen. Dr. Chasuble arrives and announces that all is ready for the christenings. Jack explains that the christenings will no longer be necessary. Noting that Jack's present concerns are secular, the minister states that he will return to the church where Miss Prism is waiting to see him. Shocked at hearing the name "Prism," Lady Bracknell immediately calls for Prism and reveals her as the governess who lost Lady Bracknell's nephew 28 years earlier on a walk with the baby carriage. She demands to know where the baby is. Miss Prism explains that in a moment of distraction she placed the baby in her handbag and left him in Victoria Station, confusing him with her three-volume novel, which was placed in the baby carriage. After Jack asks for details, he quickly runs to his room and retrieves the handbag. Miss Prism identifies it, and Lady Bracknell reveals that Jack is Algernon's older brother, son of Ernest John Moncrieff, who died years ago in India. Jack now truly is Ernest, and Algernon/Cecily, Jack/Gwendolen, and Chasuble/Prism fall into each others' arms as Jack realizes the importance of being earnest.

The Importance of Being Earnest : Literary Analysis

At the 1895 opening of Oscar Wilde's most famous play, "The Importance of Being Earnest," the audience was liberally sprinkled with well-dressed young men wearing green carnations, Wilde's approved symbol for his gay followers. These patrons knew the play, an essay in appearances and secrets, was also written in code for gay men, starting with the title itself.

By common consent, then and after, "The Importance of Being Earnest" is Wilde's masterpiece. Its title is meant as a double-entendre. The protagonist, called Jack in the country and Ernest in town, is chasing a young lady who will only marry a man named Ernest because she desires the quality of being earnest above all others in her future husband. The play's second half revolves around attempts by not one but two characters to be christened officially with that same name as part of their frenzied skirt-chasing.

The boys in green carnations knew that "earnest" was also gay code for homosexual. If you were lunching at the Savoy Grill and wanted to nail someone's sexual identity, you quietly asked, "Is he earnest?" This converts a double-entendre to a triple one, and decoding the play further will open up delicious new meanings.

Two books enable us to do this decoding. Richard Ellmann's 1987 biography "Oscar Wilde" (Vintage paperback) is not only definitive; all Wilde studies coming after were based squarely on it. Another book approaches from a sleazier angle: Theo Aronson's "Prince Eddy and the Homosexual Underworld" (Barnes & Noble Books, 1994) chronicles the play culture of London's gay men of that time with its elaborate system of protected spaces and passwords. Chapter Eight of Karl Beckson's "London in the 1890s: A Cultural History" (Norton, 1992) adds still more detail. All of this was dramatized effectively in the 1997 film "Wilde."

Fortunately, Ernest can be seen, not simply read, in a definitive version that discreetly clarifies the play's text: Anthony Asquith's 1952 British film with Michael Redgrave, Edith Evans, and Margaret Rutherford, available on DVD. Here is decoding companion to that film.

The Albany: Asquith departs from the text by starting the story in Jack Worthing's apartment in The Albany, only then moving to his rakish friend Algernon's apartment. This is significant. The Albany was the best known and most prestigious set of bachelor apartments in London, close enough to Piccadilly Circus that management discreetly marketed their willingness to allow well-off male tenants to bring home male prostitutes acquired nearby-until, that is, Wilde's trial exposed vices that caused a panicked scramble to suppress such tolerance. In an early draft of the play, Miss Prism talks about one character who is "as bad as any young man who has chambers in the Albany, or indeed even in the vicinity of Piccadilly, can possibly be." Oscar's gay friend George Ives threw parties in apartment E4.

The silver cigarette case: Algernon has come to return Jack's silver cigarette case. This is how well-off gay men paid their male prostitutes to avoid prosecution; favorites even got their names engraved inside. The cases, of course, could be pawned for far more than the cash value of the services. But despite this precaution, the customer could still be blackmailed, and Wilde flirted with blackmailers regularly.

Bunbury: Whenever his Aunt Augusta required Algernon to perform some dull social service, Algie's imaginary friend Bunbury became ill or disconsolate in ways that required Algie's urgent attention. Bunbury, of course, was the English equivalent of bone-smuggling, and Algie certainly preferred bun-burying to dining with his aunt. Wilde also had a classmate by that name.

Cecily: the name of Jack Worthing's young ward, cloistered carefully in his country house, protected by her governess Miss Prism from the corrupting influence of guys like Algernon, who of course spends most of the play chasing her. Cecily is also gay slang for a kept boy, especially one kept away from the prying eyes of other gay men.

Watching Asquith's version we see that the theme of a double life is played out with all the key characters, just as it played out in Wilde's life right after the play opened. Wilde was bullied by his unstable boyfriend, Lord Alfred Douglas, to sue Douglas' father for libel. In the play, Victorian notions of wickedness are parodied as being trivial, but the vices revealed by Wilde in his court testimony were enough to ruin him. Another Wilde play, "An Ideal Husband," which also played to packed houses at the same time as "Earnest," is actually Wilde's essay on blackmail. Both plays closed after Wilde was arrested. His own double life, which everyone earnestly wished him to conceal, finally caught up with him. Hypocrisy had its revenge.

The Importance of Being Earnest : Themes

Duty and Respectability: - The aristocratic Victorians valued duty and respectability above all else. Earnestness — a determined and serious desire to do the correct thing — was at the top of the code of conduct. Appearance was everything, and style was much more important than substance. So, while a person could lead a secret life, carry on affairs within marriage or have children outside of wedlock, society would look the other way as long as the appearance of propriety was maintained. For this reason, Wilde questions whether the more important or serious issues of the day are overlooked in favor of trivial concerns about appearance. Gwendolen is the paragon of this value. Her marriage proposal must be performed correctly, and her brother even practices correct proposals. Gwendolen's aristocratic attitude is "In matters of grave importance, style, not sincerity is the vital thing." The trivial is important; the serious is overlooked.

The tea ceremony in Act II is a hilarious example of Wilde's contention that manners and appearance are everything. The guise of correctness is the framework for war. Both women, thinking they are engaged to the same person, wage a civilized "war" over the tea service while the servants silently watch. When Gwendolen requests no sugar, Cecily adds four lumps to her cup. Although she asks for bread and butter, Gwendolen is given a large slice of cake. Her true feelings come out only in an aside that Cecily supposedly cannot hear: "Detestable girl!" Gwendolen is also appalled to find that Cecily is living in Jack's country home, and she inquires about a chaperone. Wilde gives examples again and again of the aristocrat's concern for propriety, that everything is done properly no matter what those good manners might be camouflaging.

The Absence of Compassion**: -** Two areas in which the Victorians showed little sympathy or compassion were illness and death. When Lady Bracknell hears that Bunbury died after his doctors told him he could not live, she feels he has — in dying — acted appropriately because he had the correct medical advice. "Illness of any kind is hardly a thing to be encouraged in others. Health is the primary duty of life." Lady Bracknell, like other aristocrats, is too busy worrying about her own life, the advantages of her daughter's marriage, and her nephew's errors in judgment to feel any compassion for others. Gwendolen, learning from her mother, is totally self-absorbed and definite about what she wants. She tells Cecily, "I never travel without my diary. One should have something sensational to read in the train." Wilde seems to be taking to task a social class that thinks only of itself, showing little compassion or sympathy for the trials of those less fortunate.

Religion**: -** Another serious subject — religion — is also a topic of satire. While concerns of the next world would be an appropriate topic for people of this world, it seems to be shoved aside in the Victorian era. Canon Chasuble is the symbol of religious thought, and Wilde uses him to show how little the Victorians concerned themselves with attitudes reflecting religious faith. Chasuble can rechristen, marry, bury, and encourage at a moment's notice with interchangeable sermons filled with meaningless platitudes. Even Lady Bracknell mentions that christenings are a waste of time and, especially, money. Chasuble's pious exterior betrays a racing pulse for Miss Prism: "Were I fortunate enough to be Miss Prism's pupil, I would hang upon her lips." Quickly correcting his error, the minister hides his hardly holy desires in the language of metaphor. Wilde's satire here is gentle and humorous, chiding a society for its self-importance.

Popular Culture**: -** The popular attitudes of the day about the French, literary criticism, and books are also subjects of Wilde's humor. Wilde wittily asserts that Victorians believe that nothing good comes from France, except for (in Wilde's mind) the occasional lesbian maid. Otherwise, France is a good place to kill off and request the burial of Ernest. As the good reverend says, "I fear that hardly points to any very serious state of mind at the last." Literary criticism is for "people who haven't been at a University. They do it so well in the daily papers." Modern books are filled with truths that are never pure or simple, and scandalous books should be read but definitely in secret. Again Wilde criticizes the Victorians for believing that appearance is much more important than truth. He takes the opportunity to insert many examples of popular thought, revealing bias, social bigotry, thoughtlessness and blind assumptions.

Secret Lives**: -** Because Victorian norms were so repressive and suffocating, Wilde creates episodes in which his characters live secret lives or create false impressions to express who they really are. Jack and Algernon both create personas to be free. These other lives allow them to neglect their duties — in Algernon's case — or to leave their duties and pursue pleasure — in Jack's case. Very early in Act I, Wilde sets up these secret lives, and they follow through until the final act. When Jack and Algernon realize their marriages will end their pursuit of pleasure, they both admit rather earnestly, "You won't be able to run down to the country quite so often as you used to do, dear Algy," and "You won't be able to disappear to London quite so frequently as your wicked custom was." Marriage means the end of freedom, pleasure, wickedness, and the beginning of duty and doing what is expected. Of course, Jack and Algernon could continue to don their masks after they marry Gwendolen and Cecily, but they will have to be cautious and make sure society is looking the other way.

Passion and Morality**: -** Wilde's contention that a whole world exists separate from Victorian manners and appearances is demonstrated in the girlish musings of Cecily. When she hears that Jack's "wicked" brother Ernest is around, she is intensely desirous of meeting him. She says to Algernon, "I hope you have not been leading a double life, pretending to be wicked and being really good all the time." The thought of meeting someone who lives outside the bounds of prudery and rules is exciting to naïve Cecily. Even using the name Ernest for his secret life is ironic because Algernon is not being dutiful — earnest — in living a secret life.

Various characters in the play allude to passion, sex and moral looseness. Chasuble and Prism's flirting and coded conversations about things sexual, Algernon stuffing his face to satisfy his hungers, the diaries (which are the acceptable venues for passion), and Miss Prism's three-volume novel are all examples of an inner life covered up by suffocating rules. Even Algernon's aesthetic life of posing as the dandy, dressing with studied care,

neglecting his bills, being unemployed, and pursuing pleasure instead of duty is an example of Victorians valuing trivialities. Once Algernon marries he will have suffocating rules and appearances to keep up. Wilde's characters allude to another life beneath the surface of Victorian correctness. Much of the humor in this play draws a fine line between the outer life of appearances and the inner life of rebellion against the social code that says life must be lived earnestly.

Courtship and Marriage**: -** Oscar Wilde felt these Victorian values were perpetuated through courtship and marriage, both of which had their own rules and rituals. Marriage was a careful selection process. When Algernon explains that he plans to become engaged to Jack's ward, Cecily, Lady Bracknell decides, "I think some preliminary enquiry on my part would not be out of place." When Lady Bracknell pummels Jack with questions about parents, politics, fortune, addresses, expectations, family solicitors, and legal encumbrances, his answers must be proper and appropriate for a legal union between the two families to be approved. Fortune is especially important, and when Jack and Cecily's fortunes are both appropriate, the next problem is family background. Because Jack does not know his parents, Lady Bracknell suggests he find a parent — any with the right lineage will do — and find one quickly. Appearance, once again, is everything. Duty (not joy, love or passion) is important, further substantiating Algy's contention that marriage is a loveless duty: "A man who marries without knowing Bunbury [an excuse for pleasure] has a very tedious time of it." Marriage is presented as a legal contract between consenting families of similar fortunes; background, love, and happiness have little to do with it.

Perpetuating the Upper Class**: -** The strict Victorian class system, in which members of the same class marry each other, perpetuates the gulf between the upper, middle and lower classes. Snobbish, aristocratic attitudes further preserve the distance between these groups. Jack explains to Lady Bracknell that he has no politics. He considers himself a Liberal Unionist. Lady Bracknell finds his answer satisfactory because it means that he is a Tory, or a conservative. Jack's home in London is on the "unfashionable side" of Belgrave Square, so "that could easily be altered." When Jack inquires whether she means the "unfashionable" or the side of the street, Lady Bracknell explains, "Both, if necessary." The French Revolution is held up as an example of what happens when the lower class is taught to question its betters. Education is not for learning to think; it is for mindlessly following convention. Lady Bracknell approves of ignorance. In fact, she explains, "The whole theory of modern education is radically unsound. Fortunately in England, at any rate, education produces no effect whatsoever. If it did, it would prove a serious danger to the upper classes, and probably lead to acts of violence in Grosvenor Square." Thinking causes discontent, and discontent leads to social revolution. That simply will not do.

Class Conflict**: -** One might think aristocrats would see the error of their ways and try to be more virtuous in a moral sense. However, they see their attitudes as the virtuous high ground and believe that other classes should conform to aristocratic attitudes and see the error of their own ways. When Miss Prism seems to chide the lower classes for producing so many children for Chasuble to christen, she appears to see it as a question of thrift. "I have often spoken to the poorer classes on the subject [of christenings]. But they don't seem to know what thrift is." Chasuble speaks humorously of the penchant of the aristocracy to dabble in good causes that do not disrupt their own lives too much. He mentions a sermon he gave for the Society for the Prevention of Discontent Among the Upper Orders. To the Victorians, reform means keeping the current social and economic system in place by perpetuating upper-class virtues and economy.

Every page, every line of dialogue, every character, each symbol, and every stage direction in The Importance of Being Earnest is bent on supporting Wilde's contention that social change happens as a matter of thoughtfulness. Art can bring about such thoughtfulness. If the eccentric or unusual is to be replaced with correct behavior and thought, human sympathy and compassion suffer. If strict moral values leave no room for question, a society loses much of what is known as humanity.

Love and Marriage: Perspectives from Oscar Wilde's The Importance of Being Ernest

Oscar Wilde was a self-described antinomian (p. 1807), one for whom the regular rules for society didn't apply. The fact, therefore that he should have written The Importance of Being Ernest, is not at all surprising.

The Importance of Being Ernest is a cleverly woven satire in which many of the rules, morays, and hypocritical practices and ideas of Wilde's day were made a mockery. In an interview, Wilde was quoted as saying in reference to this play, "It has as its philosophy . . . that we should treat all the trivial things of life seriously, and all the serious things of life with sincere and studied triviality." (p. 1761)

True to his intentions, Wilde exercised great skill and little restraint in crafting a satire that poked fun at many of society's most sacred and untouchable institutions. Throughout the play, Wilde's characters' assault the hypocrisy of society with a series of biting commentaries. The plot of the play is built upon the desires of two young men to marry two young women who in turn desire to marry only men named Ernest.

As marriage is at the plot's core, it makes some sense that Wilde takes frequent and steady aim at this institution and the expectations and customs which have formed themselves around it. This is the case, even though marriage was sought after by these two young men in desperate and absurd ways. Among the views expressed by Wilde's characters is the idea that romance and happiness are hindered within the bonds of matrimony. Algernon, in his counsel to Jack regarding his desire to propose marriage to Algernon's cousin, had the following to say.

> **"ALGERNON I really don't see anything romantic in proposing. It is very romantic to be in love. But there is nothing romantic about a definite proposal. Why, one may be accepted. One usually is, I believe. Then the excitement is all over. The very essence of romance is uncertainty. If ever I get married, I'll try to forget the fact.**
>
> **"JACK I have no doubt about that, Dear Algy. The Divorce Court was specially invented for people whose memories are so curiously constituted." (p. 1763)**

In other words: As uncertainty is the basis for romance, once marriage is proposed, romance ends.

The idea that marriage is a source of stress and unhappiness is highlighted as well. In describing a visit to an acquaintance who was recently widowed, Lady Bracknell said,

> **" . . . I never saw a woman so altered; she looks quite twenty years younger." In a later dialogue, Lady Bracknell said the following in regards to her late brother-in-law, " . . . He was eccentric, I admit. But**

> **only in later years. And that was the result of the Indian climate, and marriage, and indigestion, and other things of that kind." (p. 1804)**

Marriage, in this case, was placed on a par with respect to its effects upon the man's psyche to some relatively uncomfortable conditions.

According to Algernon, marriage would be tedious if the husband didn't have an imagined friend like his own Bunbury to whom he could pay frequent visits. As he put it, **" . . . You don't seem to realize, that in married life three is company and two is none." (p. 1767)**

A further point on which Wilde disparaged the institution of marriage has to do with the ways in which a spouse is chosen. The play's characters make their decisions on marital partners quickly and with little thought devoted to substantive issues related to their choice of spouses. In the case of Algernon and Cecily, Algernon, in the guise of Jack's younger brother Ernest, declared his love and proposed marriage after a single afternoon together. Following this however, Cecily informs him that in fact she had actually been engaged to him for nearly three months. Having heard so much about the brother Ernest her guardian Jack had invented as an excuse to visit town frequently, she became attracted to him. After a short period of imagined courtship, they became engaged. (pp. 1786 and 1787)

An additional point regarding the choice of suitors had to do with their names. For both Cecily and Gwendolen, it was vital that they marry someone of the name Ernest. Gwendolen saw it as her ideal to marry a man of the name Ernest. When she heard that her cousin had a friend by that name, she was instantly intrigued. She described the name Ernest as having a musical quality lacking in most names. She went so far as to pity any woman married to a man whose name was Jack as that name lacked vibration. She concluded that the only safe name was Ernest. (p. 1770) Cecily for her part had always had the fantasy of loving a man named Ernest. She felt that the name inspired confidence. (p. 1787) For both women, marriage to anyone with another name would have been inconceivable even though they freely professed great love for the men who had asked them for their hands.

A satire can be compared to a caricature in its ability to point up flaws and distinctive features by enlarging and expanding upon them to the point where they dominate the portrait and give it a distinctly comic dimension. The flaws inherent in 19th century society in general and its prevailing attitudes toward marriage specifically became, under Wilde's pen, a ready source for comic social commentary.

The Importance of Being Earnest as a farcical comedy

An Artificial, Farcical Comedy: - The Importance of Being Earnest belongs to a literary genre known as artificial comedy. This kind of play flourished during the Restoration in England and was subsequently revived by Congreve. This kind of comedy is entirely lacking in truth to nature, and it creates an artificial, imaginary, illusory world. The Importance of Being Earnest too is deficient in truth to nature. However, it is free from the indecency and obscenity which were a glaring feature of Restoration comedy. The Importance of Being Earnest is characterized by exaggeration and extravagance both in its plot and its dialogue. In fact, the keynote of this play is absurdity. The proper description of this play is to call it a farce.

An Artist in Sheer Nonsense: - One of the contemporary reviewers of this play expressed the view that by writing The Importance of Being Earnest Wilde "found himself as an artist in sheer nonsense". That reviewer called this play a farce "in which there is no discordant note of seriousness". "It is of nonsense all compact, and better nonsense our stage has. not seen," he added. In this play Wilde shows himself as "an artificer of the ludicrous". There is no philosophy, no profundity, no underlying significance, no symbolism, and no theme even in this play. It is just talk, witty talk, and the chief interest of thee play lies in that witty talk.

A Trivial Comedy For Serious People: - Wide described the play as a "trivial comedy", and, he was right ; but he also described it as a trivial comedy "for serious people", which is a paradox characteristic of Wilde. How can a trivial comedy appeal to serious people ? Perhaps Wilde meant that even serious people would be moved to laughter by the comedy of this play. Or, perhaps, he meant that, though it was a trivial comedy,, it did convey certain ideas which might interest serious people.

The Farcical Situation of a Baby Found in a Hand-Bag: - The distinguishing feature of a farcical comedy, as already indicated above, is exaggeration to the point of absurdity. Now, most of the situations in The Importance of Being Earnest are absurd and they amuse us by their very absurdity. The central situation about which the play hinges is Jack's having been found in a hand-bag in the cloak-room of a railway station in London. Jack is thus a foundling. (A foundling is a child who is found somewhere, having been abandoned or forsaken, most probably because it was -an illegitimate child and its mother wanted to get. rid of it in the hope that somebody else would find it and bring it up out of sympathy or pass it on to an orphanage). The fact of` being a foundling is not by itself absurd. What is absurd is that Miss Prism, the nurse, committed a blunder by putting the child in a hand-bag and the three-volume novel written by her in the perambulator instead of putting the manuscript in the hand-bag and letting the child remain in the perambulator. Now, it is impossible for us to believe that anybody, no matter how absentminded, can commit a blunder of that kind. That is not the only absurdity. We do not understand why, after having committed that blunder, Miss Prism did not go back to her employers to report the loss of the child and why she simply disappeared from the scene. There is nothing absurd about Mr. Thomas Cardew's discovery of the foundling, but it is absurd that he should have named the child Worthing because he was having a first-class railway ticket for a sea-side resort called Worthing.

The Witty Remarks Made By Lady Bracknell: - The absurdity of the manner in which Jack was lost as an infant serves as the basis for a number of witty remarks by Lady Bracknell and also as the basis for her rejection of Jack as her would-be son-in-law. When, in the course of her interrogation of Jack, she is told that he does not know his parentage, she tells him that she can never allow her daughter "to marry into a cloak-room and form an alliance with a parcel", which is one of her most witty remarks. When Jack asks her what he should do under the circumstances, her advice to him is to try and acquire some relations as soon as possible and to make a definite effort to produce at any rate one parent, of either sex, as soon as possible. When, towards the end of the play, Miss Prism gives an account of how she had lost the child, Jack jumps to the conclusion that he is the illegitimate son of Miss Prism herself and so he amuses us by offering to forgive his supposed mother for her act of folly in having been seduced and having given birth to an illegitimate child.

The Absurdity of Gwendolen's Rapturous Reaction to the Name "Ernest" : - Another absurdity which could be found only in a farcical comedy is Gwendolen's rapturous reaction to the name of Ernest. She tells Jack that it had always been her ideal to love

some one of the name of Earnest because there is something in this name that inspires absolute confidence. She adds that the moment her cousin Algernon first mentioned to, her the fact that he had a friend called Ernest, she knew that she was destined; to love the man having that name. She also makes the paradoxical statement that she was far from indifferent to Jack even before having met him. He always had an irresistible fascination for her, she says. She also makes it clear that she could not love a man with any other name. The name Jack, for instance, is not acceptable to her because this name is a notorious domesticity for John. Gwendolen pities any woman who is married to a man called John because such a woman would never enjoy the pleasure of a single moment's solitude. The name Ernest, she says, is a divine name, with a music of its own. It is a name that produces vibrations. All Gwendolen's comments on the name Ernest are absurd, but delightfully witty. No woman in her senses would talk in this way about a name, but this very talk constitutes one of the comic highlights of the play.

The Absurdity of Cecily's Having Fallen in Love With Algernon: - Another absurdity in this farcical comedy is Cecily's similar reaction to the name Ernest. Cecily too says that there is something in the name Ernest which seems to inspire absolute confidence, and she too pities any poor married woman whose husband is not called Ernest. She too says that it had always been a girlish dream of hers to love some one whose name was Ernest. We have already noted the absurdity of Gwendolen's reaction to the name Ernest, and now a similar reaction oh the part of another girl to that name makes the situation doubly absurd. Not only that, the absurdity in Cecily's case is further heightened by the account she gives to Jack of now she tell in love with him and got engaged to him in her imagination. She tells Jack that she had become engaged to him on the kith of February, about three months ago, and that the next day she had bought an engagement ring in his name and also a bangle with the true lover's knot which she promised him in her imagination always to wear. The absurdity does not end here. Cecily has also been writing letters to her lover, and been replying to those letters on his behalf. She always wrote three times a week, and sometimes oftener. "Oh one occasion she broke off her engagement with him because of a quarrel, but she forgave him within the same week and got engaged to him again.

The Absurdity of the Proposed Christenings: - Yet another absurdity in the play is "the decision of both Algernon and Jack to be rechristened in order to acquire the name of Ernest watch has fascinated their beloveds. Both of them make appointments with Dr. Chasuble for the christening ceremonies which Dr. Chasuble readily agrees to perform is really surprising and incredible that two sensible, well-educated girls should be fascinated by a name, and that two sensible and well-educated men should think of changing their names to Ernest because of that fascination. But farcical situations are always incredible or at least improbable.

The Absurdity of Certain Remarks and Statements: - Then there are some remarks made by the various characters, in the play which are too preposterous to be believed, and these remarks too are part of the farce. For instance, Gwendolen makes the paradoxical and amusing remark that the simplicity of Jack's character makes him exquisitely incomprehensible to her. (if a man's character is simple, it should be perfectly comprehensible and not incomprehensible). Cecily makes the remark that the memory of a human being records the things that have never happened and could no; possibly have happened, which too is a paradoxical statement. Dr. Chasuble says that his sermon on the meaning of the manna in the wilderness can be adapted to almost any occasion, joyful or distressing. Cecily's keenness to enter in her diary the words that Algernon speaks in praise of her beauty is also absurd. Her saying that Dr. Chasuble is a great scholar who has never written a single book is also a remark of that kind. Algernon

makes the remark that half of the people who get into the Bankruptcy Court are called Algernon. Another remark of the same kind which Algernon makes is that, when he is in. trouble, eating is the only thing that consoles him.

The Realistic Elements in the Play: - In spite of so many absurdities in this play, it must be admitted that there are a number of realistic, and credible situations and happenings in the play also. For instance, there is nothing, nonsensical or absurd or fantastic about Algernon's invention of Bunbury and Jack's invention of a younger brother called Ernest. We all seek excuses for some of out unusual or objectionable activities, and both Algernon and Jack have created two persons in order to cover up their escapades. Lady Bracknell's reaction to Jack's account of his origin is also perfectly believable. No society lady would agree to the marriage of her daughter with a man whose parentage is not known. Lady Bracknell's reaction to the fact that Cecily has a large amount of money in her name is also perfectly believable, because a bride who can bring a rich dowry is always acceptable to people. There is nothing fantastic about the three love-affairs in the play also. It is perfectly natural for Jack to be in love with Gwendolen, for Algernon to fall in love with Cecily as soon as he sees her, and for Dr Chasuble to be attracted by Miss Prism and to marry her in order to relieve his loneliness even though the Primitive Church was opposed to matrimony. Nor is there anything absurd about Gwendolen's flight from home to meet her lover at his country home. So many girls run away from their homes to join their lovers.

The Possible Appeal of This Play For Serious People: - It is quite possible that Wilde, apart from providing rich comic fare to his audiences, wanted also the serious people among them to derive some food for thought from his play. Wilde posed as a "trifler", but he was a, trifler with a capacity for, thinking, and there is often a wonderful suggestiveness in his lightest banter and his wildest paradox. Several remarks in the play seem-to have a" serious point. For instance, the excessive consumption of wine by servants at parties at. Algernon's flat is the kind of complaint which all bachelors will share. Again, Algernon voices a well established fact that, strictly speaking, romance ends when a proposal of marriage is accepted. Algernon is right also when he speaks of English society of the time suffering from the corruption which was depicted in French drama. That relatives are a pack of tedious people is another observation containing a large measure of truth. Another serious element in the play is the portrayal of Lady Bracknell as a snobbish woman with a mercenary outlook. This portrayal is a satirical attack on social snobbery, class-consciousness, and greed for money. The portrayal of Dr. Chasuble may also be taken in a serious light as a satirical picture of the .hypocrisy and shallowness of certain members of the clergy. Furthermore, the play also poses the problem as to how Jack should have been treated by society if he had really been an abandoned, illegitimate child. Gwendolen, no doubt, finds Jack's origin to be exciting or stirring, but Lady Bracknell rejects him summarily, and it is Lady Bracknell, who is the true representative of fashionable society. Indeed, there is much food for thought in the play for serious people, and the author has made it very enjoyable too by his wit.

The Importance of Being Earnest : A comedy of dialogue

Abundant Use of Paradox, Epigram, and Comic Irony: - The Importance of Being Earnest is a comedy of dialogue, abounding in the use of paradox, epigram, and irony. All these three devices produce a comic effect in this play, even though it is possible for a dramatist to use these devices for a serious purpose also. There are a number of paradoxical statements, epigrammatic remarks, and ironical or sarcastic remarks, all of a

comic nature so" as to amuse us. When the play is presented on the stage, the audience would keep laughing most of the time because of the witty paradoxes and witty remarks of an ironical nature.

Paradoxical Statements Made By Algernon: - A paradoxical statement may mean something seemingly absurd yet true in fact ; or it may mean a statement apparently at variance with or in opposition to established principles yet demonstrably true ; or it may mean a statement expressing an idea which is contrary to received opinion. Almost every character in The Importance of Being Earnest makes paradoxical remarks which are witty. At the very outset, for instance, Algernon says that the lower orders of society should set a good example of moral responsibility for the upper classes. This is a paradoxical statement, because the accepted view is that the upper classes should set a good example for the lower classes to follow. Algernon soon afterwards, talking to Jack, makes the statement that more than half of modern culture depends on what people should not read. This is a paradoxical remark because, in actual fact, reading contributes to the development of culture. Another paradoxical statement made by Algernon is that the truth is rarely pure and never simple, the accepted view being that truth can be pure and -simple. Algernon here adds that modern literature would be. a .complete impossibility if truth were either pure or simple, and this is another paradox. Algernon also says that literary criticism should be left to people who have not been at a university, and this too is a paradoxical statement because in actual fact literary critics are people who have had the benefit of a university education. When Algernon demands from Jack an explanation of the inscription on his cigarette-case, Algernon speaks in a paradoxical manner, saying to Jack : "Now produce your explanation, and pray make it improbable," whereas normally we would say : "Now produce your explanation, and pray make it probable or plausible." When Algernon describes women's flirtation with their own husbands as washing their clean linen in public, he is again making a paradoxical statement because the idiom is "to wash one's dirty linen in public" Another paradoxical statement made by Algernon is that in married life three is company and two is none, whereas the common saying is that two is company and three is none. Algernon again makes a paradoxical statement when he says that people who are not serious about their meals are very shallow-minded, because the accepted view is that people who are too particular about their meals must be shallow-minded and not in the habit of thinking. Algernon also says that he loves to hear his relations abused and that it is the only thing that makes him put up with them at all. This is a paradoxical statement because normally we do not want to hear our relatives abused. Another paradoxical remark from Algernon is as follows : "It is awfully hard work doing nothing." How can idleness or doing nothing be regarded as awfully hard work ? (This remark has also an epigrammatic quality). When Algernon says that he loves scrapes (or difficult situations) because they are the only things that are never serious be makes a paradoxical statement because scrapes or difficulties are certainly serious matters which give rise to feelings of anxiety in us. Another paradoxical statement made by Algernon is as follows : "Well, one must be serious about something, if one wants "to have any amusement in life." How can seriousness about anything be a source of amusement ? Yet another paradoxical statement made by him is the following : "When I am in trouble, eating is the only thing that consoles me. At the present moment I am eating muffins because I am unhappy." The real fact is that when one is in trouble or is unhappy, one feels no desire to eat anything.

Paradoxical Remarks Made By Jack: - Jack also makes a number of paradoxical statements which are quite amusing. For instance, when he sees tea-cups and cucumber sandwiches on the table in Algernon's flat, he says to Algernon : "Why all these cups ?

Why cucumber sandwiches ? Why such reckless extravagance in one so young ?" In the first place, cucumber sandwiches are no sign of reckless extravagance ; and secondly it is only the young who are recklessly extravagant. Talking of modern culture, Jack says that it is not the sort of thing one should talk about in private. This is a paradoxical remark because there is no reason why modern culture or any other culture should not be talked about in private as well as in public. Jack makes another paradoxical statement when he says that the truth is not quite the sort of thing one should tell to a nice, sweet, and refined girl, because the normal view of the matter is that a nice and sweet girl should always be told the truth and should not be deceived. Talking of Cecily, Jack says that she is not a silly girl, that she has an excellent appetite and takes long walks, adding paradoxically that she pays no attention at all to her studies. Yet another paradoxical statement made by Jack is that it is a terrible thing for a man to find out suddenly that all his life he has been speaking nothing but the truth. Why should it be something terrible for anybody to discover that he has been speaking the truth? After making this statement, Jack asks Gwendolen whether she can forgive .him for having spoken nothing but the truth, and this question which he asks her is also paradoxical.

Gwendolen's Paradoxical Remarks: - A number of paradoxical and witty remarks come from Gwendolen also. When Algernon says that he cannot allow Gwendolen to have a private conversation with Jack, Gwendolen makes the following paradoxical remark to Algernon : "Algy, you always adopt a strictly immoral attitude towards life. You are not quite old enough to do that." Then she makes another paradoxical statement by saying : "The old-fashioned respect for the young is fast dying out." (Respect is always shown to the elderly people and not to the young). Speaking to Jack, Gwendolen says : "The simplicity of your character makes you exquisitely incomprehensible to me." (If a man has a simple character, he is fully comprehensible, and not incomprehensible as Gwendolen says). Another paradoxical remark made by Gwendolen is that the home is the proper sphere for a man, while the actual fact is that the home is the proper sphere for a woman. Gwendolen adds that when a man begins to neglect his domestic duties he becomes painfully effeminate, and this too is a paradoxical remark. A very amusing paradoxical remark is made by Gwendolen when, on being asked by Jack to wait for him till he comes back, she says to him : "If you are not too long, I will wait here for you all my life." The two parts of this reply by Gwendolen contradict each other.

Cecily's Paradoxical Remarks: - Cecily makes her own contribution to the paradoxical and witty statements in this play. After her German lessons she becomes less attractive in her appearance, she says to her governess. Memory, says Cecily, usually records the things that have never happened, and could not possibly have happened. When Miss Prism tells Cecily that she had once written a novel, Cecily makes the following paradoxical remark : "I don't like novels that end happily. They depress me so much." (Why should novels with a happy ending depress anybody ?) When Algernon, after saying that he would like to reform himself, tells Cecily that he is feeling hungry, Cecily makes the paradoxical statement that when one is going to lead an entirely new life one requires regular and wholesome meals. Yet another paradoxical remark that she makes is that it is always painful to part from people whom one has known for a very short time. Speaking of her engagement with Algernon, she says that it would hardly have been a really serious, engagement if it had not been broken off at least once. Cecily also makes the paradoxical remark that, whenever one has anything unpleasant to say, one should always be quite candid. (Actually, of course, when somebody has anything unpleasant to say, we expect him not to say it in a blunt or candid manner).

Lady Bracknell's Paradoxical Remarks: - Lady Bracknell, who has a very fertile and pungent wit, makes a number of paradoxical statements. Speaking of Lady Harbury who

has lost her husband, Lady Bracknell says that Lady Harbury is now an altered woman because she looks at least twenty years younger. (Normally, when a woman has become a widow, she looks older on account of her grief at her widowhood). Lady Bracknell, paradoxically enough, does not approve of anything that interferes with anybody's natural ignorance. She feels happy to note that in England education produces no effect whatsoever. If education were to produce any effect, it would prove to be a serious danger to the upper classes. These are paradoxical remarks because the accepted view is that ignorance should be removed through education, and that education has a beneficial effect upon all classes. When Jack admits that he smokes, Lady Bracknell paradoxically says : "I am glad to hear it. A man should always have an occupation of some kind." (She regards smoking as an occupation). Another paradoxical remark made by Lady Bracknell is that a girt with a simple, unspoiled nature like Gwendolen is not expected to reside in the countryside. Her comments on the death of Mr. Bunbury are also of a paradoxical nature. Mr. Bunbury, she says, seems to have had great confidence in the opinion of his physicians. Lady Bracknell recommends, Algernon as a would-be husband for Cecily by making the paradoxical remark that Algernon has nothing but his debts to depend upon I When Lady Bracknell thinks that a heated argument is going on upstairs, she makes the following paradoxical statement : "I dislike arguments of any kind. They are always vulgar, and often convincing." (Actually convincing arguments appeal to people, but Lady Bracknell finds convincing arguments to be unwelcome).

Witty Epigrams in the Play: - Witty epigrams are also contributed to the play by almost all the characters. An epigram is an interesting or amusing thought expressed in a few words. Or, an epigram may be defined as a short, pointed saying, ingenious in thought and clever in expression. Thus Algernon makes an epigrammatic remark when he says that the very essence of romance is uncertainty. He then makes another epigrammatic remark when he says that divorces are made in heaven, thus giving a twist to the well-known saying that marriages are made in heaven. Algernon also makes the epigrammatic remark that the only way to behave to a woman is to make love to her if she is pretty, and to someone else if she is not pretty. Jack gives us an epigram when he says : "When one is in town one amuses oneself. When one is in the country one amuses other people." Again, Jack makes an epigrammatic remark by saying "It is very vulgar to talk like a dentist when one isn't a dentist. It produces a false impression." Cecily makes an epigrammatic remark when she says: "Of course, a man who is much talked about is always very attractive. One feels there must be something in him, after all." Then we get a few epigrams from Miss Prism also. "Even these metallic problems have their melodramatic side," she says with reference to the devaluation of the rupee. By persistently remaining single, a man converts himself into a permanent public temptation, says Miss Prism in an epigrammatic manner, adding in the same style : "Men should be more careful ; this very celibacy leads weaker vessels astray." Miss Prism gives us a number of epigrammatic statements in one of her speeches "Maturity can always be depended on. Ripeness can be trusted. Young women are green."

Irony in the Play: - There is plenty of irony in this play, and it is comic irony of course. The essence of comic irony is mockery or deception of one kind or another, and its force derives from the pleasure in contrasting "appearances" with "reality". There are various types of comic irony. The simplest and the most commonly used is verbal irony which occurs when the speaker says the opposite of what he means and yet conveys his real meaning so as to produce an amusing effect. In this case the proper signification of the words constitutes the appearance ; and the destined meaning is the reality. Irony also means a kind of ridicule which exposes the errors or faults of others by seeming to approve or defend them. Irony means, too, pretending ignorance with the intention of

irritating or perplexing somebody in agreement or dispute. Jack's remade to Lady Bracknell : "How extremely kind of you," when Lady Bracknell says that she is satisfied with certain particulars about Cecily, is ironical. So is Lady Bracknell's remark : "A life crowded with incident," when Jack tells her about the certificates which be has got regarding Cecily's birth, baptism, etc. There is irony in Algernon's pointing out to his servant that in a bachelor's house the servants invariably drink costly wines. (In this case Algernon knows the reason but pretends ignorance). There is irony in Cecily's remark to Miss Prism : "You know German and geology, and things of that kind influence a man very much." (Here Cecily is ridiculing Miss Prism's self-conceit about her knowledge of German and geology). Comic irony also exists in a clash between one aspect and another of some double situation, the whole of which is understood by the reader and some of the characters, while other characters are ignorant of it. An obvious example is Algernon's coming to Jack's country house under the assumed name of Ernest and pretending to be Jack's younger brother. Here the reader, as well as Algernon and Jack, knows the reality, but Cecily and the others do not.

The Importance of Being Earnest as a social satire

The Targets of Satire in This Play: -A satire is a humorous or witty exposure of human failings; weaknesses, follies, absurdities, and pretensions. The Importance of Being Earnest is truly a satire, and a very witty and amusing one. The principal target of satire in this play is the English upper class of the time, although we have a couple of satirical portraits of persons belonging to certain different orders of society, namely those of a clergyman and a governess. The author in this play ridicules certain typical representatives of the English aristocracy of the time, and he equally ridicules certain other persons as well.

The Satirical Portrayal of Algernon: - Let us take the case of Algernon first. He is a typical representative of the English upper class of the time, and he has been portrayed in a satirical manner. His shallowness, irresponsibility, extravagance, and vanity have been exposed in such a manner as to make us laugh at this specimen of the aristocracy. If the servants in his house drink his champagne, he treats the matter light-heartedly. He throws expensive parties, even though he admits that he is short of money. He tells Jack that he would like to get a prize for restoring his cigarette-case to him because he is particularly hard up at this time. In fact, he is in a state of indebtedness. As Lady Bracknell points out, "he has nothing but his debts to depend upon." Another trait of his character which is satirically treated is his gluttony. As Jack points out, this man is always hungry and is always eating whether it be cucumber sandwiches or muffins. He wants Jack to invite him to dinner at an expensive restaurant. One would think that eating is his main bobby. Algernon is a fashionable man, and is always over-dressed. This too is something to make us laugh, because aristocratic young men attach too much importance to their clothes. As Lady Bracknell points out, Algernon "is nothing but he looks every thing". According to Jack. Algernon has a ridiculous vanity. This is clear from the fact that Algernon claims to be always "immensely over-educated". His vanity is seen also in his claim that he plays on the piano with wonderful expression, sentiment being his forte. One of his absurdities is that he expects the lower orders of society to set a good example of moral responsibility to the upper classes. His view that relatives are "a tedious pack of people" again shows his vanity and his egoism. He actually loves to hear his relatives abused. One aspect of his shallowness is that at every party he would like to flirt with some woman. Nor does his Bunburying do him any credit. In short, the whole portrayal of Algernon is satirical, his only commendable and admirable quality being his brilliant wit.

The Satirical Portrayal of Jack: - Then there is Jack. He too is a representative of the upper class. But he is a much better specimen because there is much in him that we approve. He is a responsible-minded guardian, and he is a serious type of young man in whose talk, according to Miss Prism, "there is no room for triviality and idle merriment". But he goes to the other extreme. While Algernon is too light-hearted, Jack is too serious-minded. His very solemnity is made to look ridiculous. Cecily says that her Uncle Jack sometimes looks so serious as to give the impression that he is unwell. Algernon says that lack is "the most earnest-looking man" he has ever known. Jack's over-seriousness has sharply been contrasted with Algernon's gaiety. Jack's over-seriousness is also to be found in his refusal to go either to the theatre, or to the club, or to the Empire. When asked by Algernon what they should do, Jack's reply is : "Nothing". Nor is his over-seriousness the only ridiculous aspect of his character. He thinks Gwendolen to be a very intellectual kind of girl, while we know her to be absolutely shallow. He admires Cecily not only because she has an excellent appetite and takes long walks but also because she pays no attention at all to her studies. He does not believe in telling the truth to a nice, sweet, refined girt. He does not know whether a severe chill is hereditary or not. Thus the portrayal of Jack too is satirical in intention and in effect.

The Satirical Portrayal of Gwendolen: - There are three women representatives of the upper class, and each has been portrayed in a satirical manner. There is Gwendolen whose superficiality and ignorance are extremely amusing. For instance, she cannot understand how anybody of any importance can exist in the countryside. Nor did she have any idea that there were flowers growing in the countryside. Though fond of living in the town, she hates crowds. She is proud of the fact that she has never seen a spade. When she makes a railway journey, she likes to carry her diary with her because she wants to read something sensational. But her most amusing absurdity is her enthusiastic reaction to the name of Ernest. She thinks Ernest to be a divine name which has a music of its own and which produces vibrations. It was always her cherished ideal to love someone of the name of Ernest, she says. In order to marry the man with whom she has fallen in love, chiefly on the basis of his name, she runs away from home thus showing no regard at all for the decencies of family life. It is clear, then, that the author is laughing at this aristocratic young girl and, of course, he makes us laugh at her too. In her case too it could be said that her talent for witty conversation is her only redeeming quality.

The Satirical Elements in the Portrayal of Cecily: - Cecily is another representative of the upper class and though a better specimen than Gwendolen, she amuses us by her failings and absurdities. She is not at all interested in German grammar, political economy, or geography, all of which she regards as "horrid" She keeps a diary in which she .records every minor detail of her life, calling its contents "the wonderful secrets of life". Though she does have charm, and a good deal of it, she yet shows a ridiculous side to her personality. Like Gwendolen, she too goes into raptures over the name Ernest. It had always been a girlish dream of hers to love someone of the name of Ernest, she says. Her account of how she had fallen in love with Ernest is even more absurd than her enthusiastic reaction to the name. She fell in love with him without even having seen or met him ; she got engaged to him in her imagination ; she even bought herself an engagement ring on his behalf ; and once she broke off the engagement. Her absurdity appears further in her wanting to put down in her diary every word that her lover has to say in praise of her.

The Satirical Portrayal of Lady Bracknell: - The portrayal of Lady Bracknell is perhaps the most satirical of all. In this case the author simply gloats over his task of exposing the foibles and absurdities of the upper-class ladies of his time. Nor is there any doubt about

the enormous success that the author has made of his job. Lady Bracknell claims to have a taste for music, but she would like her nephew to make the selection of the numbers to be played at her party. In other words, her taste in music is simply a pretence. But this is only a minor, foible in her. Her principal absurdities are her snobbery, her class-consciousness, her mercenary outlook on life, her suspicious nature, and her domineering temperament. The manner in which she cross-examines Jack to determine his suitability as her son-in-law shows both her suspicious nature and her domineering temperament. Both these traits appear again in the questions which she subsequently asks in order to determine suitability of Cecily as a wife for Algernon. This second cross-examination shows also the importance of money in her eyes because, as soon as she learns that Cecily will bring a rich dowry, she begins to see, in Cecily certain qualities which she had not observed before. But even then she speaks to Cecily and about Cecily in a patronizing, tone, and adopts a superior attitude towards her. Perhaps her greatest absurdity appears in her claim that, although she herself did not have any fortune, she did not allow that circumstance to stand in the way of her marrying Lord Bracknell. Her domineering nature appears also in the manner in which she exercises rigid control over her daughter and her own husband, and this aspect her life is also ridiculed by the author. The portrayals of Lady Bracknell and the two younger specimens of the aristocracy are thus very successful in exposing the failings and absurdities of the society ladies of the time.

The Satirical Portrayal of Dr. Chasuble: - Another satirical portrait in the play is that of Dr. Chasuble. This portrait is a satire on clergymen. A clergyman is expected to inspire respect, but Dr. Chasuble excites our mirth. Dr. Chasuble is ridiculed for his pompous manner of speaking, his hypocrisy, his lack of real scholarship, and his materialistic attitude to life. As for his pompous manner of speaking, one example will serve the purpose. On seeing Jack in mourning clothes, Dr. Chasuble says to him : "Dear Mr. Worthing, I trust this garb of woe does not betoken some terrible calamity ?" His lack of any real learning is evident from Cecily's remark that he is one of the most learned men because he has not written a single book. It is absurd on his part to claim that a particular sermon of his can be adapted to almost any occasion, joyful or distressing. Another absurdity in his talk occurs when he makes a classical allusion drawn from the pagan authors. He is a Christian priest, but he quotes pagan authors. His hypocrisy appears in the fact that in theory he is opposed to matrimony but that actually he has been flirting with Miss Prism precisely with the object of marrying her. He is a clergyman without any really spiritual quality. He feels very disappointed when Algernon and Jack give up their intention to be baptised after having obtained his view that there can be no technical objection to the baptism of grown-up people.

The Satirical Portrayal of Miss Prism: - Miss Prism amuses us by her literary pretensions. She once wrote a three-volume novel which she deposited" in the perambulator while she put the baby under her charge in a hand-bag which she placed in a railway cloak-room. Nothing could be more absurd than this behaviour which is supposed to have resulted from her absent-mindedness. In addition to her literary pretensions, she also has moral pretensions which she shows in her dislike of the wicked younger brother of Jack Worthing and in her feeling of joy at the reported death of that wicked fellow. As a man sows, so shall he reap, she remarks on this occasion, with an air of moral superiority. The portrayal of Miss Prism is also satirical.

The Importance of Being Earnest : A comic treatment of the theme of love and marriage

Three Successful Love-Affairs: - There are three love-affairs in the Importance of Being Earnest. Jack Worthing is in love with Gwendolen Fairfax ; Algernon is in love with Cecily Cardew ; and Dr. Chasuble is drawn towards Miss Prism who is the governess in Jack's household. There is no serious obstacle in the way of the fulfilment of any of the love-affairs, and the desire of each of the characters is fulfilled by the time the play ends.

Jack's Intention to Propose Marriage to Gwendolen: - We learn about Jack's love for Gwendolen in the very opening Act. Jack is on a visit to Algernon whom he informs that be has come to town expressly to propose marriage to Gwendolen. Algernon's comment on Jack's intention is that there is nothing romantic in proposing marriage though it is very romantic to be in love. The excitement comes to an end with the acceptance of a proposal of marriage, says Algernon. He also says that, if ever he gets married, he will try to forget the fact, to which Jack replies that the Divorce Court was specially invented for people whose memories are short. Algernon remarks that divorces are made in heaven.

Gwendolen's Prompt Acceptance (if Jack's Proposal of Marriage: - Lady Bracknell comes to Algernon's flat for tea in the company of her daughter Gwendolen. As already arranged between Algernon and Jack, Algernon takes Lady Bracknell away into another room in order to enable Jack to have a few moments alone with Gwendolen and to make his proposal of marriage. Jack expresses his love for Gwendolen in a halting, hesitant manner, but Gwendolen gives him a favourable reply promptly and in unambiguous terms. She tells him that it has been her ideal to love someone of the name of Ernest because there" is something in that name which inspires absolute confidence. (She knows Jack under his assumed name of Ernest). She tells Jack that he has always had an irresistible fascination for her. When Jack asks her if she would not have loved him in case his name had been different, she says that this question involves a metaphysical speculation and has no reference to the actual facts of real life. When Jack says that the name Ernest does not suit him at all, Gwendolen replies that it suits him perfectly, that it is a divine name with a music of its own, and that it produces vibrations. Jack asks her what she thinks of the name Jack, and Gwendolen says that this name has no music in it, that it does not thrill her," and that it produces absolutely no vibration. The name Jack, she says, is a "notorious domesticity" for John, and a woman married to a man having this name would never have the pleasure" of a single moment's solitude. The only real safe name is Ernest, says Gwendolen. Jack then decides to be christened in order to acquire the name of Ernest. When Jack says that they must get married at once, Gwendolen replies that he has mentioned marriage without having formally proposed to her whereupon Jack makes a formal proposal which Gwendolen immediately accepts, saying that his eyes are wonderfully blue and expressing the hope that he will always look at her in the same loving manner in which he is looking at her now.

Lady Bracknell's Objection to Jack's Proposal of Marriage: - Then comes the obstacle in the way of the marriage of Jack and Gwendolen. Lady Bracknell cross-examines Jack in order to determine his suitability as her would-be son-in-law. In reply to her questions, he tells her that he does not smoke, that his age is twentynine, that he knows nothing, that his income is between, seven and eight thousand pounds a year, that he has a country house with some land attached to it, and so on. Lady Bracknell feels quite satisfied with all these particulars but when Jack tells her, in reply to another question, that he does not know his parentage and that he was found as an infant by Mr. Thomas Cardew, a man of a very charitable and benevolent nature, who brought him up and gave him the name of Worthing, Lady Bracknell feels outraged and tells him that she cannot allow her daughter to marry a man who was found as an infant in a hand-bag

lying in a railway cloak-room. She cannot allow her only daughter "to marry into a cloak room and form an alliance with a parcel" says Lady Bracknell. The interrogation by Lady Bracknell has been quite an ordeal for Jack who tells Algernon that Lady Bracknell is perfectly unbearable and that she is really a Gorgon, "a monster without being a myth".

The Love-Affair Between Algernon and Cecily: - The love-affair between Algernon and Cecily begins in Act II. Algernon's curiosity about Cecily having been aroused by the inscription on Jack's cigarette-case, Algernon visits Jack's country residence in the disguise of Jack's younger brother, Ernest (who is an imaginary person invented by. Jack as an excuse for paying his frequent visits to London). Algernon falls in love with Cecily at first sight and, when he praises her beauty, she tells him that she had fallen in love with him without even having met or seen him. He tells her that he thinks her to be the visible personification of absolute perfection, and that he loves her wildly, passionately, devotedly, and hopelessly. He then asks her if she will marry him, and she replies that she will certainly marry him because she has been engaged to him for the last three months. Algernon is surprised to hear this. But Cecily explains that she fell in love with him at the very time when her Uncle Jack first told her that he had a younger brother by the name of Ernest who was very wicked and bad. She had even bought herself an engagement ring on his behalf and she had also obtained a bangle with the true lover's knot as a gift from him. Not only that, she had been writing letters to him regularly and had herself been replying to them on his behalf. Once she had broken off the engagement because he bad offended her, but she had forgiven him within the same week, and the engagement had been restored. She then praises his hair for curling naturally, and she admires his name, saying that it had always been a girlish dream of hers to love some one having, the name of Ernest because there was something in that name which inspired absolute confidence. Algernon asks her whether she could not have loved him if his name had been different, and Cecily replies that if he had a different name, such as Algernon, she might have admired his character but she could not have given him her undivided attention. On learning that the name Ernest has a great deal to do with Cecily's love for him, Algernon too decides to undergo a christening ceremony in order to acquire the name of Ernest, just as lack had done.: It is amusing to find that both Jack and Algernon now make an appointment with Dr. Chasuble for christening ceremonies in order to get the name of Ernest which: has a great charm for both Gwendolen and Cecily. It is part of the absurdity of this play that two well-educated and aristocratic girls are fascinated by the name Ernest and that they fall in love with two men who are supposed to have this name.

A Misunderstanding Between the Two Girls: - A misunderstanding arises when Gwendolen comes on a visit to Jack's country residence. Both Gwendolen and Cecily think that the same man, by the name of Ernest, has proposed marriage to them. They exchange some sarcastic remarks because of this misunderstanding. The misunderstanding is, however, cleared up and the two women become allies on discovering that neither of their lovers has the name of Ernest. Jack admits that he has no brother at all, while Algernon also admits that he is not Ernest but Algernon. These confessions by the two men annoy the girls and they behave as if they were feeling greatly offended with their lovers for having pretended to have a name which they actually did not have. However, they admire their lovers" spirit of self-sacrifice in so far as they are ready to undergo the ceremony of being christened once again at this age in order to - acquire the name of Ernest. In view of this readiness on the part of the two men to undergo the christening ceremony, the girls no longer attach any importance to the name. However, a new hitch arises, and it is in Act III that this hitch is dealt with learning that her nephew Algernon is interested in marrying Cecily, she inquires about

various particulars of the girl and feels quite satisfied as to her suitability as her nephew's wife when she is told that Cecily has a large amount of money in her name. Lady Bracknell gives her approval to the proposed marriage of Algernon and Cecily, but she still does not approve of her daughter Gwendolen marrying Jack, her objection being that his parentage is unknown and that he is therefore not acceptable to her as a son-in-law.

Jack's Objection: - Jack, who is Cecily's legal guardian, now refuses to allow Cecily to get married to Algernon. When Lady Bracknell asks him why he does not allow this marriage, he says that the solution to the problem lies in Lady Bracknell's own hands. He will allow his ward Cecily to marry Algernon, if Lady Bracknell allows her daughter Gwendolen to marry him (Jack).

A Discovery: -Lady Bracknell still cannot allow her daughter to marry a man whose parentage is unknown. But this difficulty is removed when, as a result of Lady Bracknell's interrogation of Miss Prism, it is found that Jack is the son of Lady Bracknell's own late sister and the elder brother of Algernon. In view of this discovery, Lady Bracknell can have no objection to the marriage of her daughter Gwendolen to Jack.

The Love-Affair Between Miss Prism and Dr. Chasuble: - The third love-affair which also achieves its fulfilment is the one between Miss Prism and Dr. Chasuble. We meet both these persons in Act II and it becomes clear as soon as they are introduced to us that they are emotionally interested in each other. Cecily has perceived the attraction between the Rector and her governess, and that is why she suggests that Miss Prism should go for a walk with Dr. Chasuble. Miss Prism suggests to Dr. Chasuble that, in view of his loneliness, he should get married. She can understand a "misanthrope", but not a "womanthrope", she says. Dr. Chasuble replies that the Primitive Church was distinctly opposed to matrimony, but Miss Prism says that, by persistently remaining unmarried, a man converts himself into a permanent public temptation. The flirtation between Dr. Chasuble and Miss Prism leads to a happy result. When Gwendolen and Cecily accept their respective lovers whole-heartedly, Dr. Chasuble embraces Miss Prism and says enthusiastically : "At last" ! Thus the play ends with the fulfilment of the three love-affairs.

The Importance of Being Earnest : Use of wit

A Dearth of Action in Wilde's Plays: - There is very little action in the plays of Oscar Wilde. Wilde's own mother once complained to him about the dearth of action in his plays and urged him to put more action in them. However, action was not the strong point of Wilde as a playwright. All his famous plays, of which there are only four, are comedies of dialogue, and The Importance of Being Earnest is no exception. The notion in this play is quite inadequate and the entire appeal of the play lies in the brilliance of its dialogue.

Action in Act I: - Hardly anything happens in the entire play. In terms of action, The Importance of Being Earnest is a flimsy play." In Act I, for instance, the only action consists in the following developments Jack Worthing's visit to Algernon's flat ; the arrival of Lady Bracknell and her daughter Gwendolen for tea at the same place ; Jack's proposal of marriage to Gwendolen and her immediate acceptance of it Jack's inward decision to change his name to Ernest; Lady Bracknell's rejection of Jack as possible son-in-law after her interrogation of him and his confession that he does not know his parentage. Besides these incidents, we are also informed that while Algernon has invented an ailing friend by the name o Bunbury to serve as an excuse for his frequently

leaving the town to escape from its social activities, Jack has invented a younger brother by the name of Ernest in order to serve as an excuse for his leaving his country home in order to pay frequent visits to London.

Action in Act II: - In Act II the action consists in the following situations Cecily's finding an excuse for Miss Prism to go for a walk with Dr. Chasuble ; Algernon's arrival at the Manor House in disguise in order to get acquainted with Cecily, Jack's return home in mourning clothes ; Gwendolen's unexpected arrival at Jack's country home and the misunderstanding that takes place between her and Cecily ;Algernon's decision and the arrangements made by both Jack and Algernon for their christening by Dr. Chasuble ; and Algernon's refusal to leave Jack's house.

Action in Act III: - In Act III, the action consists in Lady Bracknell's arrival at the Manor House ; Lady Bracknell's approval of Cecily's marriage to Algernon but her continued disapproval of Gwendolen's marriage to Jack ; Jack's objection to Cecily's marriage to Algernon ; Lady Bracknell's interrogation of Miss Prism and the resolution of the main complication of the play.

The Wit and Humour in the Remarks of All the Characters: - Thus there is very little of what is called "plot" in this play and yet it is a play which holds the attention and the interest of the audience and the readers throughout. It is the humour and the wit of the dialogue which lends to the play its main interest. Each of the characters gives evidence of a brilliant wit in whatever be or she says. As all the characters are well-educated (even the governess Miss Prism has written a three-volume novel), the humour and the wit in the speeches of each is not of the unconscious variety. In other words, each character is conscious of his or her wit. But it must be kept in mind that none of the characters gives any sign of being aware that he or she is speaking in a witty manner. Another point to note is that the wit is not laboured but spontaneous and effortless. Witty remarks, statements, and comments flow from the lips of the various characters naturally. In fact, it is impossible for us, on a closer view, to believe that all the characters can possess such a fertile wit ; but in the theatre, or. even in the study, we hardly stop to question the talent for making witty remarks of which every character provides ample evidence. And, in any case, we know that we are reading what is known as an artificial comedy, and so it does not matter whether the possession of this gift of wit by so many characters is something convincing or not.

The Display of Wit By Algernon and Jack: - The comic and witty quality of the play becomes apparent to us in the very opening, dialogue which takes place between Algernon and his servant Lane. Even the servant amuses us by his remark that bachelors keep superior wines in their homes and that in married households the wine is rarely of a first-rate brand. Lane's remark about marriage leads Algernon to make a paradoxical statement which also amuses us. Algernon says that the lower orders of society should set a good example by showing a sense of moral responsibility so that the upper classes can learn something from them. This dialogue is followed by a much longer dialogue between Algernon and lack, and in the course of this dialogue we come across a large number of witty remarks to which both these characters make a contribution, though Algernon shows himself to be more witty than his friend. Algernon indulges in a lot of bantering talk in connection with the inscription on Jack's cigarette-case. One of the witty remarks that Algernon makes here is that girls never marry the men they flirt with. Jack makes a witty remark when he says that some aunts are tall, some aunts are not tall, and that it is a matter which an aunt may be allowed to decide for herself. Algernon makes another paradoxical and witty remark when he says that literary criticism should be left to people who have never been at a university. He makes yet another witty

remark by saying that the number of women in London who flirt with their own husbands is perfectly scandalous: Another witty remark comes from Algernon when he gives a twist to a well-known saying and modifies it by saying that in married life three is a company and two is none. Another paradoxical remark from Algernon is that people who are not-serious about meals are shallow-minded.

The Display of Wit By Lady Bracknell and Gwendolen: - Then Lady Bracknell and her daughter Gwendolen arrive, and we have some real fireworks. On being told by Jack that she is perfect, Gwendolen replies that she would not like to be perfect because perfection would leave no room for developments and because she intends to develop in many directions. Lady Bracknell makes a very witty remark when she says that Mr. Bunbury should make up his mind whether he is going to live or to die and that his shilly-shallying with the question is absurd. She also says that she does not approve of the modern sympathy with invalids, which is a paradoxical remark because generally one is expected to be sympathetic towards the sick and the ailing. Gwendolen's reaction to the name Ernest is highly amusing to us. It is indeed very funny that a highly sophisticated girl should find in the name Ernest something that inspires absolute confidence. It has always been her ideal, she says, to love some one of the name of Ernest. Lady Bracknell makes a very witty remark when, on seeing Jack kneeling. before Gwendolen, she says to him "Rise, sir, from this semi-recumbent posture ; it is most indecorous." A witty remark which is also paradoxical is made by Lady Bracknell when she says that she does not approve of anything that interferes with natural ignorance. Ignorance is like a delicate, exotic fruit which should not be touched but should be allowed to remain intact. She thinks it fortunate that education in England produces no effect whatsoever on the people because, if it were to produce any effect, it would prove to be a serious danger to the upper classes. One, of Lady Bracknell's wittiest remarks is that to be born or bred in a handbag shows a contempt for the ordinary decencies of family life reminding her of the worst excesses of "the French Revolution. This remark is amusing because of the extreme exaggeration implied in the comparison of a child's being found in a hand-bag with the worst excesses of the French Revolution. But, perhaps, the most hilarious remark that Lady Bracknell makes is that she and her husband cannot allow their "only daughter to marry into a cloakroom and form an alliance with a parcel."

More Witty Remarks By Algernon and Jack: - After Lady Bracknell has rejected Jack as a possible son-in-law and has then left, Jack makes a witty remark when he calls her a Gorgon, and adds that she is a "monster without being a myth". Jack makes another witty remark when, on being asked by Algernon if he has told Gwendolen the truth about his being Ernest in town and Jack in the country, Jack says that truth is not quite the sort of thing one tells to a nice, sweet, and refined girl like Gwendolen. To this, Algernon replies wittily that the only way to behave to a woman is to make love to her if she is pretty and to make love to some other woman if the first one is unattractive. There is something comic in the very invention of an ailing friend by the name of Bunbury and a younger brother by the name Ernest. Referring to the invention of Bunbury, Algernon says that, if he had not invented this friend with extraordinarily bad health, he would not have been able to escape from his dinner-engagement with Lady Bracknell. Towards the end of Act I we again meet Lane who, on being told that he is a perfect pessimist, replies that he does his best to give satisfaction to his master, implying paradoxically that his pessimism should be a cause of satisfaction to his employer. Act I ends with Jack telling Algernon that the latter always talks nonsense and with Algernon replying that everybody talks nonsense and nothing but nonsense. Thus the whole of Act I is replete with witty paradoxes, sarcasms, ironical remarks, and amusing statements which have an epigrammatic quality.

Witty Remarks of Miss Prism, Cecily, and Gwendolen: - The wit shows no signs of dwindling in Act II. In the beginning of this Act, we find Miss Prism telling Cecily that she is not in favour of the modern mania for turning bad people into good people at a moment's notice, which is certainly an amusing remark. Cecily makes an amusing remark when she says that memory records the things that have never happened and could not possibly have happened. This remark is also a paradox. Another paradoxical and witty remark is made by Cecily when she says that she does not like novels that end happily because such novels depress her much. Miss Prism makes a witty remark when, talking to Dr. Chasuble, she says that by remaining unmarried a man converts himself into a permanent public temptation. We are greatly amused also when Dr. Chasuble claims that his sermon on the meaning of the manna in the wilderness can be adapted to almost any occasion, joyful or distressing. He has preached this sermon at harvest celebrations, christenings, confirmations, on days of humiliation and festivals days. Of course, Dr. Chasuble does not say this in order to amuse anybody ; in fact, he is quite serious about what he is saying ; but he produces a comic effect, and the humour" here is unconscious. Miss Prism amuses us when she says that the news of the sudden return of Jack's younger brother who was supposed to have died is peculiarly distressing. Several other remarks made by Dr. Chasuble and Miss Prism are also very amusing. Cecily makes a paradoxical and amusing remark when she says that it is always painful to part from people whom one has known for a brief space of time but that the absence of old friends can be endured without much difficulty. Cecily's whole account of how she had fallen in love with Algernon (who has come in the disguise of Jack's younger brother Ernest) and how she had become engaged to him is also extremely amusing and would make an audience roar with laughter. She also amuses us when she says that she would like to put down in her diary whatever words her lover has to speak to her in order to express his sentiments about her. Algernon makes a very witty remark when he says that half of the chaps who get into the Bankruptcy Court are all called Algernon. Gwendolen makes a sarcastic remark to Cecily when, after Cecily has mentioned a spade, Gwendolen says : "I am glad to say that I have never seen a spade. It is obvious that our social spheres have been widely different." Act II closes with Algernon again indulging in banter at the cost of Jack, and Jack ultimately groaning and sinking into a chair while Algernon continues to eat muffins.

Witty Dialogue in Act III: - Nor is Act III deficient in wit. Lady Bracknell, for instance, says that hesitation of any kind is a sign of mental decay in the young and of physical weakness in the old. Speaking to Cecily, Lady Bracknell says that an experienced French maid would certainly bring about a lot of improvement in Cecily's hair and her way of dressing. She gives the example of Lady Lancing whom her own husband could not recognize after she had undergone the treatment by a French maid for three months. Jack here intervenes to say that after six months nobody could recognize that lady, which also is a witty remark. Lady Bracknell amuses us greatly when she says that she does not approve of mercenary marriages, giving her own example and pointing out that when she married Lord Bracknell she had no fortune of any kind. It is extremely amusing for us to hear Lady Bracknell say that she never allowed her lack of dowry to stand in the way of her marriage to Lord Bracknell. Another witty remark "made by Lady Bracknell is that thirtyfive is an attractive age for a woman to get married. London society, she adds, is full of women of the very highest birth who have remained thirtyfive for years. When Lady Bracknell refuses to give her consent to her daughter's marriage to Jack, Jack wittily says : "Then a passionate celibacy is all that any one of us can look forward to." Gwendolen makes a paradoxical and witty remark when, on being asked by Jack to wait for him, she says "If you are not too long, I will wait here for you all my life."

In short, although some of the situations in the play are certainly funny, it is the dialogue which keeps us laughing most of time.

"The Importance of Being Earnest-A perfect work of art."

Closely-Knit Plot : - At the very outset it must be pointed out that the appeal of The Importance of Being Earnest lies chiefly in its, dialogue which is distinguished by an abudance of wit and humour. There is undoubtedly little action in the play but whatever of it there is has been developed in a perfectly logical manner. Once we recognize that absurdity is the keynote of the play, we shall find no fault with the way the plot develops. The plot is certainly flimsy but it is closely-knit and skilfully constructed. For various reasons, this play is superior to the other plays written by Wilde, but one reason for its superiority is its excellent craftsmanship.

The Love-Affair of Jack and Gwendolen in Act I: - There are two major love-affairs, and one minor love-affair in The Importance of Being Earnest. Act I initiates one of the two major love-affairs, namely that of lack and Gwendolen. Jack has been visiting London under the assumed name of Ernest and it is by this name that he is known to Gwendolen. When the play opens, Jack is on another of his visits to London, and this time he proposes marriage to Gwendolen who readily accepts the proposal. Gwendolen's mother, Lady Bracknell, however rejects Jack as a possible son-in-law after cross-examining him and being told that Jack's parentage is unknown.

Algernon's Bunburying: - A hint of the second major love-affair is dropped to us when Algernon, in response to his persistent questioning of Jack, learns that Jack has a ward by the name of Cecily, a very pretty girl of eighteen years of age, who is living with him at his country home under the charge of a governess by the name of Miss Prism. Algernon becomes very inquisitive about Cecily and expresses to Jack his desire to see her, but Jack replies that he will take very good care to see that Algernon does not meet Cecily who is excessively pretty and only eighteen. However, Algernon takes down Jack's country address when Jack tells it to Gwendolen, and Algernon overhears it. Algernon's taking down Jack's country address is an indication that he will find an opportunity to meet Cecily. Our feeling in this respect is confirmed when Algernon tells his servant to pack his luggage because he will be leaving London for the countryside on the following day. He calls this visit to the country as part of his "Bunburying".

The Mutual Interest of Miss Prism and Dr. Chasuble in Each Other: - In Act II it is the love-affair between Algernon and Cecily which is initiated and which develops, but the other major love-affair, as also the minor love-affair (the one between Miss Prism and Dr. Chasuble, the Rector), also develop simultaneously. In the beginning of Act II we are introduced to Cecily, Miss Prism, and Dr. Chasuble. Cecily has perceived Miss Prism's emotional interest in Dr. Chasuble and the Rector's emotional interest in Miss Prism. The mutual interest of Miss Prism and Dr. Chasuble in each other is confirmed by their taking a walk together, and Miss Prism's suggesting to the Rector that he should get married in order to relieve his loneliness.

Cecily's Engagement to Jack: - Algernon now appears at Jack's country house and introduces himself to Cecily as Jack's younger brother by the name of Ernest who is supposed to be a rather wicked fellow and who therefore often gets into difficulties. But just then Jack returns home from his visit to London and, not knowing that Algernon is already there under the assumed name of Ernest, says that his younger brother has

died. This situation is very funny, indeed. On being told that his younger brother by the name of Ernest is in the house, and very much alive, Jack feels very annoyed with Algernon and would like Algernon to go away but Algernon who has already fallen in love with Cecily has no intention to leave. Finding an opportunity to be alone with Cecily, Algernon proposes marriage to her, and she promptly responds to the proposal, saying that she has already been engaged to him for the last three months because she bad fallen in love with him as soon as her guardian had mentioned him to her.

The Deception Practised By the Two Men: - The two major love-affairs are now brought into a close relationship with each other when Gwendolen unexpectedly arrives at Jack's country house in order to meet the man whom she knows under the name of Ernest. There is a misunderstanding in the minds of both Cecily and Gwendolen because they think that it is the same man called Ernest who has proposed marriage to both of them. The misunderstanding is, however, soon cleared, but both the girls feel annoyed with their respective lovers for having deceived them with regard to the name Ernest.

The Solution of the Mystery of Jack's Parentage: - In Act III the difficulty that had arisen in connection with the name Ernest is removed when the two girls decide to forgive their lovers. But another complication now arises. Lady Bracknell too arrives at Jack's country house, having come to know that her daughter Gwendolen had fled from London in order to meet her lover Jack. Lady Bracknell has no objection to her nephew Algernon marrying Cecily, but she persists in her objection to Jack as her would-be son-in-law and does not agree to Gwendolen's marrying Jack. At this, Jack declares that, as Cecily's guardian, he will not agree to Cecily's marrying Algernon unless Lady Bracknell first agrees to her daughter Gwendolen's marrying Jack. Lady Bracknell, however, is in no mood to give her consent to Gwendolen's marriage to Jack. Just then Dr. Chasuble appears and happens to mention the name of Miss Prism. The mention of Miss Prism startles Lady Bracknell, and she demands that Miss Prism be summoned to her presence. On being questioned by Lady Bracknell, Miss Prism gives an account of how she bad, twentyeight years ago, committed the blunder of putting a baby in a hand-bag which she had deposited in a railway cloak-room instead of putting the baby in the perambulator. This baby was no other than Jack. The mystery of Jack's parentage is thus solved, and it is found that Jack is Lady Bracknell's own nephew and the elder brother of Algernon. Lady Bracknell now can have no objection to her daughter's marrying Jack.

The Interweaving of the Plots: - The interweaving between the two main love-affairs is thus perfect. Algernon could not marry Cecily unless Lady Bracknell permitted Gwendolen to marry Jack ; and Lady Bracknell permits Gwendolen's marriage to Jack only when it is discovered that Jack is Lady Bracknell's own nephew. The subsidiary love-affair, the one between Dr. Chasuble and Miss Prism, is also brought into a close relationship. with the two major love-affairs because Miss Prism, who is Cecily's governess, was at one time serving as a nurse in Lady Bracknell's household and was looking after Lady Bracknell's nephew, Jack or Ernest. Not only that, it is Dr. Chasuble who comes and mentions the name of Miss Prism which arouses Lady Bracknell's curiosity and makes her summon Miss Prism to her presence. Wilde's craftsmanship is thus evident in the inter-connection and inter-dependence of the two main plots, and the close connection of the subsidiary plot with the two main plots.

The Parallelisms in the Play: - An important aspect of the construction of this play is the use of parallelism. Jack has invented a very useful younger brother called Ernest, in order that he might be able to go to London as often as he likes in order to meet Gwendolen and also for a change to relieve the monotony of his life at his country residence. In the same way Algernon has invented a valuable permanent invalid called

Bunbury in order that he might be able to go down into the country whenever he pleases in order to escape from the social whirl of London and especially from the boring dinner-parties of his aunt, Lady Bracknell. This is one example of parallelism. Another example is to be found in the reaction of Gwendolen and Cecily to the name “Ernest”. Both girls become almost rapturous over this name. Both find that this name is one which inspires absolute confidence. It had been Gwendolen’s ideal to marry someone by the name Ernest, and it had been the girlish dream of Cecily to do the same. Yet another example of parallelism -is that both Gwendolen and Cecily maintain diaries, though for different reasons. Gwendolen keeps her diary with her on bet railway journeys in order to be able to read something sensational, while Cecily records in her diary what she calls “the wonderful secrets” of her life as well as the words of praise of her beauty spoken by her admirer Algernon. Yet another example of parallelism is the readiness of both Jack and Algernon to acquire, the name of Ernest and to undergo the ceremony of christening or rechristening in order to do so, even though it is eventually found .unnecessary for either of them to undergo that ceremony.

Deceptions in the Play: - The construction of the play rests also on a series of secrets and the disclosure of those secrets. Deception and deceit are the basis of most comedies, and The Importance of Being Earnest is no exception. Not only do Algernon and Jack deceive their beloveds with a false name, but Lady Bracknell also proves to be a tricky woman because it is by bribing Gwendolen’s maid-servant that she finds out where Gwendolen has gone. Miss Prism too is guilty of deception, because she has been hiding for nearly thirty years the secret of her misdeed in having placed the baby in a hand-bag. The wealth of the late Mr. Thomas Cardew is a secret which remains a mystery till the end. Nor is little Cecily above deceit, though of a petty kind, as when she tells Gwendolen that her engagement is to be announced in the local newspaper. Even the life of Lane, the, servant, is not above suspicion.

The Interest of the Dialogue: - It is also noteworthy that every dramatic element in this play has been subordinated to dialogue. There are no doubt a number of comic situations such as Algernon’s continuing to eat muffins despite Jack’s protests, Jack’s return home in mourning clothes and his announcing the death of his supposed younger brother, the two girls thinking that they are engaged to the same person, Dr. Chasuble’s preparations for the two christening ceremonies, and so on. But it is the dialogue which is of supreme importance in this play. In connection with the dialogue it is necessary to point out that it is a judicious mixture of long and short speeches. There are many speeches consisting of no more than two to four lines, and there are a number of speeches consisting of as many as eight to twelve lines. Such a judicious mixture is also an important aspect of the construction of the play.

The Importance of Being Earnest - Satirical Comedy of Manners

“No woman should ever be quite accurate about her age. It looks so calculating.”

“The play, though extremely funny, was essentially hateful", observed George Bernard Shaw (My Memories of Oscar Wilde), and a possible reason for his aversion is its farcical nature. The Importance of Being Earnest is ostensibly a farce, that poor cousin of true comedy which may have had its provenance in Aristophanes and the subsequent Roman comedy, but which never found a secure play in the respectable comic genre. The farce is notorious for its lack of plausible plot, its mechanical actions, and its puppet - like characterization and finally its general lack of intensity. It is only Oscar Wilde and Pinero

who, among the English play wrights made a serious attempt at farce, being able to rehabilitate this sub - genre to a considerable degree. Indeed, in his so - called farcical play like Lady Windermere's Fan, A woman of No Importance , and The Importance of Being Earnest , Wilde is able to create a new kind of comedy which straddles the mid - point between farce and comedy , possessing the sheer playfulness of the one and the intellectual alacrity of the other , the mechanical plot of the one and the imaginative utopian land of the other , the flat characterization of the one and the grave satiric thrust of the other. The Importance of Being Earnest is therefore a farce, rather than a farcical comedy sui generis.

The primary feature of a farce is its improbability plot consisting of number of parallel or symmetric actions. The foremost of such action in The Importance of BeingEarnest is, of course the device of such 'Bunburyism'. Jack, the country squire invents a fictitious wicked brother by the name of Earnest, living in the city, in order to escape from the routine - bound monotonous. Life in the country - side; similarly, Algernon, The city - gentleman creates an invalid friend by the name of Bunbury in the country - side in order to escape from the responsibilities of his city - lifer. Jack falls in love Gwendolyn in the city under the name of Earnest, whereas Algernon falls in love with Jack's ward Cecily in the country under the same assumed name of Earnest. So a strangely parallel situation is created in which both the lovers assume the same name Earnest, and the both beloved think that they are in love with a man with the name Earnest. As in farce, a serious of vaudeville actions follow the two ladies call each other sister until they realize that they are both in love with Earnest, whereupon they turn into bitter enemies. Both the lovers try to be re - christened as Earnest, and both realize to their chagrin that the beloved have discovered their actual identities, chasms reigns supreme.

The presence of undimensional characters, characters noteworthy for their static, unchanging quality, is another significant feature of farce. The Importance of Being Earnest is no exception. Its bevy of character including Algernon, Gwendolyn and Cecily and Mir Prism, Lane and Merriman, are all characterized by an idea fixe, a fixed idea which does not change throughout their lives. The sole ambition of Gwendolyn's life is to fall in love with a person by the name of Earnest since it is a ' divine name ' has 'music' of its own and produces 'vibrations '. Similarly Cecily's be - all and end all in life is to fall in love with a wicked person because that would provide her with adventure and romance , Therefore she feels extremely aggrieved when she suspects Algernon of actually being a good character . Indeed, she accuses him of hypocrisy, so that ultimately Algernon averse he has been 'very bad' in his own small way.

In spite of his marionette characterization and improbable plot, The Importance of Being Earnest reveals the genuine quality of high comedy in its creation of truly romantic word in which everything is parable, somewhat like, Puck - led world of A Midsummer Night's Dream. The play has indeed the nature of a fantasy where seriousness to be abandons for flamboyant frivolity, all anxieties for the sake of food, Algernon does when his beloved Cecily abandons him. An air of innocence pervades the whole play and the tale since desires for the innocent eyes of a child looking at the multi - hued world where everything is probable and nothing improbable. It is as if were a day dream where neither truth non lie, neither good nor evil has any impact.

The Importance of Being Earnest may have been castigated for its frivolous wit, but often times these flippant witticisms take on the note of genuine wisdom - a quality germane to true comedy. When Algernon declares that the emergence of romance is uncertainty , he is hinting the very unconventional psychological reality about man being in love with only that which he does not normally achieve or attain , for at the least he

does not feel very secure about . In contrast to the usual adage that “marriages are made in heaven ", he declares that” divorced are made in heaven ", implying thereby many marriages in those days, born out of societal convenience and aristocratic status, actually make marriages a bondage, a slavery. Such suggests of wisdom abound in the play.

Satiric vision, it is said, is the most important aspect of high comedy. Although the casual reader or audience may not be able to perceive the satire beneath the fickleness, The perceptive would realize that concealed within the triviality and fantasy is seriousness and satire as John Hankins pointed out in " Wilde as a dramatist, paradoxical as it may sound in the case of so merry and lighthearted play, The Importance of Being Earnest is artistically the most serious work that Wilde produced for the theatre." Through the irresponsible statement of the aristocratic classes, it is the aristocrat themselves. Who are being attacked? Their speeches reveal their inner emptiness and the follies of the decadent society of the late 19th century. At the same time, somewhat like Shaw himself the dramatist heaps scorn on such hallowed institutions as marriage, birth, baptism, romance, love and perhaps human life itself.

Wilde himself might have called this play “a trivial comedy for serious people ", but this playful comment conceals the greater truth that the play is a revelation of the triviality of seriousness. It is of such a profound if iconoclastic truth, the force attends the status of comedy.

Irony in The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde

The play The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde is full of irony. Jack Worthing and Algernon Moncrieff, the protagonists in the play, get themselves into a complicated situation called Bunburyism (as Algernon refers to it). They pretend to be someone that they are not to escape their daily lives. They lie to the women they admire and eventually the truth is unveiled.

The irony comes into play when the truth starts to unravel and Jack finds out what really happened to him as a child and why he does not know his parents. After some coincidental events, all the main characters end up in the same room. When Lady Bracknell hears Ms. Prism’s (the woman Jack hired as his nieces governess) name she immediately asks to see her. She continues to say that Ms. Prism had wandered off with a baby years ago and asks what came about of that. Ms. Prism continues the dialog to explain how she misplaced a baby that was in her bag at a train station. Jack, thinking he might have been that very baby, retrieves the bag he was found in as an infant in which Ms. Prism identifies by some distinguishing marks to have been her own. Jack realized the woman that had been teaching his niece was his mother. But then Lady Bracknell explained that she was not but Lady Bracknell’s poor sister Mrs. Moncrieff was.

The irony continues to explain how Jack and Algernon were biological brothers. They were pretending to be earlier to play out their game of Bunburyism. Jack had told everybody he had a brother in which was he used as his justification to leave his home in the country and visit his "brother" in the city. Algernon pretends to be Jack brother "Earnest" in order to win over Jack beautiful "niece" Cecily.

> Jack- "Algy’s elder brother! Then I have a brother after all. I knew I had a brother! I always said I had a brother! Cecily- how could you have ever doubted that I had a brother." (pg. 305)

Jack's reaction shows evidence of his happiness of his new found brother. The same man that played his brother in their mind games with friends and family.

But the irony does not stop there. Jack told Gwendolyn, the woman he loved, that his name was Earnest. He lived the life of his "brother" Earnest in the city that happened to include her. But in the country, Algernon pretended to be Earnest to the woman he had admired. Both women were attracted to the name Earnest and were extremely disappointed that they were not named it. But as it turned out their father's name was Earnest. Because Jack was the eldest brother he finds out that his father had given him his name. So after all the lies and cover-ups, Jack's real name is Earnest.

This play is full of irony. It is written remarkably comical and almost absurdly. Wilde did a superior job at writing this play with an amusing story line filled with humor and satire. A man who made up a lie to find out that it was not really a fabrication, it was reality. We cannot get any more ironical than that.

Satire in The Importance of Being Earnest

The importance of being earnest by Oscar Wilde uses satire to ridicule the cultural norms of marriage love and mind-set which were very rigid during the Victorian Age. Because it uses satire to ridicule these instituitions, it shows the deviance from the social order by making ridiculous the ideas of standards, morals and manners. By trying to correct the flaws of the characters in this play, this piece also serves as a great form of critiscim. "The play really owes something to the restoration comic tradition."

Wilde was a master at the art of turning the English language around to fit his sarcastic themes and in this play he accomplished that to a high level. The title of this piece is even a play-on-word "Earnest" which can mean two different things. It can mean the obvious and be the actual characters name, but it also can mean a sense of seriousness and he then conveys that seriousness into reality for the characters. The two main characters in the play, Jack and Algernon, made every effort to be "Ernest" and "Earnest" in the play. They start their relationship based on the lies in the hope of marrying the girls that they love. There is irony in the play when they both call themselves "Earnest", a name that suggests honesty and sincerity, yet they both create stories to escape something or the other. Jack creates a brother called "Ernest" in the city that he uses as a 'scape goat' to leave his prim and proper, respectable country life, whereas Algernon creates a friend by the name of "Bunbury" to escape his aunt's high class society parties. He shows his lack of interest in such social events when he tells Jack,

"She will place me next to Mary Farquhar, who always flirts with her own husband across the dinner table. That is not very pleasant. It looks so bad. It is simply washing one's clean linen in public." (Wilde, 533)

The Importance of Being Earnest focuses on two main couples, Jack and Gwendolen and Algernon and Cecily. Both Gwendolen and Cecily yearn to have a husband called "Ernest." They both place emphasis on such a trivial matter as a name. When Jack attempts to tell Gwendolen that his name is really "Jack" and not "Ernest" she replies saying, "Jack"... No, there is very little music in the name Jack, if any at all, indeed." (Wilde,537) The only really safe name is Ernest." Wilde deliberately uses farce in the play to exaggerate the mind frame of the upper class. It is seen here that Gwendolen loves Jack, but she places greater importance on silly, superficial and trivial matters such as a name, something a person has no control over. Similarly, Cecily also dreams of loving someone called "Ernest." She clearly states to Algernon, "There is something in that name that seems to inspire absolute confidence. I pity any poor married woman whose husband is not called Ernest."(Wilde,556).

Again, Wilde is satirizing the institution of marriage, as it is not based on love, but on more vain superficial criteria. Although in this case there is exaggeration used to satirize the vanity of the aristocrats, Wilde still brings across the point that both Gwendolen and Cecily may have refused to marry the 'men of their dreams' if their names weren't 'Ernest.'

In Act Three of the play when Cecily asks Algy if he would wait until she was thirty-five years to be married (Wilde,570), even though Algy says yes, Cecily bluntly tells him she cannot. ."..I couldn't wait all the time. I hate waiting even five minutes for anybody. It makes me rather cross."(Wilde,570) One would think that after dreaming so much of the man she claims to love, waiting to be married will be a small favour to ask. In fact, Wilde

uses another couple, Miss Prism and Mr. Chasuble as a foil to show the contrast between a relationship built on love and one built on other materialistic, shallow values. Miss Prism seems to be the only woman who doesn't have an ulterior motive in the play when comes to marriage and love. Even Algernon seems to have ulterior motives. He has never met Cecily before, yet when he sees her, he instantly falls in love with her. Furthermore, his negative views on marriage in the opening scene, where he refers to it as 'demoralising,' seem to suddenly change when he meets Cecily. It can be inferred that Algernon's bankruptcy influences his attraction to Cecily. Both Jack and Algernon are determined to get themselves christened in order to hold on to Gwendolen and Cecily. That also shows some level of vanity in the men as they are not even slightly perturbed that the women place so much emphasis on their names. These couples seem to be wearing masks as they all appear one way, but seem to have some ulterior motives behind their actions. Gwendolen and Cecily both appear as ladies when they first meet, calling each other sisters, "My first impressions of people are never wrong." Yet when they believe that they're engaged to the same "Ernest," there is immediate coldness between them. Gwendolen satirically says to Cecily, "I am glad to say that I have never seen a spade. It is obvious that our social spheres have been widely different." (Wilde,559) This is called 'dissembling' as the characters aren't literally wearing masks, but metaphorically they are all pretending to be someone they aren't. There is the division between truth and identity and it shows that sometimes certain laws in society force people to lead double lives.

Lady Bracknell is the driving force behind the plot of The Importance of Being Earnest. She represents women of the Victorian upper class society and believes that those of high class should be the ones in power. She has very little opinion of those with no title, or money and views the upper class society as being a 'closed club.' In other words, most people don't deserve to be in it unless they were born into it. She appears as a guardian of society in that she forcefully dictates who should marry who in the play. In the first scene, Gwendolen is unable to defend herself from wanting to marry Jack when he proposes to her. Lady Bracknell firmly steps in saying, "Pardon me, you are not engaged to anyone. When you do become engaged to some one, I, or your father, will inform you." Lady Bracknell is portrayed as a forceful character who leaves no room for opposition. Even though Gwendolen wants to oppose her, she hasn't the strength to do so. Wilde uses Lady Bracknell to show a typical aristocrat who bends no rules of the upper class society.

One example where he shows how values are inverted and emphasis is placed on more trivial matters is the scene where Lady Bracknell meets with Jack to discuss Gwendolen. In this scene we see that in stead of asking Jack if he loves Gwendolen (which would seem to be the most important question); Lady Bracknell focuses on the materialistic side of it. She questions Jack about his money, land, house and the area in which he lives. She makes it clear that it's important for Jack to have a house in the town because Gwendolen cannot live in a country house. It is also seen here that Lady Bracknell treats the trivial things seriously, even though she's supposed to be an upholder of the values of society. However, little attention is paid to moral values. In stead, Lady Bracknell is displeased with the side of which Jack's town house is located- the unfashionable side. She thinks that everyone's interest will be similar to hers and subtly tells him, "The unfashionable side. I thought there was something. However that could easily be altered."
The entire way in which Lady Bracknell meets with Jack is as though she is of a superior

being than him. She takes down his answers to her questions in a notepad, as though it's an interview rather than a personal meeting with her daughter's love. The setting of the meeting reflects how Lady Bracknell views marriage. It's more like interviewing someone for the job of being Gwendolen's husband rather than getting to know the man her daughter is interested in. Upon the shock that Jack was found and he doesn't know who his real parents are, Lady Bracknell immediately dismisses him, especially when she finds out that he was found in a handbag.

The farce continues when she tells Jack, I would strongly advise you, Mr. Worthing, to try and acquire some relations as soon as possible, and make a definite effort to produce at any rate one parent, of either sex, before the season is quite over.

This is an extremely impossible request of Lady Bracknell, as it is obvious that Jack has no knowledge about his real parents. Although he knows that he desperately wants to marry Gwendolen, he doesn't hide his amazement upon Lady Bracknell's request, "Well I don't see how I could possibly manage to do that. I can produce the hand-bag at any moment." This simply highlights how trivial the important things are to Lady Bracknell and how important the trivial things are to her. This is a major point Oscar Wilde focuses on in this comedy of manners- values are totally reversed.

Another example of Lady Bracknell's ignorance of the non-aristocrats is seen where she is ready to turn a blind eye to Cecily, when she hears that Algernon is engaged to her. She immediately judges Cecily based on the fact that Jack is her guardian. However, her views instantly change when Jack tells her that Cecily has a hundred and thirty thousand pounds in funds, "A hundred and thirty thousand pounds! Miss Cardew seems to me a most attractive young lady, now that I look at her." Once again emphasis is placed on a person's wealth rather than their personality, sincerity, or compassion for the other. Marriage is viewed as an economic factor, whereby people marry for wealth or to conserve wealth in their families, especially Lady Bracknell who represents the guardian of an upper class society. She is however a hypocrite and uses social morals to her convenience. For example, she refuses to let Jack marry Gwendolen because of his social background, yet she tries to justify a broke Algernon marrying the wealthy Cecily. Her social hypocrisy is highlighted when she also confesses that she was not rich when she married her husband. "Never speak disrespectfully of Society, Algernon. Only people who can't get into it do that. When I married to Lord Bracknell I had no fortune of any kind." She furthermore thinks that her status gives her the right to approve of the marriage between Cecily and Algernon without asking Jack what he thinks. Eventually, both sides come to an agreement and Jack's name turns out to really be Ernest and he's really Lady Bracknell's nephew. Wilde gives the typical happy ending where everyone lives happily ever after and the stern mask that Lady Bracknell wears slowly turns into a smile.

In conclusion, The Importance of Being Earnest strongly focuses on those of the upper class society and the vanity of the aristocrats who place emphasis on trivial matters concerning marriage. Both Algernon and Jack assume the identity of "Ernest" yet ironically, they both are beginning their marital lives based on deception and lies. Lady Bracknell represents the archetypal aristocrat who forces the concept of a marriage based on wealth or status rather than love. Through farce and exaggeration, Wilde satirically reveals the foolish and trivial matters that the upper class society looks upon as being important. As said earlier, a satiric piece usually has a didactic side to it. In this case, Lady Bracknell learns that the same person she was criticising is actually her own flesh and blood.

Atta Ur Rahman Jadoon

The Importance of Being Earnest : Comedy of Manners

A comedy of manners is a descriptive term applied to a play whose comedy comes from social habits of a specified society. The play normally bases on the dominant members of the society. The social habits involve the manners and the morals practiced in the specified society. The play normally features the conduct and social status of the upper classes in a given society and how they interact with the lower classes. In most cases, the lower classes interact with the upper classes by taking roles as servants, trade people and other responsibilities as such. Therefore, I think this play can only act in a hierarchical society with a population of different classes and social status.

The importance of being earnest is referred to as a comedy of manners because it ironically describes the conduct of the Victorian upper class. The play describes their behavior in a hypocritical manner. The play seems to be making fun of them. The upper class individuals are described as money minded, superficial as well as artificial. The play uses satirical language to turn their values upside down and make us laugh considering the way they judge things by appearance. A language that is funny and witty has also been used to describe the upper class of the Victorian society. The main themes that the play bases on are love, identity, marriage as well as money. Wilde who is the author of the play had an intention of exposing the norms and values of the upper class individuals of the Victorian society and to prove them as shame. The fact is that besides the society stressing on values like respectability, decency and seriousness, its practices are totally different from these values. In order for any marriage to take place, the involved parties must be certified in terms of wealth as well as family background. From the play, we find that lady Bracknell rejected the marriage between Gewendolin and Jack simply because Jack was foundling. During her conversation with Jack, the lady gave priority to the family background without considering the education and other abilities that Jack had. She even did not consider the love that existed between Jack and Gewendolin. When she notices that Cecily's account has a lot of money, she predicts that the cash must have come from her boyfriend Algernon and stands ready to support their marriage. Therefore, it is the beauty of the boyfriend's name that makes him qualify as a candidate for marriage other than his qualities and abilities. Both Cecily and Gewendolin are ready to marry their boyfriends only because of their name "earnest" as opposed to what they feel for them. They seem to be driven by the notion that has long existed in their society which requires them to be married by men from capable and financially stable backgrounds. To them, wealth is a key requirement for marriage. "The play describes them as people who find everything in the name and love for name" (Wilde 84).

On the other hand, the men prefer to be associated with the name earnest but they seem to lack seriousness. The play bases on this to mock the upper class society that only values the surfaces and the appearances but not what is contained inside. They believe that everything that glitters is gold. This is very hypocritical. Considering the dialogue used in the play, we find it to be very witty and funny. If you consider the surface conversation between the characters, you will find it to be very beautiful and sweet but the inside is very hollow. The level to which the author has used paradox and irony in description of the conduct and behavior of the Victorian upper class society really tells us a lot about the pretensions and the artificiality of this kind of class. "Therefore, The Importance of Being Earnest is a comedy of manners because it employs light hearted language to evoke laughter at the false values of the Victorian upper society" (Wilde 97).This demonstrates a great level of discrimination against class and social status and this is one of the reasons why the play can only act in a hierarchical society with a population of different classes and social status.

Considering world historical contexts of this play to show continuities and changes over time, the importance of earnest is a comedy of manners that is derived much less in a specified history. There are several historical contexts that support the above underlined thesis of this play. The play views several historical contemporary events that demonstrate a troubled hierarchical society that has similar characters just like the ones portrayed in the play itself.

Considering some of the mentioned topics in the play, we can relate them to some of the world political issues that have been incorporated into history and still prevails today. One of them is the issue of Ireland home rule. In the year 1986, it was noted that William Gladstone came up with a great controversy where by he led the British Liberal party while under the frame work of the British Empire to back up support for the self rule form of governance. Since this home rule bill was contentious, the House of Lords later suppressed it by refusing to vote for its approval and enactment. This historical context happened only some few years before the play was released. Of course the main reason why the House of Lords failed to pass the bill was because the bill was meant to bring freedom to the less privileged members of the society. Being the upper class of this society, the House of Lords intentionally had to suppress the bill so that the lower class members remain servants to them. This was to cut any interaction as well as freedom links that might crop up. This type of behaviors is same as that of some characters in the play like lady Bracknell. She believes that ladies from the Victorian upper society are only supposed to be married by earnest men but not any other man. She does everything possible to make sure that there is no interaction between the upper and lower classes of the Victorian society just like the House of Lords did in Ireland when a home rule was to be enacted.

Considering a historical event like US civil rights movements, you will find that the political policies that were enacted discriminated against the blacks. In this context, the whites considered themselves as the upper class part of the American society. They treated the blacks as the lower class members of the same society. The whites enhanced laws on racial segregation which gave them freedom to publicly discriminate the blacks. Considering the transit system, the blacks were forced to occupy the back seats while the whites occupy the front seats. The blacks were denied some of their rights including leadership and voting. Therefore, the upper class did not allow any form of association with the lower class. They wanted the blacks to play a role as their servants. This is the same thing that was happening in the play. The upper class society did not encourage any marriage relationship with people whose background was not same as theirs. They abolished any links that could associate them with the lower class individuals. This historial context also proves that this play can only act in a hierarchical society where there is a division between the upper and the lower class. The play will make fun of their behavior since satire is the only tool to fight a loosing battle ("Historical Background" 1).

The main reason why the characters in the play get so upset with politics is because it tends to destruct the comfort and the hierarchical lifestyle that they are used to in the society. They see politics as a threat that can bring revolution and continuity change just like the French revolution that continuously hanged over the British society. When lady Bracknell hears of the sudden death of imaginary Bunbury who died in the explosion, she says that she was not aware that he was a victim of revolutionary outrage. She says that this was a fair punishment for him for being involved in the social legislation. This demonstrates the fear of social unrest that the upper class Victorian society had following any sign of revolution and social legislation that might see the rights of the poor respected.

Lastly, as the 19th century was coming to an end, England was one of the countries that witnessed cultural and artistic change considering the values that were in place during the reign of Queen Victoria. There was wide touting of values like self help and respectability during the boom times of 1860s and 1870s. When the farming practices underwent a change, the whole society was affected and very few people could help themselves. The farmers suffered a lot after the wheat fields had been converted to cattle pastures. As the farmers were struggling, the upper class society members who were industrialists enjoyed a lot by gaining lots of profits from their factories and employing the lower class individuals at cheap wages. These factory owners and some businessmen formed links to come up as middle class. As they did this, they raised their social status by settling in the country side just to imitate the aristocracy. They did this so that their social status can be recognized and bring some form of hierarchy within the society just like the Victorian society in the play ("Historical Context" 1). Indeed this play can only act in a hierarchical society with a population of different classes and social status.

Atta Ur Rahman Jadoon

Pride and Prejudice

JANE AUSTEN; 1775-1817

Jane Austen was born in Steventon, England, in 1775, where she lived for the first twenty-five years of her life. Her father, George Austen, was the rector of the local parish and taught her largely at home. She began to write while in her teens and completed the original manuscript of Pride and Prejudice, titled First Impressions, between 1796 and 1797. A publisher rejected the manuscript, and it was not until 1809 that Austen began the revisions that would bring it to its final form. Pride and Prejudice was published in January 1813, two years after Sense and Sensibility, her first novel, and it achieved a popularity that has endured to this day. Austen published four more novels: Mansfield Park, Emma, Northanger Abbey, and Persuasion. The last two were published in 1818, a year after her death.

During Austen's life, however, only her immediate family knew of her authorship of these novels. At one point, she wrote behind a door that creaked when visitors approached; this warning allowed her to hide manuscripts before anyone could enter. Though publishing anonymously prevented her from acquiring an authorial reputation, it also enabled her to preserve her privacy at a time when English society associated a female's entrance into the public sphere with a reprehensible loss of femininity. Additionally, Austen may have sought anonymity because of the more general atmosphere of repression pervading her era. As the Napoleonic Wars (1800–1815) threatened the safety of monarchies throughout Europe, government censorship of literature proliferated.

The social milieu of Austen's Regency England was particularly stratified, and class divisions were rooted in family connections and wealth. In her work, Austen is often critical of the assumptions and prejudices of upper-class England. She distinguishes between internal merit (goodness of person) and external merit (rank and possessions). Though she frequently satirizes snobs, she also pokes fun at the poor breeding and misbehavior of those lower on the social scale. Nevertheless, Austen was in many ways a realist, and the England she depicts is one in which social mobility is limited and class-consciousness is strong.

Socially regimented ideas of appropriate behavior for each gender factored into Austen's work as well. While social advancement for young men lay in the military, church, or law, the chief method of self-improvement for women was the acquisition of wealth. Women could only accomplish this goal through successful marriage, which explains the ubiquity of matrimony as a goal and topic of conversation in Austen's writing. Though young women of Austen's day had more freedom to choose their husbands than in the early eighteenth century, practical considerations continued to limit their options.

Even so, critics often accuse Austen of portraying a limited world. As a clergyman's daughter, Austen would have done parish work and was certainly aware of the poor around her. However, she wrote about her own world, not theirs. The critiques she

makes of class structure seem to include only the middle class and upper class; the lower classes, if they appear at all, are generally servants who seem perfectly pleased with their lot. This lack of interest in the lives of the poor may be a failure on Austen's part, but it should be understood as a failure shared by almost all of English society at the time.

In general, Austen occupies a curious position between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Her favorite writer, whom she often quotes in her novels, was Dr. Samuel Johnson, the great model of eighteenth-century classicism and reason. Her plots, which often feature characters forging their respective ways through an established and rigid social hierarchy, bear similarities to such works of Johnson's contemporaries as Pamela, written by Samuel Richardson. Austen's novels also display an ambiguity about emotion and an appreciation for intelligence and natural beauty that aligns them with Romanticism. In their awareness of the conditions of modernity and city life and the consequences for family structure and individual characters, they prefigure much Victorian literature (as does her usage of such elements as frequent formal social gatherings, sketchy characters, and scandal).

Jane Austen's life resembles her novels — at first glance they seem to be composed of a series of quiet, unexceptional events. Such an impression is supported by the comment of her brother, Henry, who wrote after her death that her life was "not by any means a life of event." Similarly, her nephew James added in a biography published fifty years later that "Of events her life was singularly barren: few changes and no great crisis ever broke the smooth current of its course." However, just as readers find that the complexity of Austen's novel lies in its characters and style, those studying Austen herself discover that the events of her life are secondary to her compelling personality, quick wit, and highly-developed powers of observation. The fact that Austen's life lacked the drama that other authors may have experienced in no way detracted from her skill as a writer. In actuality, Austen's lack of "extraordinary" experiences, as well as of a spouse and children, probably made her writing possible by freeing her time to work on her books. Additionally, because her books were published anonymously, Austen never achieved personal recognition for her works outside of her sphere of family and friends. Such anonymity suited her, for, as literary critic Richard Blythe notes, "Literature, not the literary life, was always her intention."

Historical Context for Pride and Prejudice

Late Eighteenth-Century Britain and the Regency Period: - Jane Austen's brief life and writing career overlapped with one of the most transformative eras in British history, marked by revolution abroad and unrest at home. The signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, the year after Austen's birth, signaled the start of the American Revolution, followed in the next decade by the beginning of the French Revolution in 1789. For the next two decades, Britain was engaged almost without cease in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars of 1793–1815, one of the most significant conflicts in British history. Among the effects of England's foreign wars during this period were great financial instability and monetary volatility. The precariousness of the late eighteenth-century was followed in the 1810s and 1820s by what is known as the Regency period. The Regency officially began in 1811, when King George III went permanently insane and his son George, Prince of Wales, was sanctioned to rule England in his place as

Regent. The political Regency lasted until 1820, when George IV was crowned. However, the Regency period has also come to refer more generally to the early decades of the nineteenth century before the start of Victoria's reign in 1837, during which the Prince Regent provided a great deal of support for the development of the arts and sciences that flourished during this period. Austen would have witnessed, moreover, the beginning of industrialization in England, though the growth of the factory system would not reach its peak until the middle of the nineteenth century. Outside of the genteel world we see in Pride and Prejudice, a third of the country's population lived on the verge of starvation, spurring food riots across the countryside. This unrest was compounded by Luddite protestors who attacked new industrial machinery (a practice called "machine breaking") in demonstrations that were a precursor to labor strikes. As these demonstrations spread fear of a revolution in England, the government responded with repressive measures that sharply curtailed freedom of speech.

War with France: - Stretching over twenty-two years, Britain's war with France affected every level of British society. While an estimated quarter of a million men were serving in the regular army, a militia of officers and volunteers in the southeast coast of England (the region where Austen was from) mobilized for what was thought to be an impending invasion by Napoleon. Austen had a close connection to the militia, as her brother Henry joined the Oxfordshire militia in 1793. Though the rural countryside in which Austen's novels are set seems at a far remove from the tumultuousness of the period, the world of Pride and Prejudice bears the traces of turmoil abroad. As Gillian Russell writes, "The hum of wartime, if not the blast or cry of battle, pervades [Austen's] fiction."[1] The presence of the troops at Brighton and militia officers like Wickham reflect wider concerns about the place of the military in English civil society.

The Landed Gentry: - The novel is also embedded within a set of domestic concerns over property, money and status that highlight the changing social landscape of late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century England. Austen's novels portray the gentry, a broad social class that includes those who owned land (the country or landed gentry) as well as the professional classes (lawyers, doctors and clergy) who did not. Though industrialization and urbanization had begun to take hold at the end of the eighteenth century, the most influential sector of society in Austen's time was the landed gentry. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, ownership of English land was concentrated in the hands of the relatively small landed classes, who retained their hold over the land through a system that encouraged the consolidation and extension of estates by enforcing strict inheritance laws. Entails of the kind referred to in the novel were established during this period in order to concentrate wealth and enlarge estates by funneling property to male children or male relatives rather than breaking it up and distributing it amongst family members. Thus, Mr. Bennett's land is left not to his daughters but to a (male) member of his extended family, Mr. Collins, ensuring that the property stays in the family line, while disinheriting Elizabeth and her sisters. Large country estates, of the kind Darcy and Mr. Bingley own, served as a symbol of the wealth and power of the landed gentry.

Marriage and Gender Roles: - As we see in the novel, questions of land ownership and inheritance are closely interlinked with courtship and marriage. In the late eighteenth century, English conceptions of family and the role of women began to change, as British culture became increasingly focused on the accumulation and concentration of wealth within the family. One way for families to rapidly accumulate

capital was through advantageous marriages. As a result, the position of daughters within the family changed, as they became the means through which a family could attain greater wealth. Familial aspirations, coupled with women's increased dependence on marriage for financial survival, made courtship a central focus of women's lives.

At the same time, the late eighteenth century also witnessed a transformation in the conception of women's rights following the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's Vindication of the Rights of Woman in 1792. In the Vindication, Wollstonecraft argues, in the language of Enlightenment thinkers like John Locke, that women should be treated as the rational equals of men. Elizabeth Bennett serves as a paradigmatic example of the conflicting transformations in women's roles that occurred in the late eighteenth century. Disinherited of her father's property, Elizabeth is not financially independent, and in fact depends upon an advantageous marriage for her future survival. Yet throughout the novel, she asserts an intellectual and moral independence that reflects a Wollstoncraftian conception of gender politics.

Print Culture and the Novel in Austen's Time: - One particularly significant change that occurred during Austen's lifetime was the expansion of literacy and print culture in England. By 1800, almost everyone in the middle classes and above could read, and literacy rates for the rest of the population rose steadily thereafter. At the same time, from 1780 onwards there was a fairly steady rise in the number of new novels being published, so that by the end of Austen's life, the novel was the dominant form of literature in England. In part, the rise of the novel was spurred on by new forms of printing and marketing, which made books less expensive and expanded their readership. Smaller format books—octavos and duodecimos, as opposed to quartos—were more portable, and therefore easier to consume. Similarly, novels became more readily accessible through the expansion of various modes of access, including circulating and subscription libraries as well as periodicals, which made literature affordable in a time when books were often prohibitively expensive. Nevertheless, novels of the kind Austen published would have been an unaffordable luxury for a great deal of the population. This was particularly true in the earlier part of the nineteenth century, when "taxes on knowledge" raised prices on paper, newspapers, advertisements, and other texts. These taxes were in fact at their height during Austen's career. This was in part because of a desire to limit access to information for the lower classes in response to revolution in France and upheaval at home. Though the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries marked an explosion in novel reading and the production of the novels themselves, the widely affordable novel would not become ubiquitous until the middle of the nineteenth century.

The realist novel, defined by its putatively objective narrator, psychologically developed characters, and minute description of the realities of domestic life, was in part inaugurated by Austen in Pride and Prejudice, and would come to dominate the literary scene in England throughout the rest of the nineteenth century. The rise of the novel has historically been linked to the rise of the middle class in England from the eighteenth century onwards, because this expanding social class (and middle class women in particular) had both the income and the leisure time available to consume them. Her novels were widely read throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries but they were largely considered unserious, frivolous, and even irrelevant—a merely "popular" genre.

Pride and Prejudice : Plot Overview

The news that a wealthy young gentleman named Charles Bingley has rented the manor of Netherfield Park causes a great stir in the nearby village of Longbourn, especially in the Bennet household. The Bennets have five unmarried daughters—from oldest to youngest, Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Kitty, and Lydia—and Mrs. Bennet is desperate to see them all married. After Mr. Bennet pays a social visit to Mr. Bingley, the Bennets attend a ball at which Mr. Bingley is present. He is taken with Jane and spends much of the evening dancing with her. His close friend, Mr. Darcy, is less pleased with the evening and haughtily refuses to dance with Elizabeth, which makes everyone view him as arrogant and obnoxious.

At social functions over subsequent weeks, however, Mr. Darcy finds himself increasingly attracted to Elizabeth's charm and intelligence. Jane's friendship with Mr. Bingley also continues to burgeon, and Jane pays a visit to the Bingley mansion. On her journey to the house she is caught in a downpour and catches ill, forcing her to stay at Netherfield for several days. In order to tend to Jane, Elizabeth hikes through muddy fields and arrives with a spattered dress, much to the disdain of the snobbish Miss Bingley, Charles Bingley's sister. Miss Bingley's spite only increases when she notices that Darcy, whom she is pursuing, pays quite a bit of attention to Elizabeth.

When Elizabeth and Jane return home, they find Mr. Collins visiting their household. Mr. Collins is a young clergyman who stands to inherit Mr. Bennet's property, which has been "entailed," meaning that it can only be passed down to male heirs. Mr. Collins is a pompous fool, though he is quite enthralled by the Bennet girls. Shortly after his arrival, he makes a proposal of marriage to Elizabeth. She turns him down, wounding his pride. Meanwhile, the Bennet girls have become friendly with militia officers stationed in a nearby town. Among them is Wickham, a handsome young soldier who is friendly toward Elizabeth and tells her how Darcy cruelly cheated him out of an inheritance.

At the beginning of winter, the Bingleys and Darcy leave Netherfield and return to London, much to Jane's dismay. A further shock arrives with the news that Mr. Collins has become engaged to Charlotte Lucas, Elizabeth's best friend and the poor daughter of a local knight. Charlotte explains to Elizabeth that she is getting older and needs the match for financial reasons. Charlotte and Mr. Collins get married and Elizabeth promises to visit them at their new home. As winter progresses, Jane visits the city to see friends (hoping also that she might see Mr. Bingley). However, Miss Bingley visits her and behaves rudely, while Mr. Bingley fails to visit her at all. The marriage prospects for the Bennet girls appear bleak.

That spring, Elizabeth visits Charlotte, who now lives near the home of Mr. Collins's patron, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, who is also Darcy's aunt. Darcy calls on Lady Catherine and encounters Elizabeth, whose presence leads him to make a number of visits to the Collins's home, where she is staying. One day, he makes a shocking proposal of marriage, which Elizabeth quickly refuses. She tells Darcy that she considers him arrogant and unpleasant, then scolds him for steering Bingley away from Jane and disinheriting Wickham. Darcy leaves her but shortly thereafter delivers a letter to her. In this letter, he admits that he urged Bingley to distance himself from Jane, but claims he did so only because he thought their romance was not serious. As for Wickham, he

informs Elizabeth that the young officer is a liar and that the real cause of their disagreement was Wickham's attempt to elope with his young sister, Georgiana Darcy.

This letter causes Elizabeth to reevaluate her feelings about Darcy. She returns home and acts coldly toward Wickham. The militia is leaving town, which makes the younger, rather man-crazy Bennet girls distraught. Lydia manages to obtain permission from her father to spend the summer with an old colonel in Brighton, where Wickham's regiment will be stationed. With the arrival of June, Elizabeth goes on another journey, this time with the Gardiners, who are relatives of the Bennets. The trip takes her to the North and eventually to the neighborhood of Pemberley, Darcy's estate. She visits Pemberley, after making sure that Darcy is away, and delights in the building and grounds, while hearing from Darcy's servants that he is a wonderful, generous master. Suddenly, Darcy arrives and behaves cordially toward her. Making no mention of his proposal, he entertains the Gardiners and invites Elizabeth to meet his sister.

Shortly thereafter, however, a letter arrives from home, telling Elizabeth that Lydia has eloped with Wickham and that the couple is nowhere to be found, which suggests that they may be living together out of wedlock. Fearful of the disgrace such a situation would bring on her entire family, Elizabeth hastens home. Mr. Gardiner and Mr. Bennet go off to search for Lydia, but Mr. Bennet eventually returns home empty-handed. Just when all hope seems lost, a letter comes from Mr. Gardiner saying that the couple has been found and that Wickham has agreed to marry Lydia in exchange for an annual income. The Bennets are convinced that Mr. Gardiner has paid off Wickham, but Elizabeth learns that the source of the money, and of her family's salvation, was none other than Darcy.

Now married, Wickham and Lydia return to Longbourn briefly, where Mr. Bennet treats them coldly. They then depart for Wickham's new assignment in the North of England. Shortly thereafter, Bingley returns to Netherfield and resumes his courtship of Jane. Darcy goes to stay with him and pays visits to the Bennets but makes no mention of his desire to marry Elizabeth. Bingley, on the other hand, presses his suit and proposes to Jane, to the delight of everyone but Bingley's haughty sister. While the family celebrates, Lady Catherine de Bourgh pays a visit to Longbourn. She corners Elizabeth and says that she has heard that Darcy, her nephew, is planning to marry her. Since she considers a Bennet an unsuitable match for a Darcy, Lady Catherine demands that Elizabeth promise to refuse him. Elizabeth spiritedly refuses, saying she is not engaged to Darcy, but she will not promise anything against her own happiness. A little later, Elizabeth and Darcy go out walking together and he tells her that his feelings have not altered since the spring. She tenderly accepts his proposal, and both Jane and Elizabeth are married.

Critical Analysis of Pride and Prejudice

Pride and Prejudice published in 1830 had originally been titled "First Impressions". The original title seems apt enough as the whole novel deals with the unreliability of first impressions. The new title however, focuses attention on the main theme of the novel which traces how 'pride' and 'prejudice' as two human traits guide relationships and this is brought out with respect to the relationship between two central figures of the novel – Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet. It is believed that these two characters are studies in pride and prejudice respectively. On a superficial level this view holds true but it would

certainly be over-simplifying matters to say that this alone brings out the full significance of the title.

Pride certainly is the pre-dominant characteristic of Mr. Darcy. On his very first appearance he makes himself highly unpopular, for he is discovered to be excruciatingly arrogant and above being pleased. His pride that stems of out of his superiority of intellect, his noble ancestry and enormous wealth prejudices him strongly against Elizabeth's family and her low connections. Darcy's is actually a social prejudice – a variant of the conventional snobbery of the aristocratic class. Although "he had never been bewitched by any woman as he was by her", Darcy feels it beneath his dignity to admit to his love for her. Even when he can repress his feelings no longer and does propose to Elizabeth 'he was not more eloquent on the subject of tenderness than on pride." In fact his customary arrogance deepens into what amounts to insolence during the proposal in which he explains to her the various family obstacles he has had to over-come and the degradation this marriage will be for him. He is considerably humbled when he is rejected without ceremony and Elizabeth's words "had you behaved in a more gentlemanlike manner" and her criticism of his conceit and 'selfish disdain of the feelings of others' affect him deeply. Elizabeth's refusal initiates a process of introspection and self-criticism and he emerges as a man whose pride has been humbled. This is revealed in the way he welcomes the Gardiners at his estate and also by his long explanatory speech to Elizabeth towards the end of the novel. The greatest proof of this development is in his remaining firm in his choice of Elizabeth even after Lydia's and Wickham's dishonorable elopement which draws from Elizabeth the acknowledgement – **"indeed he has no improper pride. He is perfectly amiable."**

In Elizabeth, the intelligent and self-assured young woman too we see the same interesting compound of Pride and Prejudice. Her initial prejudice against Darcy arises from injured pride. At the assembly she over-hears Darcy's remark about herself: "she is tolerable but not handsome enough to tempt me". From that evening Eliza is left with no cordial feelings towards Darcy. On the other hand Elizabeth is prejudiced in favor of Wickham, charmed by his fine countenance, pleasing addresses and his flattering attentions and when he provides slanderous information against Darcy, the possibility of doubting Wickham does not occur to Elizabeth and her prejudice against Darcy takes the shape of moral indignation. It is only when she reads Darcy's letter that her eyes are opened to the true character of both. In fact, Darcy's letter induces in Elizabeth the same self-criticism that Darcy too undergoes. She begins reading it "with a strong prejudice against everything" that he might have to say" but on reflection she realizes how blind, partial, prejudiced and absurd she had been. She was flattered and pleased by his attentions to her and her uncle and aunt at Pemberley and when she learns Darcy's role in buying Lydia a marriage to Wickham she greaves over every 'ungracious sensation that she has ever encouraged' towards him. For herself 'she was humbled, but she was proud of him'.

The traits of Pride and Prejudice do not dominate merely the main figures and the significance of this title is worked out perfectly through the minor characters as well. Pride in some of the minor characters takes the form of pompous and comic self-importance in Mr. Collins. Social prejudice finds embodiment in Bingley's sisters, Lady Catherine and her daughter and renders them quite contemptible. Thus we see that the appropriateness of the title of Pride and Prejudice is indeed unquestionable and it bears

immense significance to the plot, thematic concerns and the characterization in the novel.

"Love & Marriage" in "Pride & Prejudice"

"It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife."Jane Austen stated the main subject of the novel is stated in the first sentence.In this statement, Jane has cleverly done three things: she has declared that the **main subject** of the novel will be **courtship and marriage**; she has established the **humorous tone** of the novel by taking a simple subject to elaborate and to speak intelligently of, and she has **prepared the reader** for **a chase** in the novel of either a **husband i**n reach of a **wife**, or a **woman** in **pursuit** of a **husband**. All the five marriagesin the novel contrast each other to reveal Jane's opinions and thoughts on the subject of marriage.

The **marriage between Darcy and Elizabeth** reveals the characteristics, which constitutes a successful marriage. One of these characteristics is that the feeling cannot be brought on by appearances, and must gradually develop between the two people as they get to know one another. In the beginning Elizabeth and Darcy were distant from each other because of their prejudice. The series of events, which they both experienced, gave them the opportunity to understand one another and the time to reconcile their feelings for each other. Thus, their mutual understanding is the foundation of their relationship and will lead them to a peaceful and lasting marriage. This relationship between Elizabeth and Darcy reveals the importance of getting to know one's partner before marrying. At the end, Elizabeth feels the pure sincerity of Darcy.

"She began now to comprehend that he was exactly the man, who in disposition and talentswould most suit to her". So, Elizabeth and Darcy's marriage is marriage of dissimilarity and long understanding and we know that long understanding always helps in judging positive and negative points of each other. In this way their marriage is a **successful marriage**.

The **marriage between Jane and Bingley** is also an example of **successful marriage**. Jane Austen, through Elizabeth, expresses her opinion of this in the novel"really, believed all his (Bingley) expectations of felicity, to be rationally founded, because they had for basis the excellent understanding, and super excellent disposition of Jane, and a general similarity of feeling and taste between her and himself."

However, unlike Darcy and Elizabeth, there is a plan in their relationships. The flow in that both characters are too gullible and too good-hearted to ever act strongly against external forces that may attempt to separate them.

Mr. Bennet says:**"You (Jane and Bingley) are each of you so complying, that nothing will ever be resolved on; so easy, that every servant will cheat you; and so generous, that you will always exceed your income."** So, their marriage is in between success and failure.

Obviously, **Lydia and Wickham's** marriage is an example of **bad marriage**. Their marriage was **based on appearances, good looks, and sensual or sexual pleasures** and **youthful vivacity**. Once each other can no longer see these qualities, the once strong relationship will solemnly fade away. As in the novel, Lydia and Wickham's marriage gradually disintegrates. Lydia becomes a regular visitor at her two elder sisters' home and **"her husband was gone to enjoy himself in London or Bath."** Through their relationship Jane Austen shows that hasty marriage based on superficial qualities quickly looks and leads to unhappiness.

Marriage of Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Bennet was similar to that of Lydia and Wickham. Mr. Bennt had married a woman he found **sexually attractive** without realizing she was an unintelligent woman. Mrs. Bennet's favouritism towards Lydia and her comments on how she was once as energetic as Lydia reveals this similarity. Mr. Bennet's comment on Wickham being his favourite son-in-law reinforces this parallelism. The effect of the relationships was that Mr. Bennet would isolate himself from his family, he found refuge in his library or in mocking his wife. Mr. Bennet's self-realization at the end of the novel in which he discovers that his lack of attention towards his family had lead his family to develop the way they are, was too late to save his family. He is Jane Austen's example of a weak father. Austen says about Mrs. Bennet: "she was a woman of mean understanding, little information and uncertain temperament, the business of her life was to get her daughters marry. Therefore, her solace was visiting and views."

About their marriage:**"Her father captivating by youth and beauty and that appearance of good humour, with youth and beauty generally gave, had married a woman whose weak understanding and illiberal mind had very early in their marriage put an end to all real affection for her. Respect, esteem and confidence had vanished forever and all his veins of domestic happiness were over thrown."**

In these two later relationships, Austen shows that it is necessary to use good judgment to select a spouse; otherwise the two people will lose respect for each other.

The last example of a marriage is of a different nature them the ones mentioned above. The **marriage between Mr. Collins and Charlotte** is **based** on **economics** rather them on love or appearance. It was a common practice during Austen's time for women to marry a husband to save her from spinsterhood or to gain financial security. However, Jane Austen dramatizes this form of women inequality and shows that women who submits them to this type of marriage will have to suffer in tormenting silence as Charlotte does.

"When Mr. Collins said anything of which his wife might reasonably be ashamed, which certainly was not unseldom, she (Elizabeth) would involuntarily turned her eye on Charlotte. Once or twice she could discern a faint blush; but in general Charlotte wisely did not hear."

In Pride and Prejudice Jane has denounced the elements of Marriage and society that she found distasteful. These five marriages contribute that **a happy and strong marriage takes time to build and must be based on mutual feeling, understanding, and respect**. Hasty marriages acting on impulse and based on

superficial qualities will not survive and will lead to inevitable unhappiness. In this novel, "Love and marriage go together like a horse and carriage."

Pride and Prejudice: Title

The title Pride and prejudice better suits the book because the two protagonists of the novel are affected by these qualities. Elizabeth Bennet, the main female protagonist, judges her acquaintances based upon selective information, and she is proud when these judgments are correct. Fitzwilliam Darcy, the main male protagonist, is disliked because of his proud behavior. As the novel progresses the love between these two characters becomes what cures them of these bad habits. Pride and Prejudice is the most suitable title for this novel because it directly relates to the relationship between the two most important characters, whereas First Impressions only connects to Elizabeth's prejudiced attitude towards others.

Pride is the major fault of Mr. Darcy's character, and it is this pride that initiates Elizabeth's prejudice towards him. At the ball in the opening scene of the novel Darcy establishes his character with this rude comment, "She is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt me" (Austen 13). This is Mr. Darcy's first interaction with Elizabeth, and it establishes his pride. He dances very little at the ball, and this offends most of the people attending it. This instance is what makes Elizabeth then think of Darcy as **"the proudest, most disagreeable man in the world"**.

Elizabeth's prejudice develops further as the novel progresses. She selectively chooses to believe only the information that supports her initial judgments. When Elizabeth first meets Mr. Wickham, she is attracted to his handsome features and agreeable attitude. She becomes inclined to believe his story about Mr. Darcy. Elizabeth searches for negative information on Mr. Darcy, and she is pleased whenever she acquires any. When Mr. Wickham tells his false tale that ruins Mr. Darcy's name, she believes all that he says because Elizabeth is prejudiced against Mr. Darcy. She is entertained and fascinated by this rumor because Elizabeth takes pride in the accuracy of her initial prejudice. Elizabeth does not recognize the pride she has within herself because she is too occupied noticing it in Mr. Darcy as a result of her prejudice towards him.

Both Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy's feelings change after his proposal to her. Darcy states that it was hard for his love to overcome the many obstacles it had to face, such as his love would result in a very imprudent marriage on his part. Elizabeth, though offended that he insulted her family **"could not be insensible to the compliment of such a man's affection"**This shows that Elizabeth yet again has pride in the fact that she has inspired love in Mr. Darcy, despite her hatred for him. Elizabeth states that she would still deny him even if Mr. Darcy had **"behaved in a more gentleman-like manner".** This phrase stays with Mr. Darcy and causes him to realize how the way he acted came across as proud. Elizabeth denies Mr. Darcy on the grounds that he ruined the happiness of Jane and Mr. Wickham.

In order to set the situation straight, Mr. Darcy writes a letter to Elizabeth. He justifies his motives for both offences that Elizabeth accuses him of. It is from this point on that

these two characters begin to fall in love. It is ironically Elizabeth's prejudice that causes her to fall in love with Mr. Darcy. This is because after reading the letter, Elizabeth realizes the error of her judgment, and she feels guilty for having judged him unfairly. This also takes away Elizabeth's pride in her prejudice, because she realizes it was not as precise as she thought. Now that the other issues have been resolved, the only quality in Mr. Darcy, which Elizabeth dislikes, is his pride, and this issue is too resolved. After Elizabeth's comment regarding Mr. Darcy's behavior, he begins to change. She no longer sees him as the arrogant man she initially thought him to be. By the end of the novel Darcy states that Elizabeth is the cause for this change in him:

"**You taught me a lesson, hard indeed at first, but most advantageous. By you, I was properly humbled. I came to you without a doubt of my reception. You showed me how insufficient were all my pretensions to please a woman worthy of being pleased"**.

Mr. Darcy is made aware of his pride by Elizabeth's prejudice towards him, and once he is aware of it he is able to end it. Mr. Darcy's pride was the last fault that Elizabeth could find in him, and now that he has been freed of it, she falls in love with him. The two protagonists exhibited pride and prejudice, and they were cured of these qualities by each other, thus resulting in their love.

It is apparent that the title of this novel should indeed be Pride and Prejudice. Had the title of this book been First Impressions it would only be half as effective as the book's current title. The first impressions that are made upon Elizabeth do not incorporate what is occurring with Mr. Darcy, the main mail protagonist, or any of the other characters. Nowhere in the novel does it describe the first impressions of Elizabeth on the other characters. This title lacks in comparison to Pride and Prejudice, which tells the story of the two main characters, and how their love grew, all within two main qualities.

Both pride and prejudice play large roles in the novel, which is why they are the only two suitable words for the title. Mr. Darcy's initial pride inspires the prejudice of Elizabeth. Whenever Elizabeth's prejudice is correct, she takes pride in it. When Darcy proposes to Elizabeth in a proud manner offending her family, she rejects him, and this makes Darcy aware of his pride. Then, when Elizabeth realizes that her prejudice is incorrect because of the letter from Mr. Darcy, she no longer takes pride in it, and stops being prejudice. Elizabeth falls in love with Darcy because he was able to eliminate his proud mannerisms, and Darcy falls in love with Elizabeth because she treated him differently then all of the other women who attempted to court him, through her prejudice. These two qualities flow through the novel between the two main characters, and they cure each other of them. Pride and Prejudice is the correct title because it encompasses how their love came to be with only three words.

Pride and Prejudice: A Novel with Limited Range

Jane Austen confines her creative activity to the depiction of whatever fell within her range of personal experience. While her range of observation in life is not so wide her work has been variously called as the **"Two inches of ivory"** and **"three or four families"**. All these titles exhibit the excellence as well as the limitations of her craft and outlook.

Although she works on a very small canvas, yet she has widened the scope of fiction in almost all its directions. Her stories mostly have indoor actions where only family matters especially love and marriages are discussed. However, her plots are perfect and characterization is superb.

All of her six novels, including "Pride and Prejudice", have been controversial since their publication, on account of Austen's limited range. The critical view is divided in two groups – detractors and admires. The former group had criticized her on various points.

Critics object that her novels present a certain narrow physical setting. It was the period of American War of Independence and of Napoleonic Wars, but the characters of Austen are blissfully unaware of all these tumultuous events. Whole of the story of "Pride and Prejudice" revolves around Netherfield Park, Longbourn, Hansford Parsonage, Meryton and Pemberley.

Nature does not play any specific role in her novels. It seems to be an irony of the history of English literature that when writers like Wordsworth, Byron, Coleridge and others were discovering the beauties of nature / outer world, Austen confines her characters within the four walls of the drawing room or Hall. Edward Fitzgerald states:**"She never goes out of the Parlour."**

Austen avoids the sense of passions described by the romantics, because of her classical views of order and control. Bronte condemns her:**"… the passions art completely unknown to her."**

Critics have complained that her subject matters are very much the same in all her novels and she writes the same sort of story and also that she does not introduce any great variety in her characters.

All of her six novels deal with same theme of love and marriages. There are pretty girls waiting for eligible bachelors to be married to. The opening line of "Pride and Prejudice" is the theme of her six novels. She writes:**"It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife."**

Another limitation of Jane Austen is the feminization of her novels. Men never appear except in the company of women. All the information about Darcy is proved through Elizabeth's point of view. Hence, the reader looks at Darcy through Elizabeth's eye.

Even in her limited world, Austen restricts herself to the depiction of a particular class of country gentry. She excludes the matters of lower class and hardly touches aristocracy. For instance she has discussed Lady Catherine only for the purpose of satire.

There is no terrible happening in her novels. Everything happens in a civilized manner. The extreme severity in "Pride and Prejudice" is elopement of Lydia with Wickham.**"Wickham may elope with Lydia."**

A famous critic, Charlotte Bronte believes that Austen has no concern with the morals and she is an author of the surface only:**"Her business is not half so much with the human heart as with the human eye, mouth, hands and feet."**

A. H. Wright remarks that there is very little religion in her novels. Politics is not mentioned too. There are no adventures found in her books, no abstract ideas and no discussion of spiritual or metaphysical issues.

The defence of Jane Austen's limited range comes from the nature of her novels, the situation of her time and her physical surroundings. Austen's novels are termed as **"domestic novels".** She belongs to the era when neither the girls were allowed to be admitted to universities nor to be intermingled freely with men. So it is natural that her range is limited.

Austen was a daughter of a country clergyman. She has very less exposure to the world except her short visits to London and a few years study at Bath. Hence the world she experienced was very small. In a letter to her niece, Austen wrote:**"There are four families in a country village is the very thing to work on."**

Though Austen's limitations are very self-imposed yet within her deliberately restricted field, her art is perfect. Realization of one's limitations is a positive virtue. The restricted social setting and purely interests, lend a sense of discipline to her art.**"Within the limits she is superb."**

She gains in depth, what she loses in broadness of canvas. Her characters stem from a class which she knows well and hence they are very realistic and life-like. Elizabeth Bennet is one of the most delightful heroines one could come across in literature. Wordsworth remarks:**"Her novels are an admirable copy of life."**

It would be wrong to say that her novels lack passion and profundity. Her themes are love, courtship and marriage and it is impossible to keep the feelings out from such a novel. Besides love, there are also significant emotions, like jealousy of Bingley's, cunningness of Wickham, snobbery of Lady Catherine – all are depicted by Austen with perfect sincerity and conviction.

She also holds a definite moral concern in her novels. She laughs at the shortcomings of people to correct their behaviours. Beneath the theme of love and marriage, she deals with manners to correct the conduct of the middle class country gentry. She preaches the dictum of **"know thyself".** Hence she aims at high morality. She also depicts the merits and strength of a marriage based on understanding through the wedding of Elizabeth and Darcy. The nature of her craft is defined by Austen herself as:**"With bit of irony on which I work with so fine brush to produce little effect after much labour."**

Within her theme and subject matter, Jane Austen is unparalleled in her skill and plot construction. The sub-plots of Jane-Bingley, Lydia-Wickham, Charlotte-Collins all are closely linked to the main Elizabeth-Darcy plot and highlight the theme of good marriage. Even in her limits, no two of her characters are repeated. G. H. Lewis remarks:**"Her circle may be restricted but it is complete. Her world is perfect orb and vital sphere."**

Thus it may be concluded that within her limited range Austen handles all the characters, events, dialogues and the plot of her novels in a very exquisite manner. Her art is fine, perfect and distinguishable. No doubt she is a fine flower of the expiring 18th century.

Pride and Prejudice: Jane Austen's Moral Vision

Jane Austen is not a proclaimed moralist. Unlike Fielding, her aim is not to propagate the morality. She believes in art for the sake of art. She is the pioneer of the novels. Therefore, her plots are well-knit. Her main interest lies in irony and there is a hidden significance of morality as we come across her moral vision in her novels through irony.

Jane Austen is in a favour of social prosperity than individual. She upholds the organic unity of society. She stresses that the duty of human beings owe to others, to society and maintains that individual desires have to be sub-ordinate to the large scale. Lydia-Wickham elopement is passionate and irresponsible. It shows that how society's harmony is disrupted and how others' lives are ruined by the selfish act of the individual. On the other hand the marriage of Elizabeth and Darcy, Jane and Bingley bring happiness and stability to everyone, not simply to themselves.

She discusses individuals 'short comings'. Even the hero and heroine have no exception. Elizabeth blinds herself absurdly because of prejudice whereas Darcy is full of pride.**"… tolerable but not handsome enough to tempt me."**

But we can see that both learn and understand each other. Their pride and prejudice are vanished. But the shortcomings of the other characters are not changed. Mr. Bennet is careless and irresponsible man. Mrs. Bennet is vulgar and stupid. Charlotte is very much economic. Lydia is lusty and Wickham is a deceiver.

Society is divided into classes. "Pride and Prejudice" is an attempt to harmonize the two extremes of middle class – lower end and the top end – into one. Bingley's marriage with Jane and Darcy's with Elizabeth. It is her moral approach to rub the class distinction-line of society.

She also discusses the institution of family which is disturbed. The heads of Bennet family are not mentally bound. This is a matchless couple. Their role as a parent is not active. The disadvantages of such an unsuitable marriage attend the daughters also. On the other hand Bingley family is betraying because there is no head for them but only guided by Darcy.

Jane Austen is concerned with the growth of an individual's moral personality measured by the most exacting standards of 18th century values. Popes dictum "know thyself" underlines the theme of her novel. The conclusion of her novel is always the achievement of self-respect and principal mean of such an achievement is a league of perfect sympathy with another, who is one's spiritual counterpart. Jane Austen traces Elizabeth's prejudice and her anguished recognition of her own blind prejudice before she is united with Darcy in a marriage based on mutual respect, love and understanding. As she says,**"How despicable have I acted! I, who have pride myself on my discernment! – I who have valued myself on my abilities."**

In the end she says,**"There can be no doubt of that. It is settled between us already that we are to be the happiest couple in the world."**

Main theme of her novel is marriage. She tries to define good reasons for marriage and bad reasons for marriage. Her moral concern though unobtrusive, is ever-present. The marriage of Lydia-Wickham, Charlotte-Collins and of the Bennets serves the show by their failure the prosperity of the Elizabeth-Darcy marriage.

There is corruption in landed class. Jane Austen reflects this problem in her novel also. The Bingley sisters hate the Bennet for their vulgarity but are themselves vulgar in their behaviour. Lady Catharine is equally vulgar and ill-bred.

Army men in her novel are only for flirtation. They come only for enjoyment. They have no love in them. Some of them are deceiver like Wickham who elopes with Lydia not for love bur for money.

Then she discusses the degeneracy of clergy. Mr. Collins is a clergyman. He comes at Netherfield in search of life partner. But he is rejected by Bennet's daughters. Then he turns towards Charlotte. He has some reason for marriage.**"My reasons for marriage are, I think it right thing for every clergy (like me) in easy circumstances to set the example of matrimony in parish …"**

Jane Austen throws light on the materialism and economic concern of society. Charlotte is more concern with money than man. She is lusty. Her materialistic approach is judged by her remarks.**"I am not romantic, you know, I never was. I ask only for a comfortable home."**Collins also has materialistic mind. Mr. Wickham is always thinking about money. He elopes with Lydia only for money.

Pride and prejudice, is in fact, corresponding virtue. Pride leads to prejudice and prejudice invites pride. Darcy is proud, at the beginning. As he says:**"… my good opinion once lost is lost forever"**His first appearance is appallingly insolent and we tend to agree with Mrs. Bennet's complaint:**"He walked her and he walked there, fancying so very great".**Darcy's remarks prejudiced Elizabeth. At ball-party, when he firstly sees her, he says:**"… tolerable but not handsome enough to tempt me."**Wickham's biased account about Darcy increased the hatred of Elizabeth. But we can observe that both earn when they go through the process of self-realization. Then Elizabeth thinks that:**"…Darcy was exactly the man, who in disposition and talents; would suit for her."**

We may say that Jane Austen's main concern was irony. She uses irony to shake the major figures of their self-deception and expose the hypocrisy and pretentiousness, absurdity and insanity of some of her minor figures. It is definitely possible to deduce from her work a scheme of moral value. Andrew H. Wright rightly points out that irony in her hand is the instrument of a moral vision. Walter Allen rightly comments:**"She is the most forthright moralist in English."**

Pride and Prejudice: Irony

One of the most prominent features of the literary style of Jane Austen is her frequent use of irony. In Pride and Prejudiceshe investigates social relationships in the limited society of a country with an ironic and often humorous eye.

General Irony

Irony in the themes of 'pride' and 'prejudice':- The title of the novel, which refers to those failings of the main characters that initially prevent them from accepting each other, contains a strain of hidden irony. Jane Austen subtly introduces an inversion in the thematic foibles ('pride' and 'prejudice') and the characters they belong to. This very inversion is another example of Austen's use of irony. It is Darcy who is supposed to have the pride and Elizabeth who is supposed to have the prejudice. But in her misunderstandings with Darcy, sheaccuses him of excessive pride, while he accuses her of prejudice.

Irony in the very first line: - The reader is invited to laugh at the ironies of human perception and expectations from the very first line of the novel: "**It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife."** Read ironically, this sentence is turned on its head to mean: "Everyone who knows a single rich man will pursue him with ambitions to be his wife." This is irony, which allows the author to communicate more than the literal or expected meanings of her language.

Mr. Bennet's irony

Mr. Bennet's intentional irony: - Mr. Bennet, the intelligent, detached father of the Bennet sisters is an interesting study in the novel's use of irony. His own sense of irony is very well defined, and he enjoys laughing at his wife's and his family's follies.

His ironical comments at the expense of his wife range from the gently mocking: **"You mistake me, my dear. I have a high respect for your nerves… They are my old friends. I have heard you mention them with consideration these twenty years at least"** and the subtle and indirect:"**Now, Kitty, you may cough as much as you choose" to the harsh and direct:" This is a parade which does one good; it gives such an elegance to misfortune! Another day I will do the same; I will sit in my library, in my night cap and powdering gown, and give as much trouble as I can, - or, perhaps, I may defer it, till Kitty runs away".**

But Mr. Bennet's conscious use of irony serves no useful purpose. It neither serves to shame his wife, who fails to detect the vein of sarcasm underlying all his comments, nor does it educate his younger daughters or make them see how improper their behaviour is.

Mr. Bennet's unintentional irony: - This is why the plot of the novel seems to show, through Mr. Bennet, the limitations of sitting back and observing irony as a response to human experience. Trapped in a bad marriage, Mr. Bennet makes life endurable for himself by assuming the pose of an ironic passive spectator of life, who has long ago abandoned his roles as a husband and a father. And this ironic detachment on the part of Mr. Bennet is closely linked to his abdication from responsibility.

His most spectacular abandonment of duty comes in connection with Lydia's proposal to go to Brighton. "Lydia will never be easy till she has exposed herself in some public

place" says Mr. Bennet, "and we can never expect her to do it with so little expense or inconvenience to her family as under the present circumstances." His statement, seen in retrospect, is even more ironic than he meant it to be. Lydia did, in fact, end up exposing her family. And the expense and inconvenience, which he claimed would be little, turns out to be enormous.

Elizabeth's irony

Elizabeth's intentional use of irony: - On the other hand, Elizabeth's playful irony is for her both a defense against others whose faults she can perceive, and a weapon which she uses to condemn them for these faults.

In the war against stupidity, she uses irony to skewer the negative traits she is quick to find in people. She targets Mr. Collins' self-importance and his sycophantic behaviour towards Lady Catherine De Bourgh:**"They…were indebted to Mr. Collins for the knowledge of what carriages went along, and how often especially Miss De Bourgh drove by in her phaeton, which he never failed coming to inform them of, though it happened almost every day."** Mr. Collins, of course, was too blinded by his self-importance and his infatuation with Lady Catherine's power and wealth to see that Elizabeth was really not at all indebted to him, and in fact her irritation and contempt of him increased with this behaviour.

Similarly, she criticizes the contrast between Wickham's duplicity and Darcy's honesty to Jane: **"There certainly was some great mismanagement in the education of those two young men. One has got all the goodness, and the other all the appearance of it."**

She does not even spare Bingley, accusing him of over-compliance in his reliance on Darcy: **"Elizabeth longed to observe that Mr. Bingley had been a most delightful friend; so easily guided that his worth was invaluable".**

She criticizes Mr. Darcy's lack of social graces to his face: "I have always seen a great similarity in the turn of our minds. We are both of an unsocial, taciturn disposition, unwilling to speak, unless we expect to say something that will amaze the whole room". And she does not spare him in Bingley's drawing room when she says to him: "I am perfectly convinced by it that Mr. Darcy has no defect. He owns it himself without disguise." The irony, of course, is that by accusing him of owning that he has no defect, she is actually accusing him of a grave defect: arrogance.

Elizabeth response at Charlotte's marriage – unintentionally ironic: - Yet, Elizabeth's own behaviour towards Wickham is unknowingly tinged with irony.Perhaps the worst instance of Elizabeth's stubborn belief in Wickham's character is her serene acceptance of his defection to the moneyed Miss King. Ironically enough, just a few months ago, she had expressed shock at Charlotte's decision to marry Mr. Collins for very similar reasons, and in fact, had partially estranged herself from Charlotte because of what she thought were Charlotte's mercenary and shallow motives.

In her letter to Mrs. Gardiner, she says of Wickham: **"handsome young men must have something to live on, as well as the plain".** Contrast this to her very different response when Charlotte herself said much the same thing to her: "[Elizabeth] could not have supposed it possible that when called into action, [Charlotte] would have sacrificed every better feeling to worldly advantage. Charlotte, the wife of Mr. Collins, was a most humiliating picture! – And to the pang of a friend disgracing herself and sunk in her esteem…." This seeming inconsistency on her part reeks of hypocrisy, but the truth is that Elizabeth is simply less clear-sighted in the case of Wickham than she is with Charlotte.

The irony of the difference in her response to Charlotte's engagement and her own subsequent leniency towards materialism is further underlined by the reaction that the first sight of Pemberley arouses in her ("at that moment she felt that to be mistress of Pemberley might be something!"). Later, she tells Jane "…I hardly knew when it began. But I believe I must date it from my first seeing his beautiful grounds at Pemberley." People have differed on how ironically this statement by Elizabeth, supposedly dating the beginning of her love for Darcy, should be taken. But however ironically she meant it herself, it cannot be denied that her regard for Darcy received a great impetus when she saw his beautiful house.

Darcy's irony

Darcy is not as humourless and sober as he appears on the surface. He may not laugh, but in his own way he is as attuned to irony and incongruity as Elizabeth is. Their conversation shows that his wit can be as ready as Elizabeth's. For example, when Miss Bingley accuses Elizabeth of being 'one of those young ladies who seek to recommend themselves to the other sex, by undervaluing their own,' Mr. Darcy's ironic response that "there is meanness in all the arts which ladies sometimes condescend to employ for captivation"indicates that he sees through Miss Bingley's own attempt to "recommend" herself to him by "undervaluing" Elizabeth.

Mrs. Bennet's irony

Mrs. Bennet is a minefield of unintentional irony. Her ill-natured, materialistic and narrow-minded view of the world is revealed in her foolish comments, such as the one she made about Bingley to Elizabeth on her return from Hunsford "Well, my comfort is, I am sure Jane will die of a broken heart, and then he will be sorry for what he has done.''

Other such comments abound. But in the final resolution of Mrs. Bennet's deepest wishes for her daughters' marriages, there lies still more irony. Even though it is the business of her life to get them married, she has only succeeded in ruining their prospects. If her daughters' futures were left entirely up to her, her improper management of them would have ended up making them ineligible for any respectable suitors. In fact, it is Mr. Darcy who moves behind the scenes and secretly arranges the marriage of all the three Bennet girls. Thus Darcy, who she despises, and who in turn despises her, is the one who is ultimately responsible for her exultation at the end. This, then, is the greatest irony of all.

Jane Austen's irony in the social context

Finally, the author's most devastating use of irony in the book is in her attacks on community and on society, such as on the Meryton society. She uses irony as a social tool to direct the reader's gaze to some of the human imperfections that threaten the virtues of her culture.

Independent of any character, she uses irony in the narrative parts for some of her sharpest judgments. Through the Meryton community's reaction to Lydia's marriage with Wickham: ("the good-natured wishes for her well-doing, which had proceeded before, from all the spiteful old ladies of Meryton, lost but little of their spirit in this change of circumstances, because with such an husband, her misery was considered certain."), Austen attacks society's practice of taking pleasure in others' ills, and the mean-spirited gossip-mongers that inhabit society.

Austen also pokes fun at society's practice of suddenly becoming enamoured with a man because of his wealth without knowing his true nature. For instance, upon Darcy's entrance to a dance in chapter 3, Austen writes that "the report was in general circulation within five minutes...of his having ten thousand a year." She adds that "the ladies declared that he was much handsomer than Mr. Bingley" – obviously his wealth recommended his countenance to them. That they retract their approval so fast when they realize that he pays no attention to them is no less ironic.

A striking feature of the irony in Pride and Prejudice is that it is mixed with unmistakable strains of cynicism. This 'black' irony is very much in evidence throughout the book. For example, in the following statements

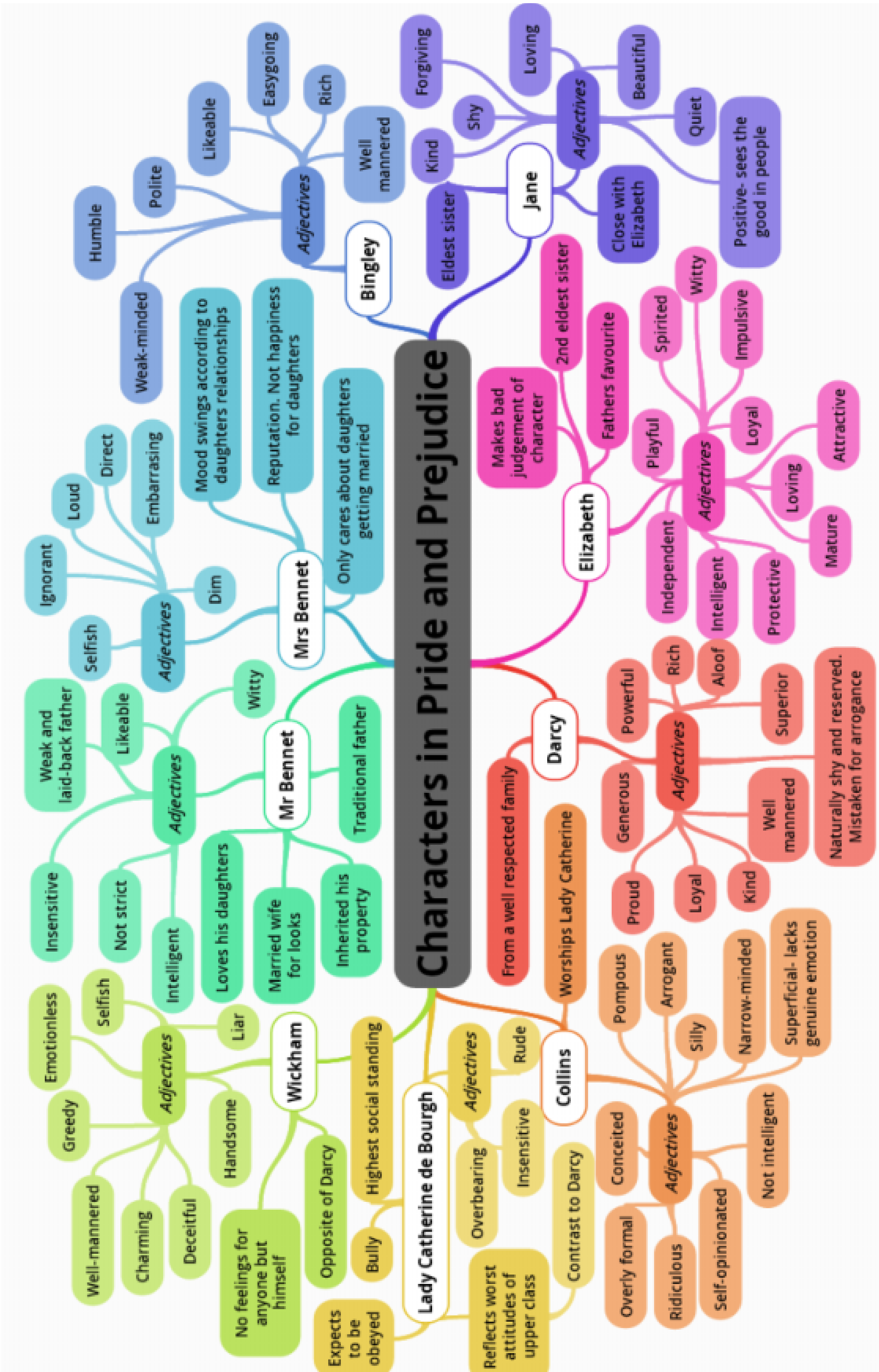
Elizabeth on Bingley: "Is not general incivility the very essence of love?"

Mr. Collins to Elizabeth: "Your portion is unhappily so small that it will in all likelihood undo the efforts of your loveliness and amiable qualifications."

Charlotte Lucas on marriage: "If a woman conceals her affection … from the object of it, she may lose the opportunity of fixing him. … In nine cases out of ten, a woman had better show more affection than she feels."

The cynicism of all this is striking – especially the suggestions that human attachments spring largely from selfish motives, and that women who do not feign affection for men are likely to be left on the shelf.

Thus, irony is employed by Jane Austen in Pride and Prejudice as the lens through which society and human nature are viewed. She uses irony not only to create humour and make her books more enjoyable, but also to make veiled, bitter observations about the world around her. And this is why this novel is as relevant in our times as it was in hers, perhaps more – for in her hands irony is an extremely effective device for moral evaluation that exposes those defects in her society which still prevail in ours today.


Characters in Pride and Prejudice
Bingley
Adjectives
Humble
Polite
Likeable
Easygoing
Rich
Well mannered
Weak-minded
Jane
Eldest sister
Close with Elizabeth
Adjectives
Kind
Shy
Forgiving
Loving
Beautiful
Quiet
Positive- sees the good in people
Mrs Bennet
Mood swings according to daughters relationships
Reputation. Not happiness for daughters
Only cares about daughters getting married
Adjectives
Ignorant
Loud
Direct
Embarrasing
Dim
Selfish
Elizabeth
2nd eldest sister
Fathers favourite
Makes bad judgement of character
Adjectives
Playful
Spirited
Witty
Impulsive
Loyal
Attractive
Loving
Mature
Protective
Intelligent
Independent
Mr Bennet
Traditional father
Inherited his property
Married wife for looks
Loves his daughters
Adjectives
Witty
Likeable
Weak and laid-back father
Insensitive
Not strict
Intelligent
Darcy
From a well respected family
Adjectives
Powerful
Rich
Aloof
Superior
Naturally shy and reserved. Mistaken for arrogance
Well mannered
Kind
Loyal
Proud
Generous
Collins
Worships Lady Catherine
Contrast to Darcy
Adjectives
Pompous
Arrogant
Silly
Narrow-minded
Superficial- lacks genuine emotion
Not intelligent
Self-opinionated
Ridiculous
Overly formal
Conceited
Wickham
Opposite of Darcy
No feelings for anyone but himself
Adjectives
Liar
Selfish
Emotionless
Greedy
Well-mannered
Charming
Deceitful
Handsome
Lady Catherine de Bourgh
Highest social standing
Bully
Expects to be obeyed
Reflects worst attitudes of upper class
Adjectives
Rude
Insensitive
Overbearing

Pride and Prejudice: Art of Characterization

The range of Jane Austen's characters is rather narrow. She selects her characters from among the landed gentry in the countryside. Sir Walter Scott very accurately describes this range:**"Jane Austen confines herself chiefly to the middling classes of society … and those which are sketched with most originality and precision belong to a class rather below that standard."**

She omits the servants and the labourers. They appear wherever they are needed but they are usually not heard. Aristocracy also is hardly touched and if taken, it is only to satirize. Lady Catherine in "Pride and Prejudice" is arrogant, pretentious, stupid and vulgar. Austen finds herself at home only with the country gentry and their usual domestic interests.

In spite of such a limited range, Austen never repeats her characters. Lord David Cecil says:**"In her six books, she ever repeats a single character … There is all the difference in the world between the vulgarity of Mrs. Bennet and the vulgarity of Mrs. Jennings."**

Though these characters are so highly individualized, yet they have a touch of universality. Thus Marianne becomes the representative of all romantic lovers while Wickham represents all pleasant-looking but selfish and unprincipled flirts.

Austen usually presents her characters dramatically through their conversation, actions and letters. Darcy and Wickham, Lydia and Caroline are much revealed through their actions, while Collins and Lydia are revealed through their letters. A direct comment is sometimes added. The mean understanding of Mrs. Bennet and the sarcastic humour of Mr. Bennet have already been revealed in their dialogues before the direct comment of the novelist. Similarly before she tells us about Mr. Collins, we have already become aware from his letter that he is not a sensible man.

Though Jane Austen does not conceive her characters in pairs yet her characters are revealed through comparison and contrast with others. Lady Catherine and Mrs. Bennet balance each other in their vulgarity and match-making drills. Wickham serves a contrast to Darcy while Bingley is a foil to him. Elizabeth's is compared and contrasted with Jane and Caroline Bingley.

Austen builds character through piling an infinite succession of minute details about them. In "Pride and Prejudice", the Elizabeth-Darcy relationship is traced through minute details, details which look trivial and insignificant in the first instance but whose significance is realized only after reading the novel. Sir Walter Scott makes a fine comment:**"The author's knowledge of the world, and the peculiar tact with which she presents characters … reminds us something of the merit of the Flemish school of painting."**

Austen is a great realist in art. Her characters are creatures of flesh and blood, pulsating with vitality. She studies her characters kindly but objectively. Regarding their appearance, she treats them quite generally, fixing them with a few bold strokes. She is constant in providing details about their outlook, attitude, manner and accomplishments.

Lord Cecil says:**"Her lucid knife-edged mind was always at work penetrating beneath such impressions to disown their cause, discover the principles … that go to make up his individuality."**

Austen's characters are neither embodiment of virtue nor pure villains but real human beings both pleasant and disgusting. Elizabeth is perceptive but her perception is sullied by her initial prejudices. In contrast Wickham has so much charm that it is rather difficult to detest him. Austen often mingles knavishness with folly making villainous characters a source of rich comedy.

Jane Austen's minor figures are flat. They do not grow and are fully developed when we first meet them. As the action progresses our first impressions of them get confirmed. Mrs. Bennet seems to be stupefied and vulgar right from the first scene. Her appearance at the Netherfield Park or her reaction to Lydia's elopement confirms her stupidity and vulgarity. This is true of almost all of her minor figures.

But her major characters are ever changing, ever growing. Usually self-deceived in initial stages, they are capable of understanding, growth and maturity. They are complex, dynamic and intricate. Her heroines, blinded by ego, vanity or over-confidence, commit gross errors and suffer bitter reverses. But by virtue of their insight they are gradually disillusioned and, thus, grow.

Minor or major all characters created by Jane Austen may be described as round inasmuch as they are all three-dimensional. E. M. Forster brings out this point quite admirably:**"All her characters are round or capable of rotundity … They have all their proper places and fill other several stations with great credit … All of them are organically related to their environment and to each other."**

Dull characters are made interesting. An eminent critic, describing Jane as a prose Shakespeare remarks:**"What, in other hands, would be flat, insipid … becomes at her bidding, a sprightly versatile, never-flagging chapter of realities."**

Thus touched by the magic wand of Jane Austen's art, even the fool and bore of real life became amusing figures. The pompous stupidity of Mrs. Collins and the absurdity and vulgarity of Mrs. Bennet should in real life, prove as irritating to us as to Elizabeth and Darcy. But even these characters become such a rich source of mirth and entertainment.

Still there are a few characters that do not look enough life-like or relevant. Mary Bennet fails to impress, nor is she even vital to the story. Jane Fairfax in "Emma" is shadowy. Margaret is "Sense and Sensibility" never comes to life. But these minor failures do not detract much from her reputation as one of the greatest delineators of characters.

Pride and Prejudice : First Impressions

First impressions and separation of social classes plays a very active role in the whole theme of Pride and Prejudice. In this novel by Jane Austen, we not only see how first impressions effect relationships, but also see how the characters in this story experience transformation through their experiences of first impressions, pride and prejudice.

First impressions cause these characters' preconceived notions, based on wealth and class to activate more pride and prejudice against each other. Elizabeth Bennet's first impression of Mr. Darcy is that he is **"proud, above his company, and above being pleased,"** while Mr. Darcy's first impression of Elizabeth is that "**she is tolerable but not handsome enough to tempt"** him.

Furthermore, Elizabeth's pride and prejudice towards Mr. Darcy continues to grow stronger. She is unaware of his admiration towards her, because she figures a man like him would never love her and she could never love a man with so much pride and conceit. The confusion of Mr. Darcy's true character takes her almost the entire novel to discover the truth about him: the truth about him and Wickham and his true reasoning for parting Bingley and Jane.

Pride and Prejudice is a story about a man who changes into a better man and his true and upstanding character, and he blossoms into a true gentleman. It's also about a woman who changes because her perception of this man has been clarified. **Both Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy learn to see beyond their first impressions of each other and learn how to make things right.** Both Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy act out of misjudgment, pride, prejudice, and lack of open communication right from the very beginning of their acquaintance. Although they are both extremely guilty of these character flaws, Elizabeth accomplished a greater transformation because, ironically, her pride and prejudice exceeded Mr. Darcy. They are much alike in character, however, and they both undergo great transformation.

The fact that Mr. Darcy is rich and of a higher class than Elizabeth seems to lead her to immediately assume his lack of interest in anything else going on around him at the balls is influenced by his wealth. **"I should have judged better had I sought an introduction; but I am ill qualified to recommend myself to strangers… I certainly have not the talent which some people possess of conversing easily with those I have never seen before. I cannot catch their tone of conversation, or appear interested in their concerns, as I often see done."** We see that Elizabeth has not come to know the fact about Mr. Darcy that he is not shallow or as snooty as she conceives.

Early in the novel Mr. Darcy judges Elizabeth by saying that she is not handsome enough to tempt him. His mind changes about Elizabeth as he discovers the depth of her personality. Elizabeth perceives Mr. Darcy's quick wits and response to her comments as prideful, but actually they both challenge each other's minds and patterns of thinking in a positive way. Mr. Darcy also bases his prejudice and misjudgment of Elizabeth based on her pushy, boisterous mother. Her mother turns him off from the Bennet family entirely, and foolishly he turns Mr. Bingley off from Jane as well, not only for that reason but because he didn't believe Jane felt any affection for Mr. Bingley. These were misjudgments on Mr. Darcy's behalf for Elizabeth sometimes can't even stand her own mother and Jane truly did have affection for Mr. Bingley. Mr. Darcy acted immaturely, without knowing the fullness of the situation. Later when Elizabeth confronts and reveals the truth to Mr. Darcy, he honestly feels remorse, and later fixes his mistake.

In the same manner Elizabeth makes judgments also about Mr. Darcy and Wickham. Elizabeth believes Wickham's story about him and Mr. Darcy when they have only just met. Elizabeth has not begun to understand Wickham's character, yet she believes him

whole heartedly without first asking Mr. Darcy about that matter. She foolishly allows her prejudice to grow inside her against Mr. Darcy; and she even talks to her family and friends, causing distaste in their mouths as well. This is immature and prejudice in the fullest.

Mr. Darcy, after several miscommunications between Elizabeth and himself finally admits his faults of pride and ignorance. He got to explain himself as well. His true character unraveled as more events took place. His maid spoke so highly of him and all that he has done for others and especially his sister. He has never shown anger, pride, or prejudice to any of his servants. He makes things right with Elizabeth and Jane- Bingley situation and even helps Lydia and Wickham after all that had happened. These are true advancements of his character from false first impressions to humbling himself and admitting fault.

For Elizabeth, she finally admits herself of being **"blind, partial, prejudiced, and absurd."** She admits she has acted despicably, by priding herself on her discernment. **"Vanity, not love, has been my folly. Pleased with the preference of one, and offended by the neglect of the other, on the very beginning of our acquaintance, I have courted prepossession [pride] and ignorance, and driven reason away where either were concerned. Till this moment, I never knew myself."**This is the greatest moment, the pivotal point in Elizabeth's character transformation. Elizabeth finally realizes first impression, pride and prejudice, have been false and wrong towards Mr. Darcy.

Both Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy could not have experienced such a character transformation as these if it were not for their initial first impressions of each other. They grew to know one another better and deeper. They caused each other to mature and transform into a greater man and a greater woman. Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy were both so stubborn about what they thought about each other for most of the novel that it caused them to see each other unclearly; luckily they overcame their false first impressions and were able to see the truth about each other and help each other grow.

Pride and Prejudice : Characteristics of a drama

The novel Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen has several characteristics of a drama. The novel shares such leading qualities of a drama as dialogue, character development, plot, theme, action and dramatic irony. The use of these dramatic devices makes the novel interesting to read.

Dialogue: - The novel opens with dialogue. It provides the substance of the play. Dialogue is used to show the characters speaking directly to each other which give the reader access to the thoughts and emotions of the characters. It grows intimacy between characters and audience.**"My dear Mr. Bennet," said his lady to him one day, "have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?"**

All of Austen's many characters come alive through dialogue. Long, unwieldy speeches are rare and in their place, the reader hears the crackle of quick, witty conversation. True nature reveals itself in the way the characters speak: Mr. Bennet's emotional detachment comes across in his dry wit, while Mrs. Bennet's hysterical excess drips from

every sentence she utters. Austen's dialogue often serves to reveal the worst aspects of her characters—Miss Bingley's spiteful, snobbish attitudes are readily apparent in her words, and Mr. Collins's long-winded speeches carry with them a tone-deaf pomposity that defines his character perfectly. Dialogue can also conceal bad character traits: Wickham, for instance, hides his rogue's heart beneath the patter of pleasant, witty banter, and he manages to take Elizabeth in with his smooth tongue. Ultimately, though, good conversational ability and general goodness of personality seem to go hand in hand. Pride and Prejudice is the story of Darcy and Elizabeth's love, and for the reader, that love unfolds through the words they share.

Plot: - The plot of a drama involves unexpected turns, suspense and climax. In pride and Prejudice we find some turning points which motivate the novel such as Darcy and Elizabeth's first meet at the Meryton ball. Darcy's Pride arouses Elizabeth's prejudice. Darcy refuses to dance with Elizabeth upon Bingley's request, saying that Elizabeth is no handsome enough to tempt him. Elizabeth hears this comment and greatly hurt. She immediately takes a view about Mr. Darcy that he will be a man of arrogant personality.

However through the Bingely-Bennet friendship Darcy and Elizabeth are brought into each other's company. Again Jane's illness at Netherfield brings the two together again. And it is the beginning of his admiration for her.

Now the audience becomes suspicious when Mrs. Bennet's garrulous vulgarity turns Darcy away from his interest in Elizabeth and leads him to take the docile Bingley to London. Moreover Elizabeth's initial prejudice is deepened by the smooth lies of Wickham against Darcy. She accepts at face value everything that Wickham says about Mr. Darcy. Mr. Wickham professes to be discrete and hints that he would not defame anybody's character, but he defames Darcy. Elizabeth would not have tolerated such a conversation if anybody except the disagreeable Mr. Darcy were the subject of the talk. As a result, Elizabeth forms an even more unfavorable opinion about Mr. Darcy than she had formed before. Her prejudice turns into hatred.

As an another principal turning point the two meet again when Elizabeth is visiting Charlotte Collins and Darcy is visiting his aunt Lady Catherine at Rosings. Darcy's old interest is revived with increased fervor.

Now we see the struggle in Darcy's mind between his pride and love for Elizabeth with the handicaps of such relations as Collins, Lydia, Kitty, Mary, Mrs. Bennet and the inferior family connection with trade. Love wins enough of a victory to bring him to the point of proposing.

The chief climax of the main story occurs when Darcy proposes to Elizabeth at Rosings and is refused. Darcy constantly emphasizes the struggles and obstacles that he had to overcome in order to make him this step. Rather than emphasizing his love, he constantly refers to all the obstacles which he has had to overcome. This proposal completely stuns Elizabeth. She thinks that Mr. Darcy is only seeking a wife who is so inferior as to be ever grateful for a chance to be his wife. She rejects his proposal without least hesitation and she gives her reasons for her refusal. She mentions his past ill- treatment to Mr. Wickham and she tells him that he was responsible for breaking up

between Jane and Bingley. And finally she accuses him not behaving in a gentleman- like manner. The denouement is reached with his second proposal and this time acceptance.

On the very next day, Mr. Darcy hands over to Elizabeth a letter which contains a defense of him against the charges which she had leveled against him. There is much logic in this defense and Elizabeth is deeply affected by it. She is forced to acknowledge the justice of his claims as regards Wickham, his criticism of her family and even his claims concerning Jane. She comes to a self-realization. Suddenly, she cannot remember anything that Mr. Darcy has ever done which was not honorable and just, while Mr. Wickham has often been imprudent in his comments. Previously, she had called Jane blind, and now she has gained a moral insight into her own character and sees that she has also been blind. Consequently, Elizabeth's character increases in depth as she is able to analyze herself and come to those realizations. This self- recognition established her as a person capable of changing and growing.

Meanwhile, the youngest Bennet, Lydia, rushes into an ill-advised romance with Wickham, an officer who at first appears charming and trustworthy. Wickham fails in a ruthless attempt to marry a rich northern woman and impulsively elopes with the naive Lydia. The 16-year-old girl speaks recklessly, acts offensively, and must gratify her impulses instantly. Lydia fails to see that running off with Wickham scandalizes her family.

Darcy shows his true mettle by secretly helping Charles return to Jane, by ensuring that Wickham and Lydia return to Longbourn as a married couple with an income, and by proposing again to Elizabeth with new humility. Shamed, Elizabeth recognizes many of her misjudgments and accepts Darcy's proposal. Their personalities soften and blend beautifully.

Another coincidence brings Elizabeth and Darcy at Pemberley House. He is very warm and friendly and inquires of her family. There is no trace of haughtiness in the manner in which he now talks to her and to her relatives. Even more, when she learns the role which Darcy has played in Lydia's marriage, she becomes strongly inclined towards him.

In this changed circumstances Mr. Darcy arrives at Netherfield and proposes marriage to her. This time she gladly accepts the proposal because she has now begun to think that Mr. Darcy is truly a gentleman. He also tells Elizabeth that it was her frankness which had finally revealed to him his shortcomings. He also admits that he encouraged Bingley to propose Jane. Elizabeth also honestly confesses the change in her feelings and the two lovers are finally happy.

A plot also centers on a single interest and other sub-actions become involved to it. There is a quite compact plot in Pride and Prejudice. In Pride and Prejudice the main story of Elizabeth and Darcy runs throughout the whole narrative. Minor stories, kept under complete control, are never permitted to obtrude and are always made to contribute to the main story.

Secondary plots revolve about Jane and Bingley, Lydia and Wickham, Mr. Collins, Miss Bingley's schemes, Lady Catherine de Bourgh. The action is developed around the gradual coming together of Elizabeth and Darcy and their ultimate happiness. The

secondary figures act as foils to the main characters and interact with them to help bring about the final resolution.

Character: - In a drama the characters show significant development. The characters of a drama suffer from their mistakes and finally learn many lessons. In the same way, here in this novel we also see the development of characters. The characters who mostly develop are Elizabeth and Darcy.

Jane Austen's characters evolve the drama. Throughout the novel, the characters, like in a drama are developed gradually or step by step. They are placed in different contexts in which he encounter each other and help reveal their personalities. Darcy and Elizabeth, for example, undergo significant changes throughout the novel.

Letter plays an important role to develop the relationship between Elizabeth and Darcy. Darcy's first letter to Elizabeth makes her even more prejudiced against Darcy but at the same time begin to think deeply about Wickham's previous story.

Darcy writes his first letter in such a way as if he is showing favor to her, which exhibits his pride. She rejects his proposal without least hesitation and she gives her reasons for her refusal. She mentions his past ill- treatment to Mr. Wickham and she tells him that he was responsible for breaking up between Jane and Bingley. And finally she accuses him not behaving in a gentleman- like manner. This final accusation gives a serious blow to Darcy. This is a turning point for his self-realization.

Elizabeth learns lessons and changes the way she thinks about some situations. An extremely rich and famous man, one of the most sought after men in the country falls in love with Elizabeth, and although she initially rejects his proposals of marriage, thinking him too proud, does slowly fall in love with him, realizing his pride was only shyness, and they become engaged. She admits her own faults and overcomes her prejudice against Mr. Darcy and she becomes aware of her own social and emotional prejudice. When her friend Charlotte marries Mr. Collins, Elizabeth condemns the marriage as ridiculous but comes to understand and accept the position her friend was in. The marriage between Mr. Collins and Charlotte is based on economics rather than on love.

Elizabeth regards Jane as more noble and kind-hearted than herself. Jane is slightly naive, she expects all people to have pure and good motives for everything and seeks to find good in everyone. She has not shown much emotion to Bingley's advances, though she accepts them. She shows little of the same sentiment, although this is just her nature, this is what made Darcy think Jane would not be much hurt if Bingley left her. This is untrue, she suffers the loss greatly, though alone and privately.

Lydia and Wickham have each other in an unhappy and impecunious marriage. Miss Bingley's jealous envy brings only bitterness and disappointment. Mr. Bennet's indolence and failure as a parent brings him the pain and shame of Lydia's elopement and Lady Catherine's arrogance brings about her humiliation in her interview with Elizabeth and her defeat in the marriage of Elizabeth and Darcy.

Theme: - The title of the novel Pride and Prejudice can be interpreted as a theme running through the novel. Pride is the feeling that one is better or more important than other people and prejudice is an adverse judgment or opinion formed beforehand

without knowledge of the facts. When we add these two themes together, we get this novel Pride and Prejudice.

The very basis of this book is on Pride and Prejudice. Jane Austen created a world in which most of the people are guilty of Pride and Prejudice and judge each other on the basis of their pride and prejudice. But pride and prejudice are not very unusual factors in this world which is based on artificial and conventional behaviors. And Jane Austen appreciates those who can come out of their Pride and Prejudice and reject the superficial behaviors. But those who can't discard their pride and prejudice remain the objects of ridicule till the end of the novel.

Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet, the two central characters of the novel, for the better part of the novel is the focus of Pride and prejudice respectively. And in the later part of the novel both Darcy and Elizabeth have come out from their Pride and Prejudice respectively.

Irony: - Irony is the very soul of Jane Austen's novels and "Pride and Prejudice" is steeped in irony of theme, situation, character and narration. Irony is the contrast between appearance and reality.

The first sentence of the novel Pride and Prejudice opens with an ironic statement about marriage, "It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife" (1). A man with a fortune does not need a wife nearly so much as a woman is greatly in need of a wealthy husband. The entire novel is really an explanation of how women and men pursue each other prior to marriage. Jane Austen uses a variety of verbal, dramatic and situational irony through the novel.

The novel is full of verbal irony, especially coming from Elizabeth and Mr. Bennet. Verbal irony is saying one thing, but meaning the complete opposite. Although Mr. Bennet is basically a sensible man, he behaves strangely because of his sarcasm with his wife. He amuses himself by pestering his foolish wife or making insensitive remarks about his daughters. Mr. Bennet cruelly mocks his wife silliness and is shown to be sarcastic, and cynical with comments as "…you are as handsome as any of them, Mr. Bingley might like you.

In chapter 4, Elizabeth confirms her strong dislike for Darcy and criticizes Bignley's sisters as well. She is critical of Jane for being "blind" to others. This criticism is filled with irony, because in the later part of the novel Elizabeth is blind in analyzing Darcy because of her prejudice against his pride. Shortly in the novel, Darcy grows interest in Elizabeth, but Elizabeth doesn't notice it. Elizabeth misunderstands Darcy attraction toward her. As she was playing the piano at the parsonage, she believes that Darcy is trying to unsettle her when he stands by the piano to hear her play the piano.

Also, Darcy was blind in the beginning of the novel because he did not realize that Elizabeth possesses the qualification his future wife must have. Another dramatic irony is in chapter 39 when Elizabeth is shocked by the behavior that she sees in her family and realizes the truth Darcy has stated about the weak impression they make.

It is interesting to note that ironically, in "Pride and Prejudice", it is the villainous character Wickham and lady Catherine – who are responsible for uniting Elizabeth and Darcy.

Action: - Another requisite of drama is action. In Pride and Prejudice there is a great deal of action, even though it is quite and seemingly unexciting. The characters of the novel do not behave in any wild or improbable way. Since the picture drawn is of everyday life and activities, it is easy for us to comprehend it and is that much more real to us.

The elements of drama, by which dramatic works can be analyzed and evaluated, are categorized into the above discussed areas. And because of the presence of these dramatic elements we can call Pride and Prejudice as a dramatic novel.

Feminine Individuality in Pride and Prejudice

Literature is a mirror of social evolution. In it we find a living record of the progressive emergence of individuality in history. It depicts the development of political rights, social equality and psychological individuality as several stages in a common evolutionary movement.

The well-loved English novelist, Jane Austen lived in an age when female social conformity was demanded, original thinking frowned upon and creativity discouraged among women. Women were expected to be virtuous, submissive, modest, concealing to their intelligence and abilities and leaving matters of science, philosophy, politics and business to more intelligent and better informed gentlemen. English law at the time forbade divorce and regarded married women much like the property of her husband's. It was an age in which it was universally believed that every girl must marry and marry young to secure a groom for financial security and social status, in utter disregard of foolish, idealistic notions of love and romance. Jane Austen rejected one very respectable proposal and refused to marry at all because she could not marry for love.

Her writing was as individualistic as she was and her own individuality was reflected in that of her heroines. In Pride and Prejudice she portrays Elizabeth Bennet's struggle to express her individuality in a society that demanded strict social conformity, a situation far afield for most Western women today, but closely resembling the pressures felt by woman in many Asian countries even now. Elizabeth has inner strength. She doesn't value people and things just because society values them. She judges according to her own values. She is not socially self-conscious or pretentious. She has a natural spontaneity. She has social skill and capacity, but she is not constrained by artificial social formalities. Nor is she a prisoner of her own ego. She has the sincerity to examine her own behaviour and the capacity to change. She has the will, as well as the strength, to resist social pressure. Elizabeth is not aggressive, rebellious or frivolous, disrespecting societal norms and breaking rules for fun. She has high human values, and employs her good sense and strong will as she sees fit, thinking independently of her family, friends and neighbours.

Unlike many contemporary notions about female individuality, Elizabeth is able to express her intelligence, independence and strong character without in any way compromising on her femininity. She is able to stand up for her rights, speak her mind freely and disregard social status, yet she never aspires to be a successful man in a man's world. She strives only to express her own unique feminine individuality. With her cheerfulness and goodwill, she is feminine as well as individualistic.

Elizabeth belongs to a family of five daughters, their father a gentleman farmer of moderate fortune. With no male heir, the family estate is to pass on to a cousin after her father's time. With no suitor in sight and no dowry to recommend her in case one turned up, marriage and financial security seem like distant dreams. But Elizabeth is not daunted. Marriage, to her, is not an ideal in itself. Her mother's one aim in life is to marry five daughters. Her younger sisters cannot wait for their turn to marry. Her best friend goads her to do all she can to secure a wealthy husband, be he a fool or a villain. But Elizabeth feels differently, and fear of neither spinsterhood nor poverty can dilute her values. At a time in England where marrying for love hardly ever happened, like her creator Jane Austen, Elizabeth is determined to marry a man she loves and respects, or not marry at all.

Her bumbling cousin Collins visits the Bennets and announces his intention of marrying Elizabeth. Collins is a decent man with a college education, respectable job and considerable income. More significantly, he is the heir to the Bennet estate. Mrs. Bennet who has intensely felt the pressure of having five unmarried daughters and dreaded the thought of their becoming poor old maids, celebrates this end to all their troubles. There is pressure on Elizabeth to accept the lucrative proposal. But she is not swayed. She cannot accept her clownish cousin just for the comforts he can supply. She does not love him, cannot possibly respect him, and seeing no admirable values in him, turns him down. Her friend Charlotte seizes the opportunity and secures him for herself, and is satisfied with the accomplishment, as is the rest of her family and neighbourhood. But to Elizabeth, the idea of marriage with such a man is humiliating. When those around her see his social standing, exalted connections and financial advantages, she sees right through it all, at his core, foolishness and pomposity.

Bingley, a wealthy young man moves to the neighbourhood, with his fashionable sister Caroline and even wealthier friend, Mr. Darcy. Bingley is a pleasant type, but his entourage acts proudly and haughtily. The entire town admires Caroline's fashionable gown and dainty lace, graceful walk and superior airs. The townspeople go up to Darcy for the privilege of exchanging a word with him, and some feel gratified even to receive a gruff snub from the aristocrat. They value only money and status. But Elizabeth Bennet is not deceived by the packaging. She sees rude, uncultured, selfish people where others see fashionable, sophisticated, wealthy folks.

Much to his own amazement as well as hers, Darcy falls in love with Elizabeth passionately and proposes to her. All that he had to offer would have tempted any other girl in Elizabeth's place to say yes before he finished speaking. But Elizabeth turns him down without a second thought. She could not accept a man with no scruples and goodness, as she mistakenly believes him to be, in spite of his fine estate, huge income,

prestigious family and superior connections. She does not set her values based on the society's, or take decisions with an eye on society's approval.

Darcy's aunt Lady Catherine is the queen of her territory. Her imperialism, founded on the virtue of her wealth and status, is gratefully enjoyed or quietly accepted, but never challenged. Here again, Elizabeth thinks for herself. The lady, Elizabeth believes, does not deserve to be worshipped because she has immense wealth. She need not be obeyed for the sake of her aristocracy. Elizabeth could not sacrifice her good sense or self-respect to please another. She scandalizes all by contradicting the lady, while all around mumble their agreement or safely nod and smile. The lady calls on Elizabeth and abuses, threatens and coaxes in turns to prevent her from marrying Darcy. Elizabeth braves the storm that would have sunk many a mighty ship, and defiantly sails past the lady right up to the altar with Darcy.

A developed mind, good values and strong character are the source of Elizabeth's strength. Nothing from the outside can dictate to her how to feel, think or act, and if her wishes are contrary to those external voices, she gallantly listens to her inner voice. She has great psychological strength that lets her face that impalpable, yet overwhelming foe of social disapproval and rewrite rules that define society.

Society comes around. It learns from her, and rewards her for transforming it. It raises her sky high. Elizabeth Bennet who had a mere £50 a year, a family to be embarrassed about and no high connections, becomes mistress of one of the finest estates in the country, a husband with an income of £10,000 a year who respects and loves her passionately, wealth to grant every comfort she could wish for and society that looks up to her in appreciation.

Jane Austen was a pioneering individual who showed that individuality is not breaking away from femininity, but enhancing it to make a more beautiful, meaningful personality. As she tells us through her heroine Elizabeth Bennet, individuality is not about competing with men or becoming masculine. It is not about getting rid of femininity. It is about recognizing the beauty, strength and values within oneself, nurturing them, and accomplishing a complementary relationship with the men and women in one's life.

The growing numbers of biographies, journals and literary societies devoted to Austen, film and television adaptations of her works, online reading groups, fan sites and mailing lists are an ode to the increasing popularity and relevance of Jane Austen and the feminine individuality she epitomized.

It is interesting to compare and contrast the characteristics of individuality that emerge in Jane Austen's and Elizabeth Bennet's personality with the more traditional masculine conception of rugged individuality.

Darcy's Individuation

In one sense we are all individuals, each with his or her own defining characteristics and attributes. But in another sense, some people are more formed individuals than others; less dependent for their attributes on how others think, feel and act, relying more on their own personal judgment, values and experience. It is easy to find examples of both types of people in life and literature. But it is more difficult to explain the process by which a member of the collective evolves into a unique individual. Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice provides a rare insight into that process of individuality formation.

The story takes place at the turn of the 19th century when the spirit of French Revolution on the other side of the Channel is exerting a quiet pressure for social evolution in England. At the beginning of the story, we encounter Fitzwilliam Darcy, the hero of the novel, as a self-centered, arrogant, wealthy English aristocrat who takes great pride in his status and estate. By the end of the story, he has shed his sense of self-importance and superiority and learnt to value himself and those around for their character and values, rather than their material possessions or social standing. Darcy's transformation clearly depicts the process of individuation.

Darcy belongs to a distinguished family. He owns a fine estate generating £10,000 annual income and a large, dependent, tenant population. He has a college education. He is handsome, strong and intelligent. As a result, in a deeply class conscious society, he has developed an acute sense of superiority. Given his class, almost all of Darcy's friends are a few rungs below him in the social ladder. Darcy dominates them socially. He convinces his impressionable friend Charles Bingley not to marry the girl he loves because she doesn't belong to the right class. Along with a cousin, the second son of an Earl with only on a modest income of his own, he visits his aunt, and takes all the decisions about the trip without once consulting his cousin.

When Bingley moves to Meryton, a provincial town, Darcy turns up his nose at the country folk. Their rural lifestyle is naturally different from his city-bred ways. Their culture, which he sees as lack of culture, offends him. The people appear noisy and ill mannered. So at every dinner or dance, Darcy stands aloof on his pedestal, refusing to mix, spurning every hand extended to him from below. When the friendly Sir Lucas suggests that he dance with one of the girls present, Darcy brusquely refuses. When a clergyman introduces himself to Darcy, he considers it an affront to be spoken to by one from a lower status without formal introduction, and rudely walks away. Like many of his society, Darcy sees a man's manners, his family, status and wealth, and misses the man himself. So when Bingley offers to introduce him to Elizabeth Bennet, Darcy fails to see her beauty, good nature, quickness, wit, or any other value that is going to make him fall in love with her later. All he sees is a local girl with unfashionable clothes and unaffected manners. Repulsed by her irresponsible parents, silly sisters and low class relatives, he dismisses her.

In the background greater forces are at work. Across the channel, the French are violently tearing down the pedestal that aristocracy had raised for itself all over Europe. As the guillotine tries to abolish the distinctions between the classes in French society, it dawns on the English aristocrats that they will have to give up their superiority if they want to save their heads. Something stirs in Darcy.

He begins to notice the imperfections in people of his own class. He sees much to be ashamed of in his stately aunt, Lady Catherine. Her rank has rendered her boorish and vulgar. Bingley's sister Caroline is, unlike the Meryton girls, wealthy, fashionable and elegant. But all her style does not make up for her coarse thoughts and meanness. The more she fawns on him, the more Darcy is repelled. His titled, wealthy cousin, Lady Anne is from an even higher social level than himself. But she is sickly, weak, lifeless, a nonentity.

By contrast, Elizabeth radiates life and energy. Darcy gradually comes to see a light in her eyes that renders her a joy to behold. Where he saw undignified manners, he now sees liveliness. Lack of sophistication now seems natural and charming. He discerns goodness, intelligence, strength, quickness and beauty in this girl he had brushed aside as only tolerable. It is perhaps the first time that Darcy sees someone simply for what they are, without being distracted by their surroundings. This signals the onset of Darcy's transformation from social conformity to true individuality, a journey that shifts his center-of-reference from external society to his own inner values.

But the path of Darcy's individuation is not smooth, as is the course of his love. Two decades of social conditioning do not let go of a man without a struggle. They lead to an inner conflict in Darcy. The emerging individual in him wants to change, move on, and embrace the new. The conservative social aristocrat in him does not want any change in the status quo. Society gets the better of him just then, and Darcy forces himself away from Meryton and Elizabeth Bennet.

Their paths cross unexpectedly when Darcy visits his aunt at Hunsford and finds Elizabeth staying with a cousin who lives nearby. With each day, he becomes clearer about his feelings for Elizabeth. Her family is still vulgar, her connections inferior, her status is no match for his, but she alone, he believes, is good enough for him. He decides to marry her, and proposes, ignorantly and arrogantly assuming that she will accept so worthy a match as his. He is stunned to hear Elizabeth's reply.

Elizabeth makes it clear to him, in a language he has never heard before, that he is the last man on earth she would ever marry. She accuses him of pride, arrogance and insensitivity. Darcy valued himself for his social position and assumed she would too. He never imagined that there was anything else for her to consider apart from his wealth, rank and estate. His value system has been turned upside down. He is angry with Elizabeth for abusing him. He is disappointed his proposal has not been accepted. He is at a crossroads. He has a choice to make. He can fall back on his old status, fortify himself in his luxurious estate, keep all commoners at a distance, and dismiss Elizabeth and all that she said as foolish. Or, he can give up his sense of superiority, cultivate humility and learn to appreciate the good values he finds in others, regardless of their status. That will mean letting go of all that is familiar and comforting, and plunging into unknown territory. Darcy does just this. He chooses the way forward. Whether it is the result of the French Revolution raging nearby, or the emotional outburst of the girl he passionately loves, or both, Darcy transforms himself from a member of a social type into a unique, psychological individual.

Displaying great humility, he recognizes and accepts the truth in Elizabeth's accusations against him. He vows to give up his pride in his family, culture, wealth and rank. He looks at himself as another would, and discovers his own faults. He sets about changing himself. He takes another look at the people he wrote off as inferior, and finds admirable qualities in them. He makes his respect for the Gardiners, Elizabeth's uncle and aunt, evident when he meets them. These people whom he had written off simply because they resided in Cheapside, a low class locality in London, and were in trade, now win his admiration and gratitude. He sees their goodness, culture and knowledge.

A greater test of his commitment to getting rid of old attitudes comes when his arch enemy Wickham elopes with Elizabeth's sister Lydia. For the sake of Elizabeth, he goes searching for Wickham in shady neighborhoods, negotiates with a man he despises, arranges his marriage, pays off £6000 of his debts and gets him an officer's position in the military. Darcy who a year earlier could not stand to be in the same room as the rural folk of Meryton, who convinced his friend to give up his love for the sake of his class, rejects all those snobbish, aristocratic social attitudes for the sake of his love.

As proof that Darcy has completely risen above the society and looks no more to it for approval, respect or appreciation, he conceals from Elizabeth and her family his role in saving Lydia. He acts out of his personal values, and saves the girl whose sister he loves. He does it neither to impress Elizabeth nor the society they live in. Darcy is rewarded for his transformation. Elizabeth learns his secret, is filled with gratitude and eagerly accepts him when he proposes the second time. Darcy attains a romantic fulfillment he had not dreamed possible.

Darcy's process of individuation is an expression in the microcosm of the transformation taking place in English society at that time. In saving Lydia and her family, compromising with the roguish Wickham, embracing the rural people of Meryton, and marrying Elizabeth Bennet, Darcy contributes his mite to the peaceful evolution in England that integrated the society and prevented a violent revolution.

The Development of the Darcy-Elizabeth Relationship

Mutual Dislike in the Beginning; Marriage at the End: - Pride and Prejudice is largely the story of Miss Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy, although certain other characters such as Mr. Bingley, Miss Jane Bennet, and Mr. Wickham also figure prominently in the novel. Both Elizabeth and Darcy create a forceful impression on us.

In fact, we would be perfectly justified in designating Elizabeth as the heroine, and Mr. Darcy as the hero of the novel. The Elizabeth-Darcy relationship dominates the novel. These two persons begin with a mutual dislike of each other, but then they both begin to feel drawn towards each other till they find that they are both in love with each other and are, in fact, indispensable to each other. Marriage is the natural consequence of this discovery by them.

Elizabeth's Self-Esteem, Hurt By Mr. Darcy's Remark: - Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy meet each other at an assembly (that is, a social gath-ering). Mr. Darcy has come to this assembly in the company of his intimate friend, Mr. Bingley. The girls attending the

assembly are greatly attracted by Mr. Darcy chiefly because of his handsome appearance and his large estate (which is situated in Derbyshire). The girls are also attracted greatly by Mr. Bingley who too is a good-looking and very rich man. While Mr. Bingley shows a lot of interest in the girls, and more especially in Miss Jane Bennet, Mr. Darcy does not feel much attracted by any of the girls. In fact, Mr. Darcy thinks that none of the girls present suits him as a partner in the dancing and therefore he dances only with the two sisters of his friend, Mr. Bingley. When Mr. Bingley suggests to Mr. Darcy that he should dance with Elizabeth, Mr. Darcy speaks disapprovingly of her, saying that there is not much charm about her. This uncomplimentary remark by Mr. Darcy about Elizabeth is overheard by her, and she therefore feels very annoyed with him. Otherwise too Mr. Darcy seems to be a very proud man. Mrs. Bennet, after attending the assembly, and speaking to her husband, describes Mr. Darcy as a very rude kind of man. Thus on the occasion of their very first meeting, Mr. Darcy expresses the view that Elizabeth is not beautiful enough to tempt him, while Elizabeth feels deeply offended with him after overhearing this remark. Elizabeth feels that Mr. Darcy is a very proud man who has mortified her own pride. What she means is that Mr. Darcy has hurt her self-esteem.

A Change in Mr. Darcy's Opinion of Elizabeth: - When Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy meet again, Elizabeth is determined not to dance with him because of the grudge which she is harbouring against him. However, a slight change now takes place in Mr. Darcy's view of Elizabeth. He begins to find that Elizabeth's face is rendered uncommonly intelligent by the beautiful expression of her dark eyes. He also finds that her figure is light and pleasing; and he is impressed by the easy playfulness of her manners. He now tells Miss Bingley that Elizabeth is a pretty woman having a pair of fine eyes. Miss Bingley regards Mr. Darcy's praise of Elizabeth as a clear signal that he is thinking of Elizabeth as his would-be wife. She then makes a sarcastic remark, telling Mr. Darcy that, in case he marries Elizabeth, he would get a charming mother-in-law in Mrs. Bennet. Actually, Mrs. Bennet has not produced a good impression on either Miss Bingley or Mr. Darcy, and Miss Bingley's remark is therefore meant to lower both Elizabeth and her mother in Mr. Darcy's estimation.

Mr. Darcy's Comment upon Elizabeth's Long Walk: - When Jane has fallen ill at Netherfield Park, Elizabeth goes to attend upon her sister. Elizabeth walks the whole distance of about three miles from Longbourn to Netherfield Park. Mr. Bingley's two sisters mock at Elizabeth for having walked such a long distance because they think themselves to be fine ladies and because, in their opinion, only a low-class girl would care to walk such a long distance. However, Mr. Darcy does not share the opinion of these two ladies in this respect. He defends Elizabeth for having walked this long distance, and says that her eyes looked brighter after she had walked that long distance. Elizabeth, of course, does not know the comments which these persons have made upon the long walk that she has taken. She continues to nurse a grievance against Mr. Darcy for having made an adverse remark about her at the assembly.

Mr. Darcy, Charmed by Elizabeth; her Handicap in his View: - Mr. Darcy now becomes more and more interested in Elizabeth. Miss Bingley perceives this change in Mr. Darcy, and she tries her utmost not to allow Elizabeth to get too close to him because Miss Bingley is herself interested in him. Mr. Darcy has now begun to like Elizabeth very much and is, in fact, feeling thoroughly charmed by her. Her only handicap in his eyes is that she does not belong to the aristocratic class of society to which he himself belongs. If she had been the daughter of aristocratic and rich parents,

Mr. Darcy would certainly have proposed marriage to her at this very stage in the story. Mr. Darcy is a proud man and a snob who believes in distinctions of class and rank. Elizabeth, on her part, continues to feel prejudiced against Mr. Darcy because of the adverse opinion which he had initially expressed about her.

Different Points of View: - In the course of a conversation, Mr. Darcy happens to say that it has always been his effort to avoid weaknesses which invite ridicule. Elizabeth asks if vanity and pride are among the weaknesses which he tries to avoid. Mr. Darcy replies that van-ity is surely a weakness which should be avoided, but that pride has to be properly regulated if a proud man has a really superior mind. Elizabeth, speaking to Miss Bingley, says half ironically that Mr. Darcy suffers from no defect. Mr. Darcy, intervening, says that he has his full share of faults, though his faults are not due to any mental deficiency in him. He then goes on to say that he cannot ignore the follies and vices from which other people suffer; and he adds: "My good opinion once lost is lost forever." Elizabeth, however, tells him that it is surely a fault in him if he can never ignore other people's follies and vices. She even says to him at this time that his defect is a tendency to hate everybody, to which he replies that her defect is deliberately to misunderstand everybody. Now, it is clear to us that Elizabeth is keen to maintain the independence of her mind. Any other girl would have been at pains to humour Mr. Darcy and to endorse whatever opinion he might have expressed. But Elizabeth has the courage to differ with him. Mr. Darcy, it seems, does not resent Elizabeth's disagreeing with the opinions which he expresses. On the contrary, Mr. Darcy finds that he is feeling more and more drawn towards her.

Mr. Darcy, Almost in Love with Elizabeth: - Mr. Darcy now thinks that, if he comes into contact with Elizabeth more often, he might actually fall in love with her. The author in this context writes: "He began to feel the danger of paying Elizabeth too much attention." Mr. Darcy pays little heed to Miss Bingley who tries her utmost to win his good opinion and his heart. At this point we get the feeling that Mr. Darcy has already fallen in love with Elizabeth though he does not yet admit this fact even to himself. The chief obstruction in his way is Elizabeth's lower social position. He thinks that his marrying Elizabeth would be an unseemly step because he is far above Elizabeth in social standing.

Elizabeth Hardening; and Darcy Softening: - A new complication arises in the Elizabeth-Darcy relationship when Mr. Wickham appears on the stage. This man, who becomes rapidly familiar with Elizabeth because of his social charm, tells Elizabeth that Mr. Darcy had done him a great wrong and a great injustice. Mr. Wickham represents himself to Elizabeth as a victim of Mr. Darcy's callousness and high-handedness, with the result that Elizabeth's prejudice against Mr. Darcy is now increased. In this frame of mind, Elizabeth tells her friend Charlotte that she is determined of hate Mr. Darcy and that there is no possibility at all of her finding him an agreeable man. Then another event takes place which further intensifies Elizabeth's bitterness against Mr. Darcy. She learns from Colonel Fitzwilliam that Mr. Darcy had dissuaded Mr. Bingley from proposing marriage to her sister Jane. Thus several reasons have now combined to harden Elizabeth's attitude towards Mr. Darcy, while Mr. Darcy, on his part, has been softening towards Elizabeth.

Darcy's Proposal of Marriage; and Elizabeth's Rejection of It: - Mr. Darcy is now so much in love with Elizabeth that he proposes marriage to her. This happens when

Elizabeth is staying at Hunsford. However, his con-sciousness of Elizabeth's social inferiority to him has by no means weakened or diminished. Even while making this proposal of marriage to her, he goes out of his way to emphasize the fact of her being socially very much beneath him. Elizabeth, who is a very self-respecting girl, feels deeply offended by the condescending manner in which Mr. Darcy has made his proposal of marriage, and she therefore summarily rejects his proposal not only because of his arrogant manner but because of other reasons as well. She gives him her reasons for this rejection in some detail. She tells him that he had prevented his friend Mr. Bingley from marrying her sister Jane. She tells him that he had most unjustly and cruelly treated Mr. Wickham, the son of the steward to Mr. Darcy's late father. And, of course, she points out to him the superiority complex from which he is suffering.

Darcy's Letter to Elizabeth in Defence of Himself: - On the following day, Mr. Darcy hands over a letter to Elizabeth. This letter contains Mr. Darcy's defence of himself. Through this letter he informs Elizabeth that he might have been mistaken in his judgment of her sister Jane and might have committed an error of judgment in preventing Mr. Bingley from marrying Jane, but that his treatment of Mr. Wickham had fully been justified because Mr. Wickham, far from deserving any favour or any kindness, is an obnoxious man, having no scruples at all. Mr. Darcy further points out that the behaviour of Eliza-beth's mother and her two youngest sisters has been far from pleasing.

A Change in Elizabeth's View of Darcy: - Although Elizabeth finds that the tone of Mr. Darcy's letter is insolent and haughty, yet the letter does bring about a certain change in her. She begins to realize that Mr. Darcy had, after all, not been unjust in his treatment of Mr. Wickham. She also realizes that Mr. Darcy had some valid ground for preventing Mr. Bingley from marrying Jane because Jane had really not given to Mr. Bingley a sufficient indication that she was deeply in love with him. Elizabeth also admits to herself that the behaviour of her mother and her two youngest sisters has been undignified and therefore disagreeable.

Mutual Appreciation of Each Other: - During Elizabeth's stay at Lambton and her visit to Pemberley House, Mr. Darcy is at pains to please Elizabeth by his talk and by calling in her in the company of his sister Georgiana. So anxious is Mr. Darcy to place Elizabeth at Lambton that Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner feel convinced that he is in love with her. On one occasion when Miss Bingley begins to speak unfavourably about Elizabeth's physician appearance, Mr. Darcy says that Elizabeth is one of the handsomest women of his acquaintance. Elizabeth, on her part, has now begun to think that Mr. Darcy is exactly the man who, in disposition and talents, would suit her most as her husband. She believes that his understanding and temper, though unlike her own, would answer all her wishes.

Elizabeth's Admiration for Darcy for his Role in the Lydia-Wickham Affair: - Elizabeth begins to admire Mr. Darcy still more when she comes to know of the role which he had played in bringing about the marriage of Lydia and Mr. Wickham. She now thinks that the Bennet family has reason to feel deeply indebted to Mr. Darcy for having saved them from disgrace and infamy. Mr. Darcy's action in having paid Mr. Wickham the required sum of money and having settled the whole matter amicably shows him to be a high-minded man.

The Effect on Mr. Darcy of Lady Catherine's Talk with Elizabeth: - Another event now takes place to bring Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy closer to each other. This event is a visit by Lady Catherine to Longbourn. Lady Catherine, in a private meeting with Elizabeth, warns her against agreeing to marry her nephew, Mr. Darcy. Lady Catherine says that Mr. Darcy is to marry her own daughter Miss Ann de Bourgh and that Elizabeth should not dare to think of marrying him. Lady Catherine utters all sorts of threats to Elizabeth; but Elizabeth remains calm and unafraid, and her answers to Lady Catherine show that she would decide the matter in accordance with her own wishes in case Mr. Darcy at all proposes marriage to her. Lady Catherine feels most annoyed by Elizabeth's attitude. When Lady Catherine meets Mr. Darcy in London, she tells him of the meeting which she has had with Elizabeth, and the answers which Elizabeth had given to her. Mr. Darcy now feels convinced that Elizabeth has a soft corner for him, and so he decides to renew his proposal of marriage to her.

Elizabeth's Acceptance of Mr. Darcy's Proposal of Marriage: - At his next meeting with Elizabeth, Mr. Darcy once again proposes marriage to her, admitting that he is now a changed man and that all his pride, vanity, selfishness, and arrogance have been humbled by her. He says that he owes the great change in his character to the manner in which she had been behaving towards him. Elizabeth, whose own attitude towards Mr. Darcy has undergone a great change on account of various reasons including the role which Mr. Darcy had played in the Lydia-Wickham affair, gladly accepts the proposal. And so, after the permission of Mr. Bennet has been obtained by Mr. Darcy, the marriage of Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth takes place amid great jubilation.

Theme of Mercenary in Pride and Prejudice

Theme of mercenary or money marriage plays a significant role to the extent that without this theme; the novel is either incomprehensible or prosaic. Although the theme of mercenary resonates through almost all the major characters; we cannot take it to be Austen's view point. She is against; not for mercenary marriages.

19th century England had some serious social problems left over from the heyday of Royalty and Nobility. One of the most significant of these was the tendency to marry for money. In this basic equation, a person sought a spouse based on the dowry receivable and their allowance. This process went both ways; a beautiful woman might be able to snag a rich husband, or a charring handsome man could woo a rich young girl. In these marriages, money was the only consideration. Love was left out, with a feeling that it would develop as the years went by. In Pride and Prejudice, Jane Austen comments that marriage in her time is a financial contract, where love is strictly a matter of chance. Lady Catherine states the fact that happiness in marriage is strictly a matter of chance. This holds true in the conception of marriage held in the novel. All of the marriages in the book formed under the bonds of money rather than the bonds of love end up unhappy or unsuccessful. The whole novel outlines attempts to dance around love for the combination of a wealthy person with an attractive person.

Before Austen can chart the difficult process through which the heroine of Pride and Prejudice becomes a skilled player of the marriage-gambling game, however, the novelist must establish the association between money and marriage. She accomplishes this throughout the book by mixing the languages of love and economics. The novel's

celebrated first sentence presents an example of this type of punning: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife". The line's comic effect derives primarily from the incongruity between the lofty diction of the phrase "truth universally acknowledged" and the baldly mercenary sentiment with which the sentence ends. The humorous conflation of philosophic and monetary speculation continues through the first and into the second chapter, as Mr. Bennet misses no opportunity to amuse himself with repeated puns that portray the arrival of the Bingley party at Netherfield as a serendipitous investment opportunity for the families in the village. When, for example, Mr. Bennet tells his wife that he needn't call on Bingley, since their neighbor Mrs. Long has promised to introduce the Bennet girls to the rich young man at an upcoming party, Mrs. Bennet replies that Mrs. Long is a "selfish, hypocritical woman" who will do no such thing since she has "two nieces of her own" . In that case, replies Mr. Bennet, Mrs. Bennet herself should introduce the girls, justifying such a breach of decorum on the sound financial principle that he who hesitates is lost: "if we do not venture, somebody else will; and after all Mrs. Long and her nieces must stand their chance". All financial ventures, from the stock market to marriage, entail an element of risk that one must expect and for which one must plan.

The first line of Pride and Prejudice, "It is a universally acknowledged fact that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife", sets the tone for the rest of the novel. We interpret it to mean that a wealthy man either actively pursues a wife based on his knowledge that no one would turn down a wealthy suitor, or attractive women use their beauty to their advantage to attract a rich husband. Confident in his knowledge of his own wealth and magnificence, Darcy's less than romantic first proposal to Elizabeth is a good example of the first of these truths. Darcy marches into the room, and after stating all the reasons why a wealthy man such as himself should never marry a "socially inferior" person such as Elizabeth, he proposes to her. He is totally confident in the knowledge that no woman would turn down marriage to a person as rich as himself, no matter how obnoxious he is. He seems out rightly stunned when Elizabeth refuses him. This refusal shatters his conception of reality, showing him that money is not all powerful. This is what seems to throw him head over heels in love with Elizabeth.

Mrs. Bennett is the embodiment of the second part of the rule. Her marriage was based on the principal of financial gain, and she desires her daughters to be the same. She was able to attract Mr. Bennett, a seemingly sensible and self-controlling man, by, "keeping her mouth shut and smiling a lot." Basically stated, she entered their marriage under false pretenses. She had no real love for him, only a desire to gain financially. Every action taken by her in the novel is directly intended to undermine her daughter's marriages, guiding them toward financial gain. She is furious when Elizabeth turns down Collins, as her marriage to him would mean the estate would stay in the family. She found Darcy most disagreeable, but would have been furious if Elizabeth had told her the she had turned Darcy's marriage proposal down.

Charlotte Lucas represents the group entirely left out of this equation. She has neither extreme beauty nor wealth. She cannot even attract a husband through her wit as Elizabeth does, and so she is basically without hope for inclusion. Elizabeth is astonished when Charlotte accepts Mr. Collin's marriage proposal, as she does not understand fully Charlotte's predicament. She cannot hope for a wealthy and handsome husband like Elizabeth and Jane can, as she does not have their particular assets. She can hope at best for security and a degree of comfort.

In Ch.26 we read that Wickham has switched his affections from Elizabeth to Miss King because she has suddenly acquired 10,000 pounds. In Ch.27 When Mrs.Gardiner teases Elizabeth that Wickham who till then was her admirer is "mercenary" Elizabeth replies:"Pray, my dear aunt, what is the difference in matrimonial affairs, between the mercenary and the prudent motive? Where does discretion end, and avarice begin?" Money no doubt is certainly necessary for a successful and happy marriage. But the vital question is 'how much?': In Ch.33 Col.Fitzwilliam Darcy,the younger son of an earl, a very rich charming young man, subtly hints that he cannot marry Elizabeth:"Our habits of expense make us too dependent, and there are not many in my rank of life who can afford to marry without some attention to money." to which Elizabeth playfully suggests that his price would perhaps not be "above 50,000 pounds." In Ch.19 Collins threatens Elizabeth to submit to his proposal by emphasizing her impoverished status:"one thousand pounds in the 4 per cents, which will not be yours till after your mother's decease, is all that you may ever be entitled to." The novel is a heart rending cry for the freedom of young women from the clutches of mercenary men who toyed with their happiness: "Happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance."

Mr. Wickham's quick transferal of his affections to Miss King after she has acquired 10,000 pounds provides important insight into his true character. While Elizabeth had clearly been his favorite, Wickham must have realized that her social position gave him little chance of being able to marry her. Of course, this knowledge did not prevent him from forming an attachment to her in the first place. Because he paid no attention at all to Miss King before she inherited the money, his motives for beginning to show a preference for her must be purely mercenary. Elizabeth does not seem to find fault with him for his actions, however, even Mrs. Gardiner points out the purely mercenary reasons for his actions. Having been sufficiently flattered by his preference for her and having formed a positive judgment of him, it seems that even in the face of such strong evidence she is unwilling to rethink her positive judgment of him. It is ironic that while Elizabeth is unable to make excuses for her good friend Charlotte for her choice to marry based on financial concerns, she sees no problem in Wickham's feigning attraction to a woman simply because her sizeable inheritance.

Elizabeth learns from Lydia that Mr. Wickham has given up his thought of marrying Miss King also. This and the other facts show Mr. Wickham to be an utterly unreliable kind of man. When Elizabeth tells Jane the true facts about Mr. Wickham, Jane too feels shocked and says: "Wickham so very bad! It is almost past belief." Mr. Wickham provides further evidence of his being a rascal and a villain by eloping with Lydia. The news of Lydia's elopement with Mr. Wickham comes as a great shock to the whole Bennet family, and especially to Elizabeth. It is true that much of the blame for this elopement rests upon Lydia herself; but Mr. Wickham cannot be exonerated. According to the information supplied by Mr. Wickham's friend Mr. Denny, Mr. Wickham had no intention to marry Lydia. Thus, Mr. Wickham's real purpose in running away Lydia had been only to seduce her and to satisfy his lust for her. If Mr. Wickham does marry Lydia ultimately, it is because of the role played by Mr. Darcy in the whole affair. Mr. Wickham states certain terms and conditions on which he is prepared to marry Lydia; and Mr. Darcy goes out of his way to fulfil those terms and conditions. Of course, Mr. Bennet too has to satisfy certain conditions laid down by Mr. Wickham, but the major role in bringing about the marriage is that of Mr. Darcy. Mr. Wickham also reveals at this time that he had incurred certain debts which are also now paid by Mr. Darcy. Thus, Mr. Wickham shows himself to be a mercenary man, besides being unscrupulous in his relations with girls.

Wickham's next victim is Lydia. It is rather difficult to explain his motives here, for Lydia has neither money, nor beauty, nor brains. And Wickham does not love her at all. The fact is that his gambling and his reckless extravagance involve him in a number of undischarged debts of honour, and he is forced to leave the neighborhood. The elopement is brought on by the strength of Lydia's love for him. He has absolutely no intentions of marrying her. Mrs. Gardiner's letter to Elizabeth clearly reveals that, even after elopement, he cherishes the hope of more effectually making his fortune by marriage in some other country. His willingness to take Lydia along is either a pure piece of rakishness or an attempt to blackmail Mr. Bennet and extort as much money as possible. However, Darcy’s intervention persuaded intervention promises him substantial immediate relief and he is persuaded to marry Lydia. His conduct in this episode betrays his extreme selfishness, his mercenariness and venality, and his utter baseness and want of principle. In pursuing his selfish aims he is thoroughly calculating - as in the careful plan to gain Georgiana Darcy's money as well as revenge on Darcy. In most of his pursuits he is thoroughly mercenary, as in his pursuit of a wealthy wife and his readiness to marry Lydia when offered enough money. His style of living is debauched: he likes gambling to excess and drinking, and his sexual morals are weak or non-existent. He is totally lacking in honour, and runs away from paying gambling debts, feels no guilt about the social stigma which will attach to Lydia after she has run away with him, and shows no intention of marrying her. Nor on his return to Longbourn after the marriage does he show any shame. At the end, we feel that in marrying Lydia he gets the fate he deserves.

In conclusion, the essential statement made about marriage in Pride and Prejudice is that a marriage for money will end up unsuccessful. At the same time, a marriage based purely on the means of passion and love alone will also be doomed to failure. A balance must be met. Balance doesn’t necessarily have to be equal, but must be present in order for a marriage to be successful. This is proven in the novel Pride and Prejudice, by examples of unsuccessful marriages formed for money, and successful marriages formed by a combination of love and security.

Character Analysis of Elizabeth and Darcy

Elizabeth Bennet:

The protagonist of the novel, is portrayed as an independent and innovative woman of her time. She is the second eldest of the five Bennet sisters and shares a close relationship with her older sister Jane. Favored by her father, Elizabeth is seen as her mother’s least favorite. This comes as no surprise as Mrs. Bennet is extremely superficial and self-absorbed, the polar opposite of Elizabeth. Her younger sisters, Kitty and Lydia, are equally repulsive, shamelessly flirtatious with men of the local military outpost. Though very dedicated to her family, Elizabeth is often humiliated by their personalities.

A central theme within the novel is Elizabeth’s limitation for marriage resulting from her family’s social status. Elizabeth’s mother throws a fit when her predetermined plans to wealthily wed each of her daughters clashes with Elizabeth’s personal creed to marry for love, regardless of material wealth. One such example is when Elizabeth is proposed to by her imbecilic cousin, Mr. Collins. According to inheritance mandates of nineteenth century England, Mr. Collins is entitled to the family’s entire estate upon Mr. Bennet’s

death. Elizabeth, however, does not love him nor ever could. She is often regarded as being too stubborn, socially rebellious, and judgmental, viewing those who do not share her same beliefs concerning marriage in a condescending light. This proves true when Elizabeth’s dear friend, Charlotte Lucas, in turn marries the spurned Mr. Collins solely for financial security. Elizabeth disapproves of her friend’s shallow and conformist decision, causing her to so eagerly court and proceed to marry him.

Just as she possesses critical opinions about select others, so too do others reciprocate the criticism and judgment for her. When faced with opposition, Elizabeth’s quick and fiery tongue often gets the better of her. A key event in the novel that exemplifies Elizabeth’s spirit transforms her life drastically. While attending a social gathering, Elizabeth is introduced to Fitzwilliam Darcy, a tall, handsome, and wealthy landowner. Their meeting is spiteful and cruel. Mr. Darcy does not hesitate to insult and slight Elizabeth and her family. Somewhat uncharacteristically, Elizabeth’s musters the strength to internalize his words and remain silent; however, Mr. Darcy’s insults give her reason to be prejudiced against him and his seemingly unjustifiable pride.

The rollercoaster of affairs involving two men in Elizabeth’s life begin partially after her initial acquaintance with Mr. Darcy followed by that with a handsome and charming, yet impoverished soldier named George Wickham. Initially, Wickham captures Elizabeth’s interest, however, he is deceitful about his past, portraying Mr. Darcy as the primary source of his suffering and misery. Elizabeth trusts Wickham’s fabrication completely, only succeeding to fuel Elizabeth’s increasing distain for Mr. Darcy. In addition to Wickham’s malicious tales, Elizabeth discovers that Mr. Darcy is responsible for the cruel end to the romantic relations between her beloved older sister Jane and Mr. Darcy’s good friend, Mr. Bingley. Elizabeth loathes Mr. Darcy as Jane is overcome with depression from the abrupt ending of her relationship with Mr. Bingley.

The turning point of the novel is marked by Mr. Darcy’s shocking marriage proposal to Elizabeth. Naturally, she is stunned and even appalled at this, considering her preconceptions of his character. Elizabeth proceeds to charge Mr. Darcy with poor manners and ignoble character. Mr. Darcy eventually enables Elizabeth to see his true character as an honorable and respectable gentleman. Ironically, Elizabeth also comes to realize that all the characteristics she erroneously distained in Mr. Darcy truly belong to Mr. Wickham.

As time goes on, Fitzwilliam Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet’s relationship only strengthens as they solidify a loving relationship. New obstacles arise between the two proud lovers, though, mainly stemming from social faux pas and class divides only true love can bond. Additionally, a dramatic scandal arises nearly eliminating any possibility of marriage between Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy. Elizabeth discovers that her impulsive sister Lydia has run away with George Wickham, without any intentions of marrying. Lydia’s actions are certain to bring shame and dishonor to the entire Bennet family, such that no respectable man would be able to consider marrying the remaining sisters thereafter. Mr. Darcy rescues the Bennet family name by providing the financial means for Lydia and Wickham to marry. It is only due to the audacious personalities of both Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth that the two are able to overcome tribulations caused by nearly every character involved: Lady Catherine de Bourgh, Mrs. Bennet, George Wickham, the younger Bennet sisters and Mr. Bingley’s sisters.

Elizabeth suffers the loss of hope after introspective reflection and painful confrontation of shallow social standards. She is devastated by the possibility that after reconsidering true nobility of Mr. Darcy's character, she could have lost him forever. It will take redeeming the seemingly irreversible and shocking scandal of Lydia and George Wickham's elopement for Mr. Darcy to prove his noble, selfless, and considerate character. He saves not only the Bennet family by making Lydia an honorable woman by offering Wickham enough money to entice him to wed the virtually penniless Lydia, despite his own personal grudge against the deceitful Wickham. The restoration of honor to the Bennet family provides for two more important marriages to take place: one between Jane and Mr. Bingley, and the other between Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy. In the end, Elizabeth has maintained her pride, yet is able to overcome her prejudice against Mr. Darcy, who initially sought to damage this pride upon meeting each other for the first time. Eventually, Elizabeth is forced to reconsider her prejudice attitudes, targeting the superfluous societal values as a whole, instead of the people who live by them.

Fitzwilliam Darcy:

Mr. Darcy is the second of the two protagonists in the novel. Over time as the story unfolds, the reader's perception of Mr. Darcy's transforms from maliciousto benevolent. His position as the ideal match for Elizabeth becomes obvious, though once an unimaginable possibility. In addition to being educated and worldly, he is rich and handsome, claiming the adoration of various women throughout the novel. It is clear from the onset, however, that he is only interested in the very woman who despises him most, Elizabeth Bennet. Nephew of Lady Catherine de Bourgh, Mr. Darcy's rank in society is just below that of nobility.

Mr. Darcy praises and holds dear many things in his life. Among the most important are his sister, Georgiana and his estate, Pemberley. Pemberley proves a fitting symbol for Mr. Darcy throughout the novel. From afar, Pemberley appears to be a proud and arrogant residence. Upon closer inspection, however, it radiates natural warmth, beauty, and a solid foundation.

Mr. Darcy's family ties and relations, in addition to Lady Catherine de Bourgh, are strong and formidable. As the only son of a well-established family, he inherits of the Pemberley estate and becomes the master of the family, especially of his adoring younger sister Georgiana Darcy. As her legal guardian, Mr. Darcy adopts a paternalistic role in Georgiana's life. Upon the death of Wickham's father, Mr. Darcy's father took the penniless Wickham under his wing and treats him like his own son. Wickham and Mr. Darcy mature together, both enjoying financial and social success at an early age. It soon became apparent, however, the conflicting characters of the two men. Where Mr. Darcy is honest, forthright, and hardworking, Wickham is discovered to be surreptitious, especially in regards to money, Mr. Darcy's father, Georgiana, and Elizabeth. In addition to being deceitful, Wickham is a philanderer and gambler.

A riff between the two childhood friends develops and quickly grows to irreparable proportions once Wickham decides to earn his fortune by eloping with young Georgiana Darcy. Georgiana was an heiress in her own right. Fortunately, Darcy due to his undying commitment to family and virtue, he succeeds in preventing the dishonorable elopement. Fortunately for Wickham, he decides not to publicly ruin him; instead, but he buys Wickham off, and thus severing all connections between them.

Unfortunately, Wickham's actions and an atrocious first impression form Elizabeth's repulsive opinion of Mr. Darcy. Ironically, her response to his hostilities and the obvious interest she shows in George Wickham only intrigue Darcy further, igniting within him a passion for Elizabeth. It is only after a fruitless and shocking proposal to Elizabeth, signifying the turning point of the novel, that Mr. Darcy receives the opportunity to clear his good name with his beloved, in addition to his dark past with Wickham and his influences on the relationship between Jane Bennet and Charles Bingley. Mr. Darcy does exactly this and slowly begins to win her affections. Despite humiliating himself by proposing and being rejected from one of inferior social class, he remains steadfast and determined to win Elizabeth's heart. His prejudice is proven through both his initial insulting comments to Elizabeth upon introduction, and by the reasons he offers to Mr. Bingley for ending relations with Jane Bennet. It is not long, however, before Mr. Darcy realizes that Elizabeth is far different from any of the solicitous women enamored with him.

Although both are quick to judge and initially are often blinded to the truth behind their pride and prejudices. Love escapes him. He is desirous not to wed or doom his days to an ordinary girl, but he is intrigued not only for Elizabeth's beauty, but her intellect, spirit, and wit as well. Elizabeth's bitter feelings towards him, and his own haughtiness seem only to deny any romantic prospects between the two. While Darcy hails from the upper echelons of society and family, Longbourn, Mr. Bennet's estate, is just barely profitable enough to admit the family into Mr. Darcy's social realm. Undoubtedly, Elizabeth's rejection of his proposal humbles Mr. Darcy tremendously.

Elizabeth's beauty claims Darcy's affections for her throughout the remainder novel, causing him to demonstrate his growing commitment to her, regardless of social standings and the family's harsh criticisms of him. Mr. Darcy finds himself in a peculiar situation, faced with the potential ruin of the Bennet family that Elizabeth had prophesized. He knows that the only way to save the family, as well as his romantic prospects with Elizabeth, is to aid Lydia Bennet, and the deplorable George Wickham.

The decision serves as a great burden upon Mr. Darcy's conscience as he is forced to choose between pride and charity. Darcy proves his benevolence as he proceeds to secretly funnel money to the Bennets through Mrs. Bennet's brother, Mr. Gardiner. In the process, Mr. Darcy is able to overcome any previous judgments, and even accepting Wickham as a prospective brother-in-law. With a renewed outlook, he offers his consent and support of Mr. Bingley and Jane Bennet's marriage, which Darcy had also previously delayed due to his critical opinions of their relationship. Mr. Darcy's patronage of the Bennet family as well as his romantic intentions are offered at a superficial cost to him, voiced by his disapproving aunt, Lady Catherine, a prude and narrow-minded woman. Lady Catherine is appalled at the alleged destruction of her family name that would result by admitting Elizabeth into her family. Instead, she considers her own sickly daughter, Heiress Anne de Bourgh, a far more fitting wife for Mr. Darcy.

In the end, however, Mr. Darcy is only too set on winning Elizabeth's heart. She regrets her initial harsh judgments of Mr. Darcy, and begins to see him with new eyes, the man of her dreams. Darcy, being the impressionable man that he is, holds few people in high esteem, and Elizabeth is one of them. She joins Georgiana, Mr. Darcy's dear sister, as the two most influential and precious elements in his life. Pemberly becomes the home to his new wife, Elizabeth. Mr. Darcy overcomes various internal battles, such as his

arrogance, prejudice, and social restraints. Finally, he reaches a state of harmony between all the elements of his life including fortune, family, friends, and the very dearest to his heart, his new wife, Elizabeth.

Jane Austen as a Novelist

Jane Austen wrote out of sheer love of writing without having an eye on popularity or monetary gain. She has often been praised for the silvery perfection of her art. Macaulay has in his journal the entry: "I have now read once again all Miss Austen's novels; charming they are. There are in the world no compositions which approach nearer to perfection." She is perfect because she never strays outside the material and method of her art

Jane's creative range is in some respects a very limited and narrow one. In the first instance it is confined to her portrayal of the gentry class in which she was born and which she knows best. Leonie Villard has rightly pointed out**: "The 'gentry,' that class which is essentially proper to English society, holding to the aristocracy as well as to the middle class, and forming a link between them, is not only the class which Jane Austen knows best, it is also the only class that she wishes to know."**

Jane further limits herself by taking not a large canvas for her portraiture but selecting only "the little bit of irony (two inches wide)" to work upon. According to her, "3 or 4 Families in a Country Village is the very thing to work on," as she wrote to her niece, the literary Anna. Owing to the fascinating pictures of domestic life portrayed by Austen, her novels are considered the classics of "domestic comedy" novels. She lived through the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, but she does not mention these historic events even once in her novels. There are no adventures, no sensational incidents, and no romantic musings in her novels. There are incidents of elopements such as those of Lydia and Wickham in Pride and Prejudice, or Julia and Henry Crawford in Mansfield Park. They are, however, in no sense romantic affairs but fall in the natural course of events in the story.

Jane Austen's novels deal with commonplace humdrum events of everyday life, in which people do little more than talk to one another about their trivial interests. Life mostly consists of paying Visits, quizzing and speculating about new arrivals, driving to meet relatives or to do shopping, walking in parks, etc. The quiet drama of life that is treated is mostly confined to drawing rooms. That is why Charlotte Bronte regrets that Jane's novels lack the picturesque aspects of external nature for there is "no open country, no fresh air, no blue hill, no bonny beck" in her novels. Owing to Jane's preoccupation with ordinary, commonplace events of life, her novels are called "tea-table romances." Walter Scott praised her for her exquisite treatment of ordinary events: "The young lady has a talent for describing the involvements of feelings and characters of ordinary life which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with." He also praises her **"...exquisite touch which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting...."**

According to Professor Garrod the central situation in Austen's novels is more or less the same, namely, young women in search of husbands. In Somerset Maugham's view, "She wrote very much the same son of story in all her books, and there is no great variety in

her characters." Even in the treatment of love Jane is limited in her inability to express impulsive emotions, associated with love, directly and passionately. Charlotte Bronte emphasizes the lack of passions in her novels when she remarks: "She ruffles her reader by nothing vehement, disturbs him by nothing profound. The passions are perfectly unknown to her; she rejects even a speaking acquaintance with that stormy sisterhood." According to George Eliot, Jane Austen **"never penetrated into deeper experience, the powerful and spiritual things of life."**

The most important aspect of Jane's narrow range is her comic mode of holding a mirror up to life. She is a comedian and her literary impulse from the beginning to the end, has been humorous. On being asked to write an historical romance by the Prince Regent's librarian, Mr. Clark, she clearly told him that she "could no more write a romance than an epic poem." She could under no condition go beyond her range of the comic vision of life. Most of her successful characters are regular comic character-parts like Mrs. Bennet and Mr. Collins.

Within her narrow range Austen is among the greatest literary artists, the greatest "artificers" of fiction. Her picture of life is "a delicate water-colour to put beside the more vigorous oil-painting of Fielding." Her work is that of a miniaturist or illuminator. According to Charlotte Bronte "There is a Chinese fidelity, a miniature delicacy in the painting" of life by Austen. Like a true artist Jane holds to the classical ideal, "nothing in excess; everything in its proper proportion." She, however, conceals the effort of her creative activity so well that her work seems absolutely spontaneous and natural, almost a free outburst. Her own conception of a perfect novel as given in Northanger Abbey is "a work in which the greatest powers of mind are displayed, in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour, are conveyed to the world in the best chosen language."

Professor Garrod's remark that Jane Austen is incapable of writing a story refers to her inability of narrating sensational and exciting happenings. In fact, such a sequence of happenings was beyond her range. But, even while dealing with commonplace events of life, she goes on manipulating relationships among characters by giving twists to them in such a way as always keeps the reader in suspense. The story of the struggle of mutual attraction against mutual repulsion of Darcy and Elizabeth in Pride and Prejudice, passes through" such situations as keeps the readers eager to know the next development, till the end. Jane Austen also anticipates Henry James* favourite technique of telling the story not as the author perceives it, but as one of the characters in the story perceives it. This device helps to eliminate the frequent intrusions of the author, which break the illusion of reality and make the novel rambling and loose in form. The story of Pride and Prejudice is narrated from the point of view of Elizabeth.

All of Jane Austen's novels are meticulously integrated. There is not a character or incident that does not make its necessary contribution to the development of the plot. Structurally her novels belong to that type of the "dramatic novel" in which the hiatus between the characters and the plot disappears. The given qualities of the characters determine the action, and the action in turn progressively changes the characters, and thus everything is borne forward to an end. In Pride and Prejudice, the pride of Darcy and prejudice of Elizabeth give rise to action which in its turn brings about a change in them. Darcy discards his pride and Elizabeth her prejudice and thus the hero and the heroine are finally united. Baker divides the plot of Pride and Prejudice into five acts of

high comedy corresponding with the five stages of situation at the beginning, development of conflict, climax in the middle of the plot, followed by the decline of conflict and final resolution. In the novel the climax is reached when Darcy's proposal is rejected by Elizabeth.

Austen's skill to fuse together good and bad in her characters in the same proportion as is found in nature makes them real and life-like. She has an unerring eye for the outward idiosyncrasies of her characters, their manner, their charm and their tricks of speech. Her characters are therefore so much individualized that each is different from the other. In Macaulay's view she approaches nearest to the manner of Shakespeare in this respect. He says: "she has given us a multitude of characters, all, in a certain sense, commonplace, all such as we meet every day, yet they are all as perfectly discriminated from each other as if they were the most eccentric of human beings."

Austen has a deep psychological insight which enables her to correlate the surface peculiarities of her characters with their inner nature. She also reveals a keen insight into the processes of the heart and the hidden internal workings of the minds of her characters. These hidden tumults of heart often bring about changes in her characters. Austen's characters are, therefore, not static or flat but well-rounded and vibrant. Being embodiments of essential human nature, her characters transcend the bounds of time, to become figures of as timeless and universal a significance as the pilgrims of Chaucer.

What makes Jane Austen a source of perennial interest is the all - pervading presence of humour and irony in her stories. It is the irradiating spark of humour that enlivens her commonplace subject matter and gives to her novels their exhilarating charm. But she never ridicules "what is wiser or good." "Follies and nonsense, whims and inconsistencies" (Chapter XI) divert her and she laughs at them. In Pride and Prejudice, Mrs. Bennet and Mr. Collins arc constantly the source of laughter because of their vulgarity and mean understanding. Mr. Bennet misses no opportunity of amusing himself at their cost. Mr. Collins' foolish display of self-importance and humility and his pompous proposal to Elizabeth are also full of great fun and laughter.

Jane Austen's humour is quiet and delicate. She never exaggerates the fun. Her sense of ridicule is proportioned to the follies which divert her. Her humour is cultivated and genial; it is the humour of an observer — of a refined, satisfied observer — rather than the humour of a reformer. This is why even her satire is mild and genial, and often tinged with irony. When Lydia in Pride and Prejudice suggests to her mother that the family visit her for she can get husbands for her sisters easily there, Elizabeth remarks: "I thank you for my share of the favour; but I do not particularly like your way of getting husbands".

Irony is the most important element of Jane's comic vision. According to Professor Chevalier, "the basic feature of every irony is a contrast between a reality and an appearance." While "verbal irony" shows the contrast between the apparent meaning of a statement and its real meaning, "situational irony" provides the contrast between the expectation and fulfillment of a situation. "Irony of character" presents the contrast between appearance and reality of characters. Irony is at play continually and all through Pride and Prejudice. All the characters do the opposite of what they wish to do and experience the opposite of what they and others expect them to experience. Darcy and Wickham are the impressive examples of the irony of character. Elizabeth who

describes Wickham as "the most agreeable man I ever saw" and considers Darcy to be "the last man in the world whom I could ever be prevailed on to marry", has to revise her opinion soon to her great mental agony Darcy, who at first sight finds Elizabeth "not handsome enough to tempt me", later on describes her "as one of the handsomest women of my acquaintance". He in good faith tries to prevent his friend Bingley from marrying a Bennet girl, but marries one himself. Mrs. Rennet thinks Darcy to be the most disagreeable man in the world, but soon after goes "distracted" with delight when she hears he is to be her son-in-law. She takes Elizabeth to her husband so that he may persuade her to marry Mr. Collins, but Mr. Bennet instead tells Elizabeth: "An unhappy alternative is before you, Elizabeth. From this day you must be a stranger to one of your parents — your mother will never see you if you do not marry Mr. Collins, and I will never see you again if you do".

Jane Austen is undoubtedly one of the great prose stylists among prose writers in English. She uses proper and apt words and her sentences are balanced, clear, precise, and simple, yet refined and lively. Though she sometimes uses archaisms and stilted diction, her dialogues are very natural and suited to her characters. Dr. Chapman calls her "one of the most accurate writers of dialogue of her own or any age."

Jane Austen's moral-realistic vision, the perfection of her art, her sparkling humour and irony, her skill in framing compact plots and natural dialogues, and portraying living characters, and the universal significance of her stories — all contribute to making her in the words of David Cecil "one of the supreme novelists of the world."

Importance of Economic Concerns in Pride and Prejudice

Economic concerns are set up right from the opening sentence of Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice as the foil for love. The novel is a lengthy discourse upon the old adage that "money doesn't buy happiness", and throughout the textual dance between these two elements, the author presents the [perhaps rather bleak] theme that happiness in marriage is possible only when love, affection, and mutual respect are all present and influential, and yet tempered with sound financial resources and decisions. "The danger of losing it all" must be removed far enough for love to blossom, and yet must not be the sole reason for the match. My essay will explore this theme through studies of the five major matrimonial arrangements in the novel.

Due to economic misfortune, the **marriage between Mr. and Mrs. Bennet**cannot be described as a happy one. Exasperated cries such as "Oh, Mr. Bennet!" are heard throughout the story as his wife fails repeatedly to anticipate his mind, whereupon Mr. Bennet invariably chooses to isolate himself from her shrewish voice in his library. Their relationship is significantly dysfunctional.

Mr. Bennet is motivated mostly by a desire to enjoy his life as comfortable as possible, and take nearly nobody seriously. Mrs. Bennet on the other hand is perpetually troubled by the looming threat of being reduced to her pittance of an inheritance to support her family, thanks to the "cruel entail" of the Bennet estate upon a male heir. This riles her fragile nerves, and inclines her to the sort of behaviour that Mrs. Bennet calls "silly", such as gossip, match-making, and behaving like a snob-nosed bitch. Mrs. Bennet's emotional despair at her financial affairs is what drives them apart. She has little

recourse but to gossip about the prospects of eligible rich men marrying her daughters, as we are to understand Mr. Bennet has been unable or unwilling to save for his family. His happiness and that of Mrs. Bennet and their daughters would therefore always be greatly impaired due to his failure to properly address these economic concerns.

A character that has far too much regard for economic concerns and far too little regard for emotion is **Charlotte Lucas**, whom **marries** the ill-mannered**Mr.Collins** for the **"worldly advantage"** and **security** he can offer her. She admits to the reader that she finds Mr. Collins **"neither agreeable nor sensible",** and his society "irksome" rather than pleasing, just like everybody else does. However, she still marries him without hesitation asking only "a preservative from want." Her own happiness is not even a factor in her calculations; she sees it as something external to the entire institute of marriage, saying "happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance." Elizabeth and the reader pity her since they know that happiness consists principally in not marrying Mr. Collins, a giant douche. After Charlotte marries she finds the only way she can bear her life with Mr. Collins is by furnishing a room for her own comforts, and by subtly manipulating him into spending time in the garden or the study, away from her.

As for Mr. Collins, he married in a manner that becomes his financial position, but his happiness too also depends on matters outside of marriage. He endlessly priorities the iron will [whim?] of Lady Catherine de Bourgh over any mutual attachment with either his cousin Elizabeth or Charlotte Lucas, and in general seems honored to be her loyal terrier for the rest of his life.

The married lives of Mr. and Mrs. Collins shows exactly how happiness is unobtainable in marriage without both love and sound economic reasoning in the right proportions.

The embarrassing put-up **marriage between Wickham and Lydia** comes as a result of her having no regard at all for financial concerns, and being swept up entirely in her emotions.

Not realising that the scandal of an elopement will make her sisters utter ineligible as wives for rich men in high society, thus causing the ruin of the whole family, Lydia's affair causes more grief to her mother than anyone else, shocking her and leaving her confined to her bed with misery. Swept up in girlish raptures of emotion Lydia fails to understand Wickham's motives as Lizzy does, in that "handsome young men must have something to live on, as well as the plain", and that he was only happy to marry her firstly for the money he thought he was marrying into, and later for the money he was promised by Darcy.

Since Lydia continues to naively overlook Wickham's vices she, and the family too, appear to be perfectly happy once the financial problems of her marriage are solved, and the scandal is thus disguised.

Quite shortly, the romance and **marriage between Mr. Bingley and Jane Bennet** is the purest in the story, and is possible only because of Bingley's fortune.

Having all his financial matters well in hand, and fully able to provide for a future wife and maintain his current life of impulsive self-serving luxury, Bingley is able to court Jane freely without complication other than his interfering sisters. In this respect he

proves true the opening line from the novel, "A single man in possession of good fortune must be in want of a wife", for his fortune being assured, they have leave to both be simply happy making each other happy.

The **eventual marriage between Darcy and Elizabeth** is almost identical to that of Jane and Bingley's in terms of happiness and inexhaustible financial means; Darcy is indeed even richer than Bingley, and anybody who gets to know this pair well can see they are far richer in personality too. However in their courtship period Darcy and Elizabeth are unable to make each other happy. They firstly have no love for each other on account of Wickham's poisonous tales of Darcy causing a prejudice, and Darcy's pride in his superiority in wealth and class.

Their relationship builds and after some time Darcy hastily proposes to Elizabeth, but at the same time pointing out the glaring deficiencies in her financial and social position and his magnanimity in condescending to propose in spite of them. He, the careful steward of his father's great legacy, is most likely still of the mindset that in marriages between two highly wealthy families, such as would be the case between for example his and the Bingleys or de Bourghs, it is important for the lady to be equally distinguished and accomplished and bring her own financial and class benefits to the match. Not surprisingly, his proposal is rejected in this form since Elizabeth can see that she would not be happy to be regarded as an inferior.

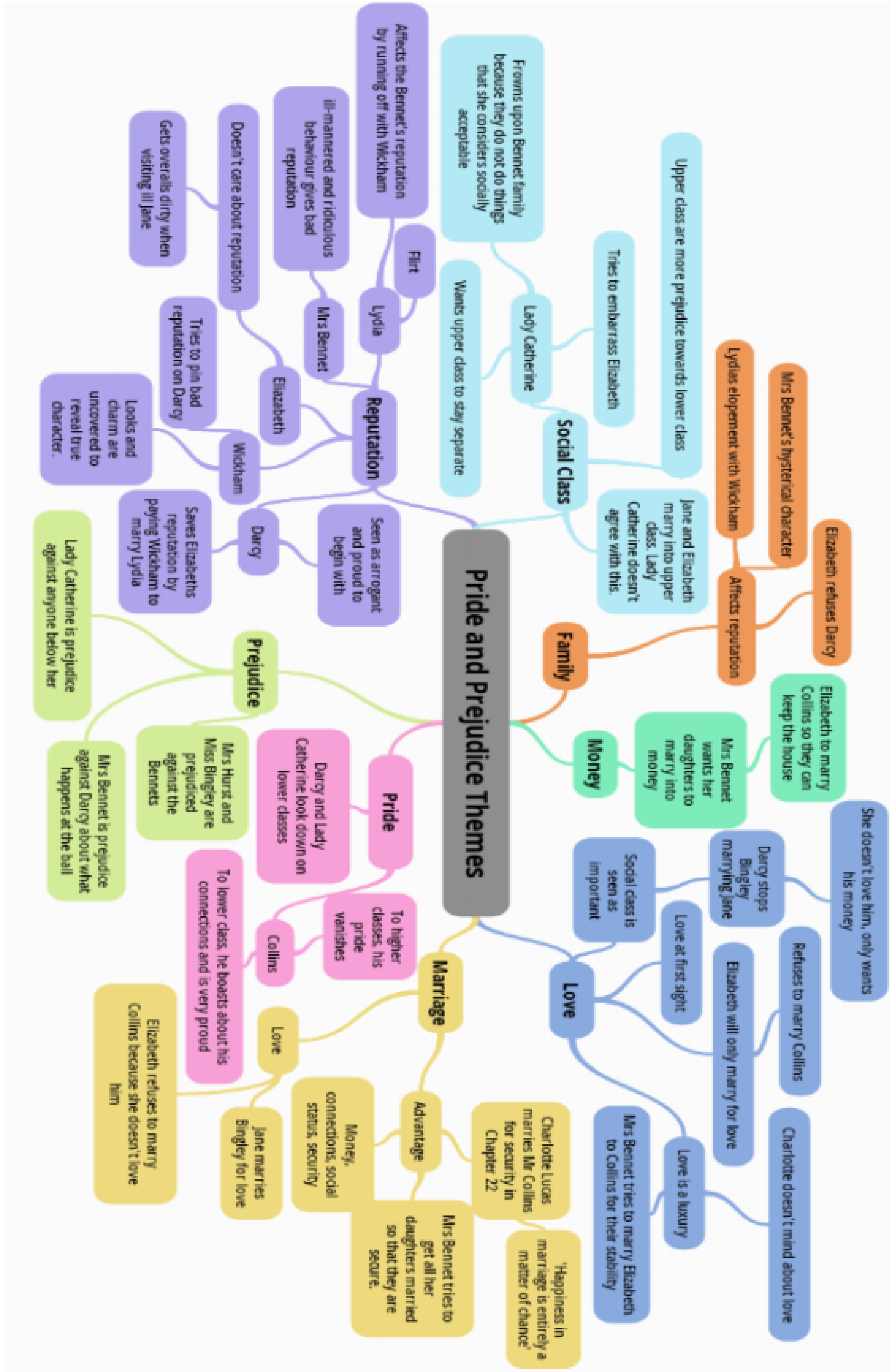
Not until he voluntarily entreats with the despicable Wickham and even bribes him with his own [precious] fortune, does Elizabeth truly credit Darcy with having learned that his unashamed pride in his high financial position was a character flaw, and then resolve to be happy with him in marriage. His aid in first clearing Lydia's scandal with Wickham, and then confessing to meddling in Bingley's attempts to court Jane Bennet, resolves both his own reservations about lowering himself to become involved with the comparatively poor Bennet family, and Elizabeth's distaste for his pride.

After resolving both their personal and financial conflicts, they like Bingley and Jane are nothing but happy.

To conclude we can say that various marriages of characters in Pride and Prejudice explore the idea that it is essential for us to be sensible of our financial position when searching for a husband or wife, and that love and economics are equally important.

Mr. and Mrs. Bennet can no longer be happy with their dwindling wealth. In the case of the Collinses, they wed for reasons of social expectation and provision of a respectable income, and cannot make each other happy. In the case of Lydia and Wickham they are happy, but only when the truth of Wickhams financial indiscretions are concealed.

But the happy ending to the story comes when Darcy and Bingley finally overcome the economic disparities between their families and accept their brides the very happy Miss Bennets for richer or for poorer.


Pride and Prejudice Themes
Social Class
Upper class are more prejudice towards lower class
Tries to embarrass Elizabeth
Lady Catherine
Frowns upon Bennet family because they do not do things that she considers socially acceptable
Wants upper class to stay separate
Jane and Elizabeth marry into upper class. Lady Catherine doesn't agree with this.
Family
Affects reputation
Lydias elopement with Wickham
Mrs Bennet's hysterical character
Elizabeth refuses Darcy
Money
Mrs Bennet wants her daughters to marry into money
Elizabeth to marry Collins so they can keep the house
Love
Darcy stops Bingley marrying Jane
She doesn't love him, only wants his money
Social class is seen as important
Love at first sight
Elizabeth will only marry for love
Refuses to marry Collins
Love is a luxury
Charlotte doesn't mind about love
Mrs Bennet tries to marry Elizabeth to Collins for their stability
Marriage
Advantage
Charlotte Lucas marries Mr Collins for security in Chapter 22
'Happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance'
Mrs Bennet tries to get all her daughters married so that they are secure.
Money, connections, social status, security
Love
Jane marries Bingley for love
Elizabeth refuses to marry Collins because she doesn't love him
Pride
Darcy and Lady Catherine look down on lower classes
Collins
To higher classes, his pride vanishes
To lower class, he boasts about his connections and is very proud
Prejudice
Lady Catherine is prejudice against anyone below her
Mrs Hurst and Miss Bingley are prejudiced against the Bennets
Mrs Bennet is prejudice against Darcy about what happens at the ball
Reputation
Lydia
Flirt
Affects the Bennet's reputation by running off with Wickham
Mrs Bennet
ill-mannered and ridiculous behaviour gives bad reputation
Elizabeth
Doesn't care about reputation
Gets overalls dirty when visiting ill Jane
Wickham
Tries to pin bad reputation on Darcy
Looks and charm are uncovered to reveal true character.
Darcy
Seen as arrogant and proud to begin with
Saves Elizabeths reputation by paying Wickham to marry Lydia

The Return of the Native

THOMAS HARDY ; 1840-1928

Thomas Hardy was born on June 2, 1840, in Upper Bockhampton, not far from Dorchester, in Dorsetshire, southern England. The son of Thomas Hardy, a master mason or building contractor, and Jemima Hand, a woman of some literary interests. Hardy's formal education consisted of about eight years in local schools. He was bright enough so that, by this time, he'd read a good deal in English, French, and Latin on his own. Later, in London, he made his own rather careful study of painting and English poetry. He was also interested in music and learned to play the violin. At the age of sixteen, he was apprenticed to an architect in Dorchester and remained in that profession, later in London and then again in Dorchester, for almost twenty years.

He began to write poetry during this time, but none of it was published. His first novel, The Poor Man and the Lady, written in 1867–68, was never published. Although the manuscript did not survive, Hardy used parts of it in other books. His first published novel was Desperate Remedies in 1871. The first novel to appear in installments in a magazine before publication as a book, an arrangement he was to follow for the rest of his novels, was A Pair of Blue Eyes in 1873.

Hardy's real fame as a novelist, along with sufficient income to let him abandon architecture for good, came with Far from the Madding Crowd in 1874. On September 17, 1874, Hardy married Emma Lavinia Gifford.

From this time on, Hardy devoted his full time to writing, continuing to publish novels regularly until his last, Jude the Obscure, in 1895. Among these are some of the best of his so-called Wessex novels (Hardy uses the name of one of the kingdoms of Anglo-Saxon Britain to designate an area including his native Dorsetshire): The Return of the Native, 1878; The Mayor of Casterbridge, 1886; The Woodlanders, 1887; Tess of the D'Urbervilles, 1891; in addition to Jude. To this list of best should be added the earlier Far from the Madding Crowd.

In writing most of his novels, Hardy worked out the details of time and geography he wanted to use with great care. Almost every novel is, therefore, located in a specific, mapped-out area of Wessex and covers a specified period of time. The Return of the Native, for example, covers the period 1842-43 and is set on Puddletown Heath (called Egdon Heath in the novel), on which Upper Bockhampton is situated. This novel also reveals a side of Hardy's authorship for which he has been taken to task by critics. In response to requests from readers of the novel in serial form, he added a sixth book to the original five to give his story a happier ending. He says in a note to the novel that the reader can choose which of the two endings he prefers but that the rigorous reader will probably favor the original conception.

Tess sold more rapidly than any of his other novels, and Jude was probably more vehemently denounced. During this period of time, Hardy also published his first poems as well as short stories. On June 29, 1885, he moved into a house he had built in Dorchester and lived there for the rest of his life.

On November 27, 1912, Mrs. Hardy, a woman with whom he had become increasingly incompatible, died. Several months later, he married Florence Emily Dugdale, a woman whom he had referred to for several years previously as his assistant and who was about forty years younger than he. After the appearance of Jude, Hardy devoted his attention entirely to poetry and drama, publishing a number of books of poems, including one which he prepared just before his death. He also wrote and published an epic drama on the Napoleonic era, The Dynasts, which appeared in three parts with a total of nineteen acts. He was given a number of honors, including an honorary degree from Oxford. The success of Tess had made possible a good income from his writing for the rest of his life, and when he died he left an estate of nearly half a million dollars. He died on January 11, 1928, and a few days later was buried in Westminster Abbey.

"The Return of the Native" : Summary

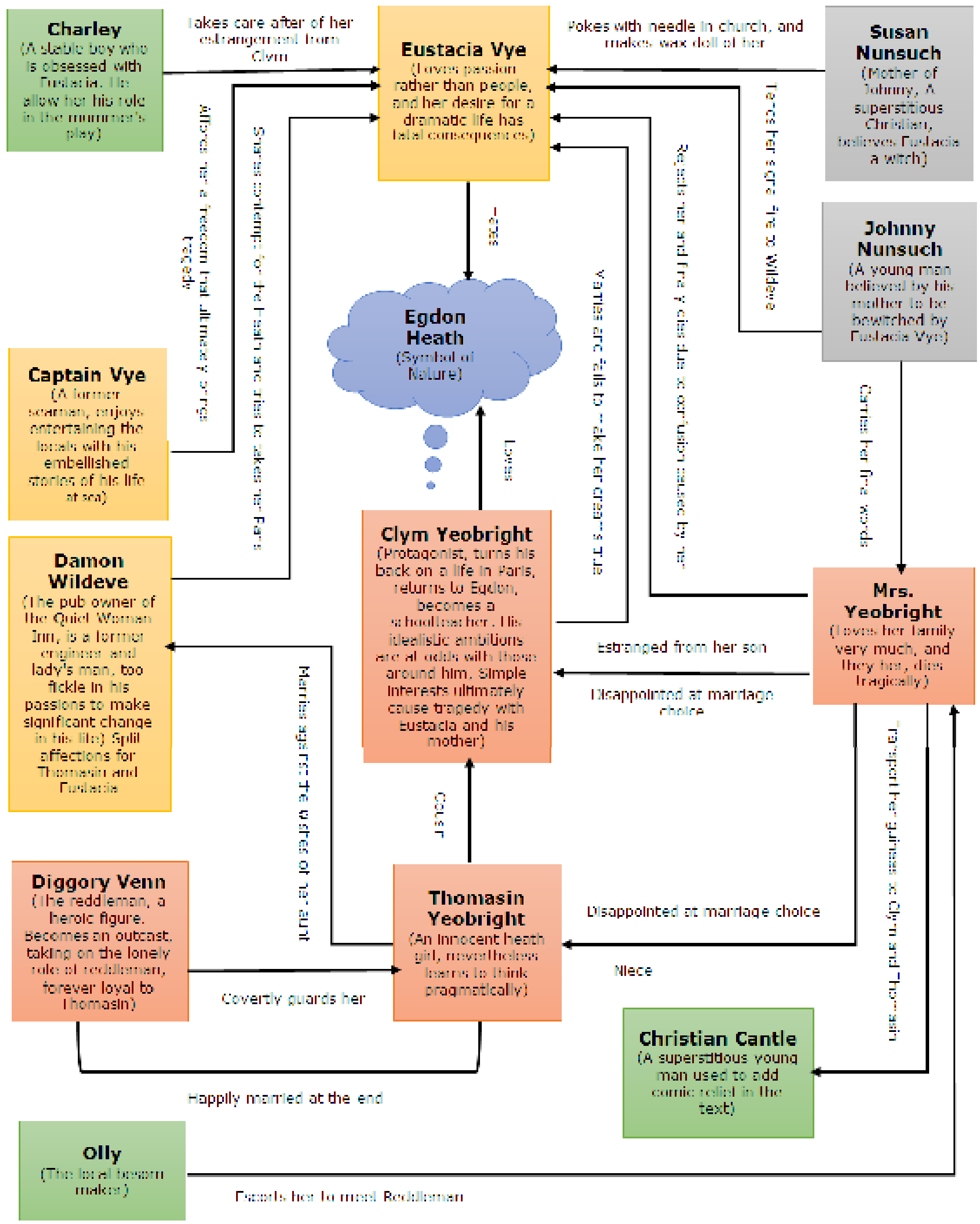
Across Egdon Heath (a "vast tract of unenclosed wild . . . a somber, windswept stretch of brown hills and valleys, virtually treeless, covered in briars and thorn bushes"), an older man makes his way. Soon he encounters a horse-drawn van, being led by Diggory Venn, a reddleman (seller of a reddish powdery dye used by sheep farmers to identify their flock). In the van is a young woman whose identity Venn rudely conceals from the elderly hiker. As he continues walking alongside the van, the reddleman notices the figure of a woman, standing atop Rainbarrow, the largest of the many Celtic burial mounds in the area, profiled against the sky, "like an organic part of the entire motionless structure," and then, replacing her, other figures. These are heath folk (locals, living near the heath) come to start a Fifth-of-November bonfire, a local custom. The night sky is lit by a number of these bonfires.

The young woman traveling in Diggory Venn's horse cart is Thomasin Yeobright, who was to have married Damon Wildeve that day. Mrs. Yeobright takes Thomasin with her to see Wildeve at the inn he operates in order to demand an explanation of his failure to marry her. When their bonfire has burned out, the locals come to serenade Thomasin and Wildeve, thinking them to be newly married and wanting to celebrate. When Wildeve is able to get rid of them he starts off to see Eustacia Vye, the mysterious figure Venn saw earlier, standing on Rainbarrow.

Eustacia watches for Wildeve on Rainbarrow, returning now and then to check on the signal fire she has had built before her grandfather's house. (Captain Vye is the chance acquaintance of Venn's). Wildeve was once Eustacia's lover, but she has not seen him since his interest in Thomasin. Eventually, Wildeve does finally arrive.

Venn accidentally learns of the meeting between Eustacia and Wildeve. A longtime admirer and once rejected suitor of Thomasin, Venn thinks he can score points with her. He now resolves to help her and purposely overhears the conversation between Eustacia

and Wildeve the next time they meet on Rainbarrow. Venn then calls on Eustacia to get her to help Thomasin, finally telling her he knows about her meetings with Wildeve. Venn also informs Mrs. Yeobright he would like to marry her niece. Though he is rejected, the aunt uses him as a means to put pressure on Wildeve. Wildeve goes immediately to Eustacia to convince her to leave with him, but she will not answer right away.



The news of the arrival for the Christmas holidays of Mrs. Yeobright's son, Clym, is widely talked about on the heath, including Captain Vye's house, where Eustacia also hears about his impending visit.

Mrs. Yeobright and Thomasin make preparations for Clym's arrival. After getting a glimpse of him, Eustacia is fascinated by him. She arranges to substitute for one of the boys in the traditional Christmas mumming (a play or pageant in which the actors use gestures, masks, props, and elaborate makeup, but do not have spoken lines), the first performance of which is at a party Mrs. Yeobright is giving. During the performance at the party, Eustacia succeeds in meeting Clym while she is in costume. Now that her interest in Wildeve has paled, Eustacia makes clear to Venn that she would like to see Wildeve married to Thomasin. They do marry, with Eustacia serving as witness. Mrs. Yeobright, who has once opposed the marriage, does not attend; and Clym, who has been away from home, finds out about the marriage after it has taken place.

Giving up his business career in Paris, Clym has returned to Egdon Heath to set up as a schoolteacher to those who can't afford existing schools. Mrs. Yeobright disapproves, thinking Clym's career goals do not show enough ambition. Clym meets Eustacia, in her own person this time, and is strongly attracted to her, an attraction that Mrs. Yeobright argues against. Clym sees Eustacia regularly, usually on the heath, for several months and then asks her to marry him. She says yes, though she hopes he will finally give up his plans and take her to Paris.

When Mrs. Yeobright and Clym quarrel over his love of Eustacia and he feels forced to leave his mother's house, he decides he and Eustacia should marry right away and live for a time on the heath. Clym finds a cottage and moves from home, leaving his mother disconsolate and bitter. Wildeve's interest in Eustacia revives when he hears of her approaching marriage.

On the occasion of their marriage, Mrs. Yeobright decides to send a gift of money. Her son, Clym, is marrying Eustacia against her wishes, and she hopes that, by offering this gift, she and her son can repair their relationship. The other half of the money is to go to her niece, Thomasin, who has recently married Damon Wildeve, Eustacia's former lover. Unfortunately, Mrs. Yeobright selects as her messenger the inept Christian Cantle, the village simpleton. Cantle loses the money gambling with Wildeve, who wants revenge on his wife's aunt for not trusting him with the money. Venn, protecting Thomasin, wins it back from Wildeve, but not understanding that part of it should go to Clym, Venn he delivers it all to Thomasin.

Eustacia and Clym for a time live a secluded life. When Mrs. Yeobright receives no response from Clym about the money, she calls on Eustacia, and they quarrel bitterly. Clym, hurrying his study to be a teacher so as to pacify the impatient Eustacia, develops severe eye trouble and is forced to suspend his work. To his wife's dismay, he takes up furze cutting (furze is a low, prickly shrub) as a way of making a little money and getting exercise. To Eustacia, this is a far cry from what she yearns for — the gay life of the great world, especially as represented by Paris — and since Clym had business and connections in Paris, Eustacia saw him as a way out of her constrained life on the heath. To compensate, she goes to a gipsying (a dance) and unexpectedly encounters Wildeve

and dances with him. Venn sees them together and attempts to discourage Wildeve's loitering around Clym's house at night.

Persuaded by Venn to forget her pride and call on her son, Mrs. Yeobright starts the long walk to his house on a hot August day. She sees Wildeve admitted by Eustacia before she can get there; when she knocks on the door, Clym's wife looks out the window but doesn't answer. The older woman tries to walk back home, stops in exhaustion, and is bitten by an adder. She is later discovered by Clym, who has set off for her house to attempt a reconciliation, but even medical attention cannot save her and she dies. Clym blames himself for her death. Eustacia is nearby when Mrs. Yeobright dies but doesn't make an appearance; she has accidentally encountered Wildeve, who has lately come into an inheritance.

Clym for some time is ill and irrational because of his mother's death. His constant blaming of himself exhausts Eustacia, and she tries to find consolation in Wildeve. Once back to normal again, Clym sets out to discover what his mother was doing on the heath. From Mrs. Yeobright's handyman, Cantle, from Venn, and a young boy who came across his mother as she tried to get home that day, Clym learns what happened. He accuses Eustacia of cruelty to his mother. When Clym adds the charge of deception of himself as a husband, the relationship between him and Eustacia is effectively over. She leaves his house to return to Captain Vye's.

At her grandfather's, Eustacia doesn't know how to occupy herself and once even thinks of suicide. A bonfire is lit for her when the Fifth of November comes, an inadvertent signal to Wildeve, who offers to help Eustacia get away from the heath to Paris. On Thomasin's advice, Clym, now moved back to his mother's house, writes to ask his wife to return to him.

On the evening of the sixth of November, Eustacia signals to Wildeve that she wants to go, by chance not getting Clym's letter before she leaves the house. Thomasin, has suspicions about Wildeve. She and Captain Vye, who finds out Eustacia has left the house very late at night, come to ask Clym's help. Thomasin tries to get back home, finally with Venn's assistance. While Wildeve waits with a horse cart for Eustacia, and Clym searches for his wife, Eustacia on this dark, stormy night throws herself in a stream near a weir. Both Wildeve and Clym try to rescue her, but it is Venn who pulls out both men as well as Eustacia. Of the three, only Clym survives.

After her husband's death, Thomasin moves into the family home with Clym. Venn, having given up the reddle trade, calls on her, and they become interested in each other. However, Clym thinks he ought to ask his cousin to marry him since his mother wished it. But Thomasin and Venn decide to marry and do. Clym is last seen on top of Rainbarrow, performing as an itinerant preacher of moral lectures.

"The Return of the Native" : Critical Analysis

The Return of the Native looks at first like a typical nineteenth-century novel: long, with several plots, and set in a wide landscape. But this tale is really very compact. The major

action takes place in a year's time. All of the characters live in the Egdon area, and the outside world does not intrude (we do not hear, for example, about the national problems of England).

All of the major characters are bound together in a dense knot of relationships. The structure of this book is concentrated, to reflect the tight organization of the action. Book first, the longest book, sets the stage and introduces the characters. Book second brings Clym and Eustacia together and sees the marriage of Thomasin and Wildeve. Book third shows the split between Clym and his mother and his marriage to Eustacia. Book fourth tells of the terrible accidents that lead to Mrs. Yeobright's death. Book fifth sees Clym and Eustacia separate, bringing about the tragic deaths that end the main action. Book sixth, a kind of epilogue, shows the marriage of Thomasin and Diggory.

The action is organized around seasonal celebrations, beginning and ending with the autumn bonfires, as if to emphasize the dramatic changes that can take place in such short periods of time. The story is told in straight chronological order, without the use of flashbacks or other devices. (This may underscore the story’s sense of the straightforward, irresistible movement of time itself.) Regularly, our concentration upon the major characters is broken by the appearance of the country folk, as if for comic relief, to stress the need for the reader to step back and consider the meaning of the tale.

Take, for instance, the example of Egdon Heath, the first “character” introduced into the book. The heath proves physically and psychologically important throughout the novel: their relation to the heath defines characters, and the weather patterns of the heath even reflect the inner dramas of the characters. Indeed, it almost seems as if the characters are formed by the heath itself: Diggory Venn, red from head to toe, is an actual embodiment of the muddy earth; Eustacia Vye seems to spring directly from the heath, a part of Rainbarrow itself, when she is first introduced; Wildeve's name might just as well refer to the windwhipped heath itself. But, importantly, the heath manages to defy definition. It is, in chapter one, “a place perfectly accordant with man’s nature.” The narrator's descriptions of the heath vary widely throughout the novel, ranging from the sublime to the gothic. There is no possible objectivity about the heath. No reliable statement can be made about it.

For Clym, the heath is beautiful; for Eustacia, it is hateful. The plot of the novel hinges around just this kind of difference in perception. Most of the key plot elements in the novel depend upon misconceptions--most notably, Eustacia’s failure to open the door to Mrs. Yeobright, a mistake that leads to the older woman’s death--and mistaken perceptions. Clym's eventual near- blindness reflects a kind of deeper internal blindness that afflicts all the main characters in the novel: they do not recognize the truth about each other. Eustacia and Clym misunderstand each other’s motives and true ambitions; Venn remains a mystery; Wildeve deceives Thomasin, Eustacia and Clym. The characters remain obscure for the reader, too. When The Return of the Native was first published, contemporary critics criticized the novel for its lack of sympathetic characters. All of the novel's characters prove themselves deeply flawed, or at the very least of ambiguous motivation. Clym Yeobright, the novel’s intelligent, urbane, generous protagonist, is also, through his impatience and single-minded jealousy, the cause of the novel’s great

tragedy. Diggory Venn can either be seen as a helpful, kind- hearted guardian or as an underhanded schemer. Similarly, even the antagonistic characters in the novel are not without their redeeming qualities.

Perhaps the most ambiguous aspect of the novel is its ending. The novel seems to privilege a bleak understanding of human nature. Given the tragedy of the double drowning, it seems impossible that the novel could end happily. And yet, Diggory Venn and Thomasin are contentedly married. This is not, however, the way the novel was first conceived; Hardy was forced to give the novel a happy ending in order to please the Victorian public. In an uncharacteristic footnote, Hardy remarks, "The writer may state here that the original conception of the story did not design a marriage between Thomasin and Venn… But certain circumstances of serial publication led to a change of intent. Readers can therefore choose between the endings." Thus, even the true conclusion of the novel is left in doubt, a fitting end for a novel that thrives on uncertainty and ambiguity.

Hardy frequently interrupts his story to tell us what it means- but does he really tell us? One cannot always be certain that this author is explaining himself fully, even when he seems to be doing so. It's not that he attempts to deceive the reader; rather, he wants to make it clear that life is unclear. He wants to emphasize the mystery of existence. He doesn't believe that life offers simple, clear-cut answers, nor does he imagine that human beings, or his characters, can be judged as either completely good or completely bad.

His point of view, then, could rightly be called "ambiguous." He may directly criticize Wildeve in one passage, for example, but then his narrative suggests that Wildeve is not responsible for everything that happens to him and Eustacia. He may number all of Eustacia's worst faults, but somehow most readers still feel that Hardy is, like Clym, fascinated with her.

He shows that life is filled with disasters and tragedies, but he says that new life will continually spring up to replace the old.

Although Hardy frequently shows a sense of humour, many readers have felt that he puts too much emphasis on the unhappy aspects of life. He would argue against that charge, saying that he simply reported life as it is, and the true report just happens to be filled with unhappiness. Is that the thinking of an objective observer, or a pessimist? As you read this novel, form your own opinion of where Hardy really stands.

"The Return of the Native" : Major Themes

The Heath: - The heath is more than just a dramatic backdrop to the action; it is an integral part of the plot and character development, and a constant thematic symbol. Hardy devotes the novel's entire first chapter to describing the timeless landscape of Egdon heath. What defines it most of all is its timelessness - it is much bigger than any human drama, and hence might its natural forces swallow those humans.

The heath can also be viewed as an antagonist in the story, working against the key characters to bring about their tragic fates. Mrs. Yeobright, exhausted by her long toil to Clym's house, collapses in the darkness on her return, and is bitten by a snake. Wildeve and Eustacia both drown as they plan to flee the heath forever. Clym becomes a preacher, extolling the virtues of a world beyond the heath. Only Thomasin and Diggory, who are truly at ease with their surroundings, endure. The heath is a place for lasting sentiment, not fiery passion or intellectual ideals. Those who are able to tune to its rhythms and pace remain. Those who feel they can live beyond its power are destroyed by it. Eustacia views it as an explicit antagonist - "'Tis my cross, my shame and will be my death" - and yet falls in attempting to defeat it (69). Most of all, the heath is an expression of Hardy's tragic sense, which suggests that time and the world have little use for the squabbles of humans and will thereby negate their efforts time and again.

Superstition: - Superstition permeates the text, and is connected with the death of Eustacia and possibly Mrs. Yeobright. In the most basic sense, superstition exists through the heath locals. So tied to nature, they are naturally drawn more towards pagan rituals than towards the transcendent message of Christianity. They judge their lives according to the cycles of the heath, and hence believe that strange forces beyond their understanding rule the world.

Many locals, Susan Nunsuch most of all, believe Eustacia is a witch. Susan brings a fearful dimension to their charge, both stabbing Eustacia with a pen and then later making a wax effigy that she burns. Hardy was cautious to avoid being labelled immoral, and so he never extrapolates on Susan's suspicions, which could be based in the possibility of Eustacia's sexuality. Both of Susan's actions are based around witch-lore. A witch would supposedly not bleed if pricked, and an effigy works akin to a voodoo doll, by transferring pain to another.

Eustacia's death also evokes witch-lore, since a suspected witch was thrown in water. If she floated, she was vindicated, and if she drowned, she was proven witch. Tragically, Eustacia floats but it brings her no benefit, since she dies. In surviving and dedicating himself to Christianity, Clym suggests Hardy's dismissal of such lore, though the author never goes so far as to outright denounce any of the ancient superstitions suggested in the text.

Tradition: - One of the novel's inherent conflicts is that between the declining, traditional attitudes of Dorset and the modern world that was replacing it. Hardy's work often highlighted the waning traditions and ideals of his age, and there are many examples where custom and folklore feature as central to the narrative. Part of the novel's appeal is the way it records these dying customs.For instance, Diggory Venn's trade as a reddleman represents the dying skills of the region:

He was one of a class rapidly becoming extinct in Wessex, filling at present in the rural world the place which, during the last century, the dodo occupied in the world of animals. He is a curious, interesting and nearly perished link between obsolete forms of life and those which generally prevail.(6)

Though Diggory does dismiss the traditional fears - that a reddleman stole children - he nevertheless dedicates himself to this ancient trade.

Hardy also records the decline in church attendance in rural regions like Egdon, and discusses the history and function of the mummers. In terms of the latter, he explains how repeated tradition can lead to perfunctory execution and reception, as opposed to the true passion of a regenerated custom.

There are some customs that Hardy connects to more ancient customs. Hardy believed the November 5th bonfires were a continuance of Druid tradition more than a commemoration of Gay Fawkes. Further, the May Day celebrations seems to have a primal draw, since it is those which finally bring Thomasin and Diggory together.

Education: - The Return of the Native presents a range of views on education without ever delivering a final conclusion in the issue.

As an extraordinary resident of the heath whose intelligence allowed him to explore the greater world, Clym is a strong proponent for education. In fact, he wants to explore a new type of education with the residents of the heath, and is drawn home for that purpose. However, he confronts both reticence and outright opposition to these noble plans, and ends up as a preacher - a vocation more associated with tradition than modernity - than as a teacher. To some extent, Clym is oblivious to the nature of those he wishes to educate. They are not only not ready for his ideas, but are also fundamentally opposed to them. Captain Vye gives a reflective instance of their skepticism when he describes education as valuable only towards encouraging the young to engage in offensive graffiti.

In fact, Hardy explores how Clym's natural good-looks stand in opposition to these modern ideas of education exemplified in his intellect:

He already showed that thought is a disease of flesh, and indirectly bore evidence that ideal physical beauty is incompatible with emotional development and a full recognition of the coil of things.(109)

It is only really within the spiritual world that he is finally able to find solace. His ideal of "instilling high knowledge into empty minds" is unrealistic to the point of arrogance, an indicator that his learning has not helped him to connect with his fellow man (160). Even as preacher, his "moral lectures" maintain a didactic air that repulse some listeners. He continues to speak but not to listen, which gives an implicit criticism of the educational instinct.

Clym’s most significant education is what he learns on the heath - that the world is controlled by large forces beyond our understanding.

Romantic Love: - The quest for romantic love amongst the nature-centered heath affects many characters, Eustacia most of all. She is desperate to discover the passion of romantic love. Early in the text, she expresses that she seeks, "A blaze of love, and extinction, [which] was better than a lantern glimmer of the same which should last long

years (56). She wants a quick burst of passion, rather than the pragmatism of a sustaining respect and passion. This desire helps explain her tragic demise - she is too quick to romanticize a situation, ignoring its reality. She ignores the fact that Wildeve mostly repulses her, to twice become attracted to him, and ignores Clym's stated intentions to justify her acceptance of his proposal. This conflict creates a sense of dissatisfaction that has tragic consequences.

Clym is attracted to Eustacia on so many levels, but ultimately chooses a respectable, simple life with her. The passion and romanticism that defined him on his return is quickly traded for a more pragmatic personality that disappoints Eustacia. His tragic flaw here is his blindness to what she needs, and they both pay for it.

Finally, Thomasin begins with a romantic passion for Wildeve, but ultimately realizes the greater wisdom of pragmatism. When they finally marry, she is no longer enamored with him, but rather has matured to realize that she must protect her reputation over her romantic pride.

The Oedipus complex: - Clym has an intense and turbulent relationship with his mother, which evokes the Oedipus complex, so-named by Freud because of the ancient play Oedipus Rex. Simply put, the Oedipus complex describes an unhealthy love-hate attraction between a mother and son.

Mrs. Yeobright has clearly had great ambitions for her son. We see her disappointment when he reveals that he has left Paris to return to Egdon. She cannot appreciate his return to Egdon as a step forward; instead, she vicariously considers it as sign of failure, asking him, "But it is right, too, that I should try to lift you out of this life into something richer, and that you should not come back again, and be as if I had never tried at all?" (140).

This vicarious association further explains her contempt for Eustacia. She cannot understand that he is attracted to her instead of finer Parisian ladies. The relationship between Clym and his mother starts to sour after he begins to court Eustacia. He chooses to give Eustacia a gift – a charnel pot unearthed from the burial mound – which was originally intended for his mother. Though all of these attitudes can be explained, they together suggest an intimate and intense connection.

Clym is aware of the challenges to his happiness, and refers to the competing areas of his life as "antagonistic growths." Interestingly, his relationship with his mother is the first he lists, before his wife and vocation. He is forced into making a choice between Eustacia and his mother, and the regrets over this situation lead to a romantic demise for almost all involved.

Constancy: - In the novel, characters who display constancy are rewarded. Like the unswerving firmness of the Egdon landscape, those who remain true to their ideals endure. Diggory Venn, as example, is unwavering in his love for Thomasin. He adapts his lifestyle and means of income to win her affections, and patiently remains her faithful champion. Similarly, Charley the stable boy does not waver in his affection for Eustacia. He gives her his mummer’s role, and later cares for her despite her attitudes towards

him. Even the dim-sighted Clym can perceive Charley's love for his wife. Similarly, the heath folk are characterized by their adherence to unchanging tradition and folklore. They accept the heath as timeless and constant, and their kind perseveres for that reason.

The characters more defined by transient, changing passions - Wildeve, Eustacia, and Clym - all suffer a tragic end. The heath, with its constancy, has little use for such dynamic human passions.

"The Return of the Native" : Hardy's Concept of Tragedy

Expressions like pessimism and fatalism have unreservedly been used by critics and readers to describe Hardy's philosophy of life, and there is no doubt these labels do largely convey his outlook and his stance. He is deemed pessimist because he considers that man is born to suffer and he is called fatalist because he thinks that destiny is antagonistic to man and that it governs human life, allowing very little free will to human creatures and often inflicting undeserved sufferings upon them.

Hardy, however, is not a cynic because he does not regard man as essentially mean and wicked. There, certainly, are villains in his novels but he believes on the whole that there is more goodness and nobleness in human nature than evil, and that man is capable of a heroic endurance of misfortune. Further wise, it is possible to call Hardy a determinist instead of fatalist, because, while fatalism implies a blind and arbitrary working of some supernatural power, determinism implies the logic of cause and effect. In Hardy's novels the logic of cause and effect is as much at work as an arbitrary supernatural power.

Hardy's conception of life is essentially tragic. As Austin never wrote a tragedy, Hardy never attempted a comedy. He holds an opinion:**"Happiness is an occasional episode in the general drama of pain".**

Hardy feels that "man is born to suffer" and the glory of man lies in his power of bearing his catastrophe. It appears that his mind is trained in the Greek literature, which was the first attempt to project a mighty clash between man's dreams and realization. Hardy also portrays this conflict, but with a slight difference. In Greek tragedy, Fate is some of supernatural power holds responsible of the catastrophe, while in Shakespearean tragedy, man is solely responsible for his actions their consequent disaster. Hardy combines both these concepts to carve his own view of tragedy. In his stories, destiny is as much responsible for the disaster, as a character himself. "The Return of the Native" fully illustrates Hardy's conception of tragedy.

Aristotle defines 'a tragedy is a story of a conspicuous man, who falls from prosperity to adversity, because of his error of judgment i.e. his hamartia and his sufferings, downfall arouses a feeling of pity and fear in us, thus becomes a source of catharsis'. As it is clear from the statement as well as from the historical facts, that Greek tragedy was the story of a conspicuous man, related to country life, and almost same is the case with Shakespearean tragedy. But Hardy sets his tragedy in the rural background. His story

brings forth the downfall of a common man, yet noble. As Clym is a noble man, his innate kind and loving nature, residing at the Egdon Heath. He is surrounded by the intense figures of common life, rustics. His mind is a kingdom, filled with his noble aims of educating the rustics, in the true sense of the word, as author comments:

"He had a conviction that the want of most men was knowledge of a sort which brings wisdom rather than affluence".

But striving after high thinking, he still likes his plain living. He struggles selflessly to achieve his high aims, but he is somewhat unpractical rather, too simple to plan properly for his goals. And his flaw lies in the fact he goes too far, selflessly but unplanned, for his aims, and thus injures himself, both physically and spiritually, causing poor eye sight in the first case and tension through disharmony with his mother and wife, in the second case.

His unpractical nature also comes out when he 'decides to marry Eustacia' though she warns him that she would not make "a good home spun wife" and his mother pronounces her as "an idle voluptuous woman". Clym thinks that Eustacia would help in his educational prospects, but she proves to be exactly the opposite. It's said, that Eustacia holds the "greatest responsibility" for the tragedy in "The Return of the Native", then it would not be wrong.

Hardy also shows the weak power of decision of Clym that he fails to strike a balance between his duties (to his mother), his ambition (for teaching) and his love (for Eustacia). As the author states:

"Three antagonistic growths had to be kept alive: his mother's trust in him, his plan for becoming a teacher, and Eustacia's happiness".

And he fails to maintain them, at a time, first inclining totally towards Eustacia and then towards his mother, and in adjusting his educational plans between them.

According to Hardy, Fate and destiny have always an essential part to play in bringing a catastrophic end. In the novel under discussion, destiny is disguised in the cloak of "nature" and "co-incidences". Chances and Coincidences occur, in Hardy's novels, too frequently that they become almost unrealistic. In this novel, the story leads to ultimate tragedy, with the death of Mrs. Yeobright, which is caused by a number of ironic accidents and co-incidences. It is also the role of chance that the letter of Clym fails to reach Eustacia, which becomes the cause of her fatal ending death. Thus, Hardy feels: "Human will is not free but fettered".

Nature is always considered as a "living agent", by Hardy, which is always so strong and influential, that his human characters can never escape from its clutches. "Egdon Heath" also depicts such qualities. It contrasts with the human existence. Eustacia feels the heath, as her "cross", her "shame", and eventually it becomes a potential cause and the place of her death. Nature is also hostile to Mrs. Yeobright, as Heath kills her by a venomous creature from its own bosom.

Nature also appears as the "foreteller" of coming events, when the Heath becomes furious before the death of Wildeve and Eustacia.

The thick-skinned rustics are also an essential part of Hardy's writings. They perform the "role of chorus" of the Greek tragedies and provide "Comic relief", like Shakespeare's characters. In "The Return of the Native" much of the useful information, also, about the main characters is provided by these rustics.

The most important aspect of a tragedy, according to Aristotle, is the feelings of catharsis. Undoubtedly, the tragedies of Hardy also provide a source of catharsis. One certainly experiences the feelings of pity and fear, when one observes Clym's paralysis of will. He appears in the story as a devoted, sympathetic, energetic fellow but he ends up as a miserable, pitiable, half-blinded figure, with the end of the story. Truly, the description of the author is very true, when he says:

"Everywhere he (Clym) was kindly received, for the story of his life had become generally known".

It can be noted through the treatment of Clym, that Hardy's general view about the human nature is essentially noble and sublime, but tragic. His main characters portray the higher values of human traits of tolerance and bearing of misery, the eyes of the reader.

In short, it can be said that Hardy's concept of tragedy is of a higher level. Though he does not reach the height of Shakespeare, but comes quite near to him. Thus, it can be said that his art of tragedy is perfect.

"The Return of the Native" : Chances &Coincidences

Is chance the same thing as fate? Different readers disagree on this question. Perhaps it is cruel, deliberate fate that Eustacia, for instance, has been set down to live on the heath she loathes. It may be mere capricious chance, however, that Mrs. Yeobright decides to visit on the very afternoon that Wildeve also decides to come to Eustacia's cottage. In other words, fate seems to rule events according to some vast pattern, which is beyond human control. Chance seems to intervene in smaller, random ways, when human beings are trying to act on their own. Many readers, however, feel that chance and fate is the same thing in this novel. Things "just happen," without rhyme or reason, and that in it is the pattern of the universe.

Hardy lost faith in orthodox Christianity quite early in his life. It was mainly because of the advancement and challenges of science to dogma. As a consequence, he reached a new kind of scepticism. He felt that universe is governed by some blind chance and not by any conscious power. For this reason chance and coincidences play a very vital role in all the novels of Hardy.

Such a conspicuous influence of accidents, on the course of events, does not appear in the works of any other novelist. Though Hardy's characters are responsible for their

suffering yet the role of chance and coincidences often operates as a deciding factor. Hardy feels:**"An impishness of circumstances invades our life and becomes the cause of our undoing".**

In his novel, man is tossed here and there in the ruthless struggle for survival and the stronger one suffers more as he tries to resist the sweep of chance.

Hardy believes that chance is an embodiment of fate. He feels that fate or destiny is sometimes indifferent, but it is most often hostile to human happiness. He thinks:**"Happiness is an occasional episode in the general drama of pain".**

The hostile of fate, disguises itself in the irony of circumstances, which one finds in the novels of Hardy. In other word, when the human beings are not themselves responsible for the frustration for their hopes and thwarting of their aims, fate appears in the shape of chance or accident to contribute to or to complete, their ruin. Hardy thinks:**"Chance is the incarnation of the blind forces, controlling human destiny".**

There is also an abundant use of chances, accident and coincidences in "The Return of the Native". These chances are interwoven with the actions of characters, to bring forth the ultimate catastrophe.

Johnny Nunsuch introduces the first coincidence in the story. He overhears the conversation of Wildeve and Eustacia, when Wildeve visits her in response to her bonfire. Johnny narrates this incidence to the Reddle-man. As a result of this chance, Reddle-man becomes activity involved in the affairs of these two principal characters Eustacia and Wildeve. On the other hand, furthermore, this chance meeting eventually results in the wedding of Thomasin with Wildeve.

At some later stage, during the story, Christian Cantle meets the village folks, by a sheer accident that takes him to a raffle (lottery). He is carrying Mrs. Yeobright's money, which is to be delivered to Thomasin and Clym, in equal halves. Cantle, by a chance stroke of good luck, wins prize at raffle. Being encouraged by his winning, he agrees to play the game of dice with Wildeve and loses all the money of Mrs. Yeobright. Then, the Reddle-man appears and with his luck, wins all the money back and delivers all the money to Thomasin. Thus, the chance meeting of Cantle with the village folks causes a great misunderstanding and also a future quarrel between Mrs. Yeobright and Eustacia.

"The marriage is not a misfortune in itself. It is simply the accident which has happened since that has been the cause of my ruin".

Another accident is the chance meeting of Eustacia with Wildeve, which leads not only to the renewal of bond between the two but also to the suspicion in the mind of the Reddle-man, who immediately goes to Thomasin and informs her about her husband's plans.

The most crucial accidents, however, are yet to come in the novel. At an occasion, Wildeve visits Eustacia during the daytime. At the same time Mrs. Yeobright comes to reconcile with her son. This coincidence creates a big complication, as Eustacia fails to open the door, while Wildeve is inside and when she opens it, Mrs. Yeobright has gone

while Clym is fast asleep, just by a chance. Consequently, each of these four characters has to pay heavily for these accidents, happening simultaneously.

On her homeward journey, Mrs. Yeobright faces yet another accident. She is bitten by an adder and is dead. Her death results in a fierce quarrel between Clym and Eustacia. Thus, much of the tragedy of the novel centres s round the closed door, to which a number of accidents contribute.

At a later stage, Wildeve receives a legacy, by a pure chance. This news would have been a sign of hope in the story, but the future events prove Hardy's essentially tragic conception of life. Hence:**"There is pervading note of gloom, only momentarily relieved".**

The news of legacy brings new thoughts to Eustacia's mind. Her meeting with Wildeve encourages her to seek his help in her attempt to escape from Egdon Heath. Unfortunately, this attempt proves fatal and deadly for both of them.

After the death of Clym's mother, he first expels Eustacia out of his house but later, he intends to bring her back to home therefore, he writes a letter to her, but Captain Vye fails to handover the letter to Eustacia and she decides to escape with Wildeve to Paris, this chance brings her fall.

Finally, the nature also contributes in the contrivance of chance. On the night of Eustacia's escape, the weather accidentally gets worst. The night becomes dreadful, because of rain and storm. This desperate situation of weather adds to the gloomy condition of Eustacia and causes her death.

Thus, Hardy certainly makes his story hard to believe by his excessive use of chance and coincidence. There are accidents and coincidences in real human life, but they are not so frequent, as in the novels of Hardy, nor are accidents and coincidences always malicious and hostile to man. A critic says:**"The plot of the novel lacks the terrific and terrifying logic of cause and effect that marks the plots of the greatest tragedies. That, yet operates the way it does more accidental than necessary".**

But to condemn his use of chance altogether is to misunderstand his view of life. His novels present a bottle between man and destiny, whereas, destiny appears through chances and coincidences. However, the realism of "The Return of the Native" is certainly marred by en extraordinary use of the device of chances and coincidences:As Shakespeare says:**"Fate has a terrible power; you cannot control it by wealth or war".**

"The Return of the Native" : A tragedy of Character &Environment

Hardy has been called the Shakespeare of the English novel and the four great Hardian tragedies, Tess of the D'ubervilles, Jude the Obscure, The Mayor of Casterbridge and The

Return of the Native have been likened to the four great Shakespearean tragedies. But Hardy's conception of tragedy is radically different from that of Shakespeare.

Hardy's Tragic Hero: - In a Shakespearean tragedy, as Bradley has pointed out, the tragic hero is a man of high rank and position. He may belong to the royal family or he may be some great general and warrior indispensable for the state. He is not only exalted socially but he has also some uncommon qualities of head and heart. He is in short a rare individual. When such a person falls from greatness and his high position is reversed, the result is "Cathartic'. His fall excites the tragic emotion of terror and the readers are purged of the motion of self-pity.

This was the traditional concept of Tragedy up to Hardy. But Hardy has how own concept, he is the innovator of a new form of tragedy, His tragic hero and heroines are no exalted personages. They are neither kings nor queens. They belong to the lowest ranks of society. Thus in the present novel, Clym is humble by birth, and he takes to furze-cutting as his profession, and Mrs. Yeobright is the wife of a humble farmer. But these humble people have exceptional qualities of head and heart which raise them above the common run of mankind. Thus Clym is the idealist, and Mrs. Yeobright is prudent, strong and loving.

Hardian Tragedy: Apotheosis of the Human Spirit: - When these humble heroes and heroines of Hardy suffer and fall from grace the effect is as "Cathartic" as that of a Shakespearean tragedy. A Hardian tragedy is an apotheosis of the human spirit. It reveals to us the essential nobility and heroism of the human soul. The nobility of Mrs. Yeobright is brought out by her death, and Clym suffers because of his idealism.

Tragic Waste in Hardy: - Like a Shakespearean tragedy, a Hardian tragedy .also creates the impression of tragic waste. Evil is eliminated in the long run, but always at the cost of much that is good and desirable. The real tragedy is this waste of good. Much good is wasted when Eustacia comes to a tragic end. Similarly, the real tragedy is not that Mrs. Yeobright dies, but that in her death so much of love and prudence are wasted.

Hardian Tragedy, Elevating: - But Hardian tragedy does not discourage or cause despair. "It is elevating and stimulating. It does not shake our faith in life, all the more it strengthens us; it does not make us light-hearted, but makes -us wiser and better." Thus, The Return of the Native, is not depressing. Hardy has introduced a note of meliorism by showing the happy end of Thomasin's love story.

No Tragic Flaw in Hardy: - The Shakespearian hero has some fault of character, some strong tendency to act in a particular way, which is the cause of his undoing. Bradley has called this weakness of the hero as the "tragic flaw' of his character. This tragic flaw results in the fall of the hero, it is the cause of the tragedy. Though at a later stage the course of action is complicated by other factors — chance, abnormal state of mind, some supernatural force, etc.-yet primarily action issues out of character. Character is responsible for tragedy.

"Character is Destiny in Shakespeare." But this is not so in Hardy. His Tragic heroes and heroines are free from any 'tragic flaw' in the Shakespearean sense. They do not have

any obsession or a marked tendency to act in a particular way. Thus the tragedy of Clym and Eustacia is the result of chance to a very great extent. Mrs. Yeobright's death is also brought about by chance events.

Destiny, and Not Character, the Cause of Tragedy: - "Character may be destiny" in Shakespeare, but in Hardy, "Destiny is Character." In all his novels, chance events happens throughout. Fate expresses itself as chance. However in the. Return of the Native character too plays a significant role in bringing about the tragedy. Eustacia' tragedy results from her excessive love of the glittering city life and from her extreme hunger for love. Isolation in Egdon makes her rebellious, morose and gloomy. It intensifies her hunger for love, and for the pleasures of city life. Similarly, Clym's idealism is responsible to a very great extent for his tragedy. He is unpractical and lacks worldly wisdom. Character and environment play a larger part in causing tragedy in this novel, than in other novels.

Considered as a tragedy, The Return of the Native has other peculiar features as well. For one thing, while in a Shakespearean tragedy both the hero and the heroine die at the end, in this novel the heroine, Eustacia, alone dies, and the hero lives on a life of deep anguish, virtually a life-in-death. This is another instance of the relentless cruelty of destiny.

Secondly, the Return of the Native has a double-ending. While Eustacia, Wildeve and Mrs. Yeobright come to a tragic end and Clym too suffers terribly, the end of Thomasin's love-story is a happy one. We find her in the end married to the faithful Venn, and likely to enjoy a happy life ever afterwards. In this way, the novelist has introduced a note of meliorism in the novel. He has thus shown that a limited happiness is possible even in this sorry life of ours. The happy end of the Thomasin story does not reduce the tragic intensity of the Catastrophe, rather it enables the novelist to present his vision of life truthfully and honestly.

"The Return of the Native" : Role of Egdon Heath

Huge, forbidding, strange- the wasteland of Egdon Heath is like a stage set for the action of this novel. It offers wide spaces for movement, but it also has hiding-places for intimate scenes. Its many different faces reflect or heighten the many different moods of the story. One can believe that the Heath has many secrets, and has witnessed all possible varieties of human experience. It is a place of long life and of sudden death, of fertile spring and short, vivid summer. No matter what feeling Hardy wants to express at any particular point, the heath can offer it up.

Something about Egdon Heath depresses the restless, adventure-seeking characters of the novel, Eustacia and Wildeve. But it is a comforting presence to unselfish people like Clym and Thomasin. As you read, notice each character's reaction to the heath; it may say something about his or her inner nature. The less intellectual country folk simply take the place for granted, just as they take their own souls for granted.

Does Egdon Heath represent life? Time? The supernatural? Destiny? Readers have suggested these and other possibilities. Perhaps it is not a symbol for anything, but merely a background, a small universe, having no meaning, offering no answers. Part of the mysterious appeal of this novel is that Hardy makes the heath seem so significant, but then never specifically explains his purposes. We must use our own imaginations to try to understand and feel what the heath finally means.

Egdon Heath is the first ‛character’ introduced into the book. The heath proves physically and psychologically important throughout the novel: their relation to the heath defines characters, and the weather patterns of the heath even reflect the inner dramas of the characters. Indeed, it almost seems as if the characters are formed by the heath itself: Diggory Venn, red from head to toe, is an actual embodiment of the muddy earth; Eustacia Vye seems to spring directly from the heath, a part of Rainbarrow itself, when she is first introduced; Wildeve’s name might just as well refer to the wind-whipped heath itself. But, importantly, the heath manages to defy definition. It is, in chapter one,**“A place perfectly accordant with man’s nature.”**

The narrator’s descriptions of the heath vary widely throughout the novel, ranging from the sublime to the gothic. There is no possible objectivity about the heath. No reliable statement can be made about it.

For Clym, the heath is beautiful; for Eustacia, it is hateful. The plot of the novel hinges around just this kind of difference in perception. Most of the key plot elements in the novel depend upon misconceptions--most notably, Eustacia’s failure to open the door to Mrs. Yeobright, a mistake that leads to the older woman’s death--and mistaken perceptions. Clym’s eventual near- blindness reflects a kind of deeper internal blindness that afflicts all the main characters in the novel: they do not recognize the truth about each other. Eustacia and Clym misunderstand each other’s motives and true ambitions; Venn remains a mystery; Wildeve deceives Thomasin, Eustacia and Clym. The characters remain obscure for the reader, too. When The Return of the Native was first published, contemporary critics criticized the novel for its lack of sympathetic characters.

All of the novel's characters prove themselves deeply flawed, or at the very least of ambiguous motivation. Clym Yeobright, the novel's intelligent, urbane, generous protagonist, is also, through his impatience and single-minded jealousy, the cause of the novel's great tragedy. Diggory Venn can either be seen as a helpful, kind-hearted guardian or as an underhanded schemer. Similarly, even the antagonistic characters in the novel are not without their redeeming qualities.

“The Return of the Native” : Role of Eustacia Vye

For Hardy, romantic passion can be dangerous. Another kind of passion, uncontrolled anger, can also have unfortunate consequences. The only feelings, which can be trusted, are moderate, like Thomasin’s kindness and desire for people to be at peace with each other. Relationships between people are best not when they are violent and sudden, but when they have a long history and have endured much, like the love between Diggory and Thomasin. Love at first sight, as Eustacia and Clym find out, is likely to be a

mistake. Hot-tempered reactions are generally a mistake, as well. Hardy understands that passion is fundamental to human nature- and he portrays passion so well that we cannot help but respond to it in characters like Eustacia. But he stresses that we must try to act in the light of reason. We may fail- as Clym does- but we must try. Moderation is the goal.

Is Eustacia really a superior being, or does she merely thinks she is? Are her passions deeper than other people's, or is she simply greedy? Is she doomed by fate or by her own selfishness? Few readers have ever been able to decide for certain. That is the genius of Hardy's portrayal. If you are like most readers, you will find this beautiful young woman fascinating one moment, exasperating the next. Even the other characters of the novel find her unpredictable, and their reactions to her vary widely. Is she a goddess or a witch?

Hardy skilfully avoids simple answers by showing us many sides of this complex character. At times, he seems sympathetic to her frustrations with her narrow life, yet he does not shrink from showing her at her worst. She is capable of deception, and she has a killing temper. She can be disloyal, she can wound with a perfectly aimed insult, and she can exploit other people's good nature.

Why, then, does the reader simply not turn away from her? Perhaps because almost everyone can feel pity for her at moments, such as before her death when she cries out,

"How I have tried and tried to be a splendid woman, and how destiny has been against me... I do not deserve my lot!"

If she had been able to live in a great city, perhaps she would have been splendid. If she had found a society that appreciated her rare qualities, rather than fearing or scorning them as the people of Egdon do, she might have achieved great things.

Hardy's point, of course, is that those possibilities are not available. Like all of us, Eustacia must make do with the situation that faces her: she must either accept or change her fate. Her tragedy is that she refuses to accept it but fails to change it.

Usually, Hardy describes Eustacia in contrasts, to stress the divided nature of her soul, the conflicts that torture her. Early in the novel, he writes,

"As far as social ethics were concerned Eustacia approached the savage state, though in emotion she was all the while an epicure. She had advanced to the secret recesses of sensuousness, yet had hardly crossed the threshold of conventionality."

He is saying that, on the positive side she is a nonconformist, an independent spirit; but on the negative side, emotion, passion, the heart's needs have become an obsession with her. She lives solely for romance.

"To be loved to madness- such was her great desire."

One side of her nature, however, all too poignantly recognizes that love itself is evanescent: she is terrified of time. Think of her first appearance in the novel, eagerly searching with her telescope for Damon. She is the very picture of a desperate woman searching for experience. She carries with her an hourglass, even though, as Hardy takes pains to point out, she does have a modern watch. It is as if she actually wants to see time, her dreaded enemy, as it dribbles away. At the moment which should be her most blissful, when she and Clym decide to marry, she gazes toward the eclipsed moon and warns,

“See how our time is slipping, slipping, slipping!”

She confides to her lover the deep (and perceptive) fear that their love will not last.

Though she lives by certain illusions, another side of Eustacia is ruthlessly realistic. Perhaps her most attractive quality is this inability to lie to herself about herself. Basically, she knows her own faults; she's intelligent, perceptive, and honest. When she first meets Clym, she explains to him that she is depressed by life. It’s a simple statement, but it may well sum up all her difficulties. Life itself is somehow too much for her unusually sensitive and demanding nature. Life doesn't give her what she wants. Life, as she experiences it, is a prison.

Not surprisingly, readers disagree on many aspects of this puzzling, ambiguous character. Her actions can be seen from many different perspectives. For example, some say that she sincerely loves Clym; yet surely she also has a selfish motive in agreeing to marry him: in her mind, the marriage is associated with an escape to Paris. Throughout the book, her mixed motives often lead to troubling actions.

No matter how many times you read this novel, you will probably never be certain just how you feel about Eustacia Vye. She is too contradictory; she is too special and rare. Hardy himself is most eloquent when he describes her in symbolic terms, as when he writes that she and Damon, walking together under the full moon, “appeared amid the expanse like two pearls on a table of ebony.” Equally doomed, these two passionate beings shine brightly in a dark world only to be extinguished.

“The Return of the Native” : Role of Clym

Well denotation, if sometimes mistaken, Clym is Hardy's central character, the returning native of the novel's title. He does not find happiness, but he does find a kind of wisdom through his suffering. In the beginning, he is stubborn and proud. When he discovers that he can cause tragedy for others, he learns humility. Hardy wants the reader to learn what Clym learns. We cannot always get what we want in life, but neither can anyone else. Human beings should love one another and try not to cause each other pain.

Well-meaning, intelligent in certain ways, Clym Yeobright is not suited to life in the real world of his day. He dislikes city life as “effeminate,” but when he returns to Egdon, no one understands his ambition to teach school. His ideas come from books rather than from direct experience with people. Unfortunately, he does not really know himself,

either. He thinks he is rational and controlled; but love for Eustacia causes him to act rashly. He thinks he is morally right; but this leads him to be cruel to others, whom he believes to be in the wrong.

Like his cousin Thomasin, Clym loves Egdon Heath, and the people there love him for his pure nature. The most important influence in his life is his home, especially his mother, Mrs. Yeobright. Temporarily, he leaves her to marry Eustacia, but in the end, even after her death, her influence on him remains strong.

Hardy suggests that Clym is too sensitive. His constant thinking almost seems to weaken him physically; his studying literally makes him an invalid for a while. His high ideas are not very practical. In day-to-day experiences with other people, he often has little or no idea what they want, or what they are thinking.

Yet this does not make him ridiculous. We have to respect himbecause he is struggling to find the truth of life. Though he is sometimes obtuse, he is never thoughtless. Perhaps he lacks the sense of self that is necessary to survive. If Wildeve is too selfish, then Clym in contrast is too unselfish.

In the end, Clym dedicates himself to others, hoping to spread truth and comfort and to teach all men to love each other. Ironically, he himself has failed with his mother and with Eustacia, the two people he loved most. He is more successful at loving all mankind than at being a son or husband.

"The Return of the Native" : Responsibility of Character and Fate

Pessimism, Fatalism, Determinism: - Words like pessimism, fatalism and determinism have freely been used by critics and readers to describe Hardy's philosophy of life. These labels largely convey his outlook and attitude. Everywhere in the novels of Hardy, human beings appear to us crushed by a superior force. He is pessimistic because he believes that man is born to suffer and he is fatalistic because he believes that destiny is hostile to man and that it governs human life, allowing very little free will.

Whether his creed is fatalism or determinism, Hardy is haunted by the vision of necessity. He shows us the sad consequences of a conflict of contradictory wills and the development of this conflict is crossed at every moment by accidents which interpret them. Hardy, however, is not cynic. He doesn't regard man as essentially mean and wicked. There are villains in his novels; but he believes that there is more goodness than evil in human nature. Man is capable of heroic endurance of misfortune. Therefore it is possible to call Hardy a determinist than a fatalist. Fatalism implies a blind supernatural power and determinism implies the logic of cause and effect.

Character and Fate responsible: - Hardy believes that "happiness is an occasional episode in a general drama of pain." He didn't think life to be a boon. Hardy's conception of life is essentially tragic. The conflict is one in which there is only the remotest chance of escape. Man suffers from a lack of foresight and from an inability to

subdue his own insubordinate nature and this suffering is aggravated by the chances and incidents and a strange overwhelming power. The Tragedy in RN is due largely to the weaknesses and faults of the characters themselves. To that extent, character is fate, but tragedy is also caused by the natural and fateful forces working on the other end.

Clym's responsibility: - Human weaknesses largely determine the course of events in the novel. Clym is a noble man and would like to serve his fellow human beings by educating them. He is not a materialistic man. In fact, has forsaken the fashionable life of Paris and returned to Egdon Heath. We should not expect such a man to be unhappy; but he has his shortcomings. He fails to perceive Eustacia's unsuitability as a wife to a man like himself. He is unable to see materialistic nature of Eustacia and love for worldly gaiety. She warns him that she doesn't have the makings of a "good some-spun wife" and his mother emphatically tells him that he would regret his marriage to Eustacia whom she rightly describes as an "idle, voluptuous woman" but Clym doesn't see to these warnings. Having fallen in love with and married Eustacia, fails to keep the marriage. He also fails to balance between his wife and mother. Both the couples are incompatible with each other.

Mrs. Yeobright's responsibility: - Mrs. Yeobright, though a respectable matron for whom we feel great respect, is rigid and obstinate. Being worldly and practical, she is unable to read Clym's mind and feels unsympathetic to his humanitarian projects. She objects to her educational plans and marriage to Eustacia.

Wildeve's responsibility: - Wildeve is the villain of the piece and is the author of much of the misery that the characters suffer. He is an unscrupulous man, with a shallow nature and shifting loyalties. He fluctuates between one woman and another, marries one of them but keeps running after the other. His intimacy towards married Eustacia triggers more crises in the lives of characters.

Incongruities of the situation: - The tragedy in RN results from the incongruities of the situation in which these characters find themselves. For example, the incongruity of incompatibility between Clym and Eustacia, she hates Egdon Heath as much as Clym likes it. She like the glamour of Paris and thinks Heath a hell. Describe the tragic story in brief…

The role of destiny: - The responsibility of the characters for their tragedy is obvious. We repeatedly have a clash of wills and a conflict of purposes between the various persons involved, each pulling in a different direction. The tragic situation keeps mounting and the characters reach the limit. We are unable to understand the force working behind their tense and tragic life. It is destiny which manifests itself in the form of accidents and incidents. It is just when Mrs. Yeobright has determined to reconcile between the couple that the demon of mischance begins its game. Mrs. Yeobright's death is the result of many ironic accidents and coincidences. She arrives at her son's house at a time when Wildeve is having an intimate conversation with Eustacia and when she cannot immediately open the door. Mrs. Yeobright turns back and on her way back home is bitten by an adder and is killed. Before her death, she tells the boy, Johnny whom she meets purely by chance that Eustacia had discarded her. Clym has driven out Eustacia; fate resumes its flippant jests. He writes a letter to her to come back; but the

letter miscarries by a few minutes. Clym, unaware of this, sits in his house waiting for Eustacia to knock. The night is the worst imaginable. The Heath is beaten by wind and rain. At length, a woman's footstep is heard. He feels excited. Thinking it to be Eustacia, he finds Thomasin who breaks the news of Eustacia's elopement with Wildeve which ends in drowning. We must remember that almost all Eustacia's meetings with Wildeve after her marriage to Clym have been accidental. All these incidents are responsible for their tragic ends and are supplemented by human weaknesses and get aggravated.

The Part of Nature and Egdon Heath: -In Hardy's stories, nature is always a personage and this personage is embodied here in Egdon Heath. Heath is the dark immemorial environment whose influences control the lives and destinies of those who dwell here. Egdon Heath symbolizes the whole cosmic order, win which man is but an insignificant particle. Eustacia looks upon Heath as a great enemy. She regards it as her cross, as her shame and as the potential cause of her death. Egdon Heath is swept by rain and wind causing death to Eustacia and Wildeve and it also kills Mrs. Yeobright with its venomous adder from its bosom.

"The Return of the Native" : The Sense Disillusionment

Thomas Hardy has a very pessimistic philosophy of life and his characters also suffer from disillusionment of their lives. He shows man lives in an indifferent world. Return of the Native is based on the assumption that man is destined by God to suffer the overwhelming pain and suffering which exits in the world.

All the main characters of Return of the Native namely- Clym, Eustacia, Wildeve, and Mrs.Yeobright have their own aim ambition. But all their plans turn into vain. All of their lives are full of aim. But they are trapped in a series of bitterly ironic events. They are faced with an incomprehensible universe.

The protagonist of the novel, Clym at an early age have been sent to Budmouth and from where he had gone to Paris. In Paris he had placed in trade and he had risen to the position of a manager of a diamond-merchant's establishment. He is a boy of whom something is always expected. He feels that he has to use his services for the people in Egdon Heath. In order to be of some service to the people, he wants to start a school. His misfortune, semi blindness disables him from executing the educational project.

In his love affair also he was not successful. Clym is very much attracted by the charm and beauty of Eustacia. Ignoring his mother's strong opposition he takes a cottage at Alderworth, several miles away from Blooms-End. But the utter incompatibility of temperaments had foredoomed their marriage.

The heroine of the novel, Eustacia was fully aware of the beauty, which nature has bestowed upon her. She didn't care about what people may tell about her. She can't bear the loneliness that heath has. She says, "Tis my cross, my shame and will be my death". Eustacia dreamed of a life in Paris. She hopes that if she marries, Clym he may take her to Paris. She has fascination for the pompous city life. But Clym on the other

hand wants to settle in Egdon. So she had to stay in Heath. In the later part of the novel she tries to escape from the Egdon Heath with the help of Wildeve. Coincidentally Clym writes Eustacia a letter begging her to return to him - but he sends the letter too late. Eustacia does not see the letter before she leaves to flee with Wildeve. If she had, she might have no die like this.

Mrs. Yeobright, the mother of Clym, is a woman of middle age with well-formed feature. She vehemently opposes the plans of Clym to start a school. She wants Clym to go back in Paris because there he has a respectable job. She had brought up her with great care and devotion. She also strongly opposes not to marry Eustacia. She says, "Is it best for you to injure your prospects for such a voluptuous, idle woman as that?" But nothing could restrict her son from staying in the Heath or marrying Eustacia.

She was shocked, for example, by the sight off her son dressed as a furze cutter. She could not believe her eyes. She had thought it was only a diversion or hobby for him.

Again she resolves to reconcile with her son. But she never gets the chance to reconcile with her son and she dies.

Wildeve

Though Wildeve is depicted as a demon here but still he is also the portrayal of disillusionment. In the beginning of the novel, Wildeve responses quickly to Eustacia's signal fire. It is true that he wishes to marry her. But he could not. And in the later part of the novel he unhesitatingly leaps into the stream with all his clothes on to try to rescue Eustacia. But in this time also he fails and dies.

Analyzing all the above discussed characters we can say that man is thus posited to be the source of the cosmic but the cosmic is considered to be too complex for human understanding.

"The Return of the Native" : Hardy's Art of Characterization

Introduction: In the field of characterization, Hardy's talent, as compared with that of some great novelists, is narrow. His memorable characters all have a family likeness, but there is no doubt about the realistic quality of Hardy's character portrayal. He makes his characters live in almost vital manner.

We get the feeling that we have actually met the various persons whom Hardy portrays in his fiction. His characters are made of solid flesh and blood like Clym and Eustacia. They are recognizable human beings and their conversation, actions, irritations, annoyances and quarrels perfectly convincing. It has been said that Hardy's great success is with subtle characters. But the fact is that his men and women are the most vividly realized when they are simple, primal characters: rustics such as Grandfer and Christian Cantle, sturdy countrymen like Diggory Venn.; passionate wayward women such as Eustacia and plausible rogues such as Wildeve. The portrayal of male characters

are admirable, he perhaps succeeds ever better in the treatment of men than women. This choice of his characters leads him away from intellectual complexities which delight most novelists. If his best characters are not subtle, the art that describes them is surely one; for he can record the minutest fluctuations of emotional experiences -write the problems in the relationships of the characters and discuss them- such as incompatibility of Eustacia etc. Hardy introduces each of his principal characters with a vivid description of the personal appearance. The reddleman is described "as young and, if not exactly handsome, approaching very near to handsome." Wildeve is quite a young man. The grace of his movement is singular. It is "the pantomimic expression of a lady-killing career." Eustacia is "full-limbed and somewhat heavy and soft to the touch as a cloud. She has pagan eyes, full of nocturnal mysteries."

The portrayal of Eustacia: Return of The Native contains some of Hardy's greatest characters, notably Eustacia and Clym. Her rebellious nature and force of will are for what Hardy calls her, "the raw material of the divinity". She is the most powerfully-drawn woman in the Hardy's portrait-gallery. Her selfishness, her charms and beauty, her uncontrolled passions do not blind us to her celestial imperiousness. Hardy suggests that she is a goddess in her power. She has a femme fatale in her power to arouse passions in others and Cleopatra in her pride, her passion and her scorn of consequences. She is Hardy's greatest creations whom no reader is likely to forget. She herself is responsible for the tragedy that befalls her. These are the factors which put her to tragedy: Her unsatisfied longing to be taken to Paris and her Hatred of Heath are the main factors governing her fate. She was attracted towards Clym simply by the hope that she would be taken to Paris. She was also aware of his deficiencies and she frankly confessed to Clym that she didn't have the makings of a good house-wife. But she also told him that she loved him and that she could sacrifice her dream of Paris for him, "To be your wife in Paris would be heaven to me; but I would rather live with you in a hermitage here than not be yours at all." In spite of this her desire of Paris never perished. Her reaction to Clym's furze-cutting, her renewed interest in Wildeve, Her failure to open the door, and her final decision and death are all the factors which contribute to her tragedy. Eustacia's own weaknesses and lapses play a large part in bringing about the tragedy. Her love of gaiety and fashion, her worldliness and incapacity to appreciate her husband's lofty nature and her inconsistency are the powerful factors.

Mrs. Yeobright's character: Mrs. Yeobright has been vividly portrayed. Her love for her son is her most outstanding quality. With it she combines a strength and firmness of mind, a shrewdness and sagacity. She has a practical mind especially in her assessment of Eustacia. Her opposition to her son's educational plans shows her narrow-mindedness.

The portrayal of Clym: His portrayal is much less complex. His aversion to materialistic and fashionable life of Paris, his great love for her mother, his decision to be a school teacher and educator and his acceptance of his misfortune all make him a convincing character. The delineation of his character has superbly been made by Hardy.

Diggory Venn: In the portrayal of Diggory Venn, too Hardy is matchless. He represents the honest, steadfast, devoted, self-sacrificing and selfless lover. Some of us remain

unconvinced by the selfless love he expresses towards Thomasin. It would be seen that he has nothing else to do but safeguard the interests of his farmer sweetheart.

Wildeve's character: Wildeve is the villain whose conduct arouses disgust in our minds. He is depicted as casual, irresponsible, selfish, pleasure-loving and even callous. He plays with the hearts of girls, marries one of them and runs away. He strongly reminds us of Sergeant Troy in Far From the Madding Crowd. He has attractive manners and amiable nature. He partly redeems himself by sacrificing his life for Eustacia. The character of Wildeve is convincing.

Contrasted Portrays: One important aspect of Hardy's characterization is the contrasting portraits of his characters. Mrs Yeobright and Eustacia are as unlike each other as any two women could be. The one honest and devoted; the other, unscrupulous and inconstant in love. Clym is contrasted with both Diggory and Wildeve. He portrays men though in a narrow range, but he delineates women eminently. There are three women characters in the novel. Eustacia, Mrs. Yeobright and Thomasin (Compare them). There are only three main male characters; Clym, Wildeve and Diggory Venn (Compare them here).

The Egdon Heath: In delineating the various characters, Hardy makes use of the natural environment in which these characters live. Egdon Heath is not only the scene of the story; it dominates the plot and determines the characters. (write attitude of different characters to Heath)

The Rustic Group: We cannot ignore the rustic group of characters. Although they appear here as a group, yet they have been individualized too.

How Hardy Uses his Knowledge of the Bible, Art, the Universe and Wessex Folklore to Add Depth to "The Return of the Native" ?

Hardy began writing Return of the Native in 1877 and Hardy includes many of the beliefs and views of the Victorian period in his writing including concerns about God and religion, scientific theories, moral values and cultural attitudes of the people of the day. Hardy wrote the novel at a time when he was happiest, when he had returned to his native Dorset after living for a time in London. He loved the countryside but realized that with this great time of change, with the industrial and agricultural revolution, that the customs of rural England were under threat. He was concerned that local traditions and regional identity would be forgotten through the civilizing of the masses. Hardy was keen to preserve a record of the local folk history and superstition which continued to play a major part in the lives of the Dorset people, even in the 1890's. By drawing on his knowledge, Hardy was able to illustrate to the reader the changing beliefs of the period at the same time as giving deeper meanings to the story and giving the reader a better understanding of the characters through his extensive use of Greek mythology and biblical references.

Hardy began his life with strong religious beliefs. He was born into a very active Christian family and regularly attended church services. His faith was devout until 1862 when he moved to London. There he was exposed to new ideas and scientific advancements and as he started questioning religion and searching for the meaning of life, his faith weakened and his spiritual beliefs were strengthened. It was a time when the bible had been brought into question through Darwins work 'The Origin of the Species' which suggested that evolution had been responsible for man's development rather than being created by God. With this and other discoveries, people had started to think about the nature of existence.

In Return of the Native, Hardy writes from the point of view of an agnostic as his characters, although uneducated, question traditional beliefs. Conventional Christian religion is conspicuous by its absence in the novel. Although the Church did play a central part in most rural communities at the time, in the world of Egdon Heath, the heath folk rarely made the effort to attend church services. When Fairway recounts the story of Mrs Yeobright forbidding the wedding banns in book 1 chapter 3, he says

'ah well I was at church that day .... which was a very curious thing to happen' and Humphrey replies, 'I haven't been these three years'.

This suggests it is an unusual occurrence for the local people to go to church. Hardy also describes in Book 2 chapter 4 how the local inhabitants of Egdon are unlikely to visit church, even on Christmas Day, as because of the weather 'they did not care, to trudge two or three miles to sit wet footed in the church'. If their belief had been strong, then it wouldn't have mattered what they had had to endure to demonstrate their faith.

Hardy's views on religion are obvious in his writing. He is almost mocking of Clym as when he first returns to the Heath, he is likened to a Victorian missionary in his aim to improve the lives of the common workers through education. Hardy describes him as 'John the Baptist who took ennoblement rather than repentance for his text' and his further comment that 'the rural world was not ripe for him' seems to criticise his unwelcome intentions. Hardy ends the novel with Clym as a rather pathetic and tragic hero, preaching his 'Sermons on the Mount'.

Hardy uses a great deal of religious imagery in the novel and the purpose of this reference to biblical characters and disasters, gives the reader a better understanding and magnifies the importance of events. In book 1 chapter 4, Eustacia explains her hatred of the heath as she tells Wildeve, 'Tis my cross, my shame, and will be my death'.

The imagery anticipates her failure to escape the heath and foreshadows her death. In the chapter The Night of the 6th of November, Hardy describes Eustacia's last walk on the Heath. He refers to the 'agony in Gethsemane'. Eustacia's thinks of various historical and biblical events as she heads off into the night on the path towards Rainbarrow. Such references are extremely symbolic. Similarly Venn is compared to an 'Ishmaelitish creature' inferring that he has been cast out and gives a better understanding to how Venn is seen as an outsider by the locals. The purpose of Hardy including these biblical references reflected the thinking of the time and is meant to be ironic.

Hardy's lack of Christianity led him to the conclusion that there was an imminent will that controlled life and that people were simply pawns being manipulated by a higher force that was indifferent to pain. Although some of the characters in Return of the Native are uneducated, they question traditional beliefs which are shown through the Heathfolk's Pagan rituals.

Art

In the novel, Hardy frequently pauses from the story to talk about the past and often refers to people in Greek mythology, art and literature to compare the characters. In his description of Eustacia, he compares her to myths like 'Artemis, Athena, Hera' to emphasise how much like a goddess she is and how she is different to other normal women. He also refers to her as 'an embodiment of the phrase a populus solitude' likening her to a quotation of one of Hardy's favourite poems 'Child Harolde by Byron.

When Hardy describes Mrs Yeobright perception of communities he suggests that she sees things from a distance and suggests that her view of life is the same as you would have to view the work of Flemish painters 'Sarlert and Van Alsloot'.

From the point of view of MrsYeobright's experience of rejection by Clym, the novel echoes the themes and actions of Shakespeare's play King Lear, as it explores the themes of the parent-child bond, pride, arrogance, misunderstandings, justice, blindness and madness. The allusion to King Lear and the tone which Clym speaks to Eustacia is Shakespearian in its style as he says in book 5, chapter 3,

'By my wretched soul you sting me, Eustacia! I can keep it up, and hotly too. Now, then, madam, tell me his name!'

The inclusion of Shakespearean themes in the novel adds more seriousness to the events taking place and stresses the tragedy.

Wessex Folklore

Hardy loved his native Dorsetshire and preferred country life to city life, much like Clym Yeobright. At the time of writing the novel in the 19th century, major changes were taking place largely due to the industrial revolution. This resulted in people moving from the farmlands to work in new factories in the cities. Hardy was well aware that one of the effects of the social change taking place was a loss of identity.

Hardy's novel is centred around Egdon Heath and the people who live there and documents a vanishing life of colourful characters, traditional dialects, seasonal celebrations, folk remedies and superstitions. He included the details of the vanishing country life as a historical record which also included negative aspects. As the great agricultural depression took place in Britain and Ireland between 1870 - 1890, people lost their jobs. This is possibly the reason that Clym was forced to leave Egdon to look for work and probably the reason Diggory Venn was forced to take up employment as a Reddleman as his work running a dairy herd no longer existed as he writes 'since the introduction of the railways Wessex farmers have managed to do without these'.

As well as documenting dying traditions, the heath folk act like a chorus in a classical Greek drama and through their talking and joking, they are able to comment on the actions of the main characters. Hardy uses them to provide the reader with a background to the story. For example in Book 1, chapter 3, they provide information that the marriage between Thomasin and Wildeve and that the brides Aunt, Mrs Yeobright 'forbad the banns'. The main action of the plot is interspersed with the appearance of the Heathfolk who are always light and jovial, which allows the reader to take in important information and think about the consequences of the action of the main characters.

The heathfolk are the main participants in the ritualized celebrations that Hardy wanted to include. The action is organized around seasonal celebrations, which begin and end with the autumn bonfires. The bonfire is a symbol of continuity which has its origins in a pagan ritual and because the heathfolk are strongly superstitious, they use the bonfire to ward off evil spirits. Hardy uses the 5th November to show a strong sense of tradition which began in 1605 when Guy Fawkes attempted to get rid of the King James I by blowing up the houses of parliament. Bonfire night is also related to the Celtic New Year when bonfires were lit as part of the New Year celebrations.

Another example of traditional celebration comes when the heathfolk perform the Mummers play as part of the Christmas festivities. The Play of St George shows a battle between Christianity and Paganism and Hardy includes the play to make a point about good and evil and the fact that the reader should consider the complexity of the characters and not make moral judgments about them.

The gypsying at the village picnic in late August also marks the changing of the seasons as does the Maypole dance, a festival of Spring which is symbolic of fertility and renewed life. Hardy uses the Maypole dancing to suggest that new life may also be possible for Thomasin.

As well as the seasonal celebrations, Hardy includes other ancient rituals that are performed by the locals. In the novel, to cure Mrs Yeobright of her adder bite, Sam suggests an old folk remedy telling Clym 'You must rub the place with the fat of other adders'.

Christians believed that man had the right to chose between right and wrong. However they also believed that there exists an evil agent at work in the world which the bible calls Satan. Following the New Testament teaching, the ancient church regarded the devil as the originator of all evil. Magicians, sorcerers and witches who were believed to make use of Satanic powers were therefore excommunicated.

Hardy was keen to emphasise the superstitious beliefs and god fearing nature of the rustics on Egdon Heath. The two main examples of the local superstition are Diggory Venn and Eustcia Vye. Both of these characters are isolated and feared for being different and therefore arouse suspicion. In the early Christian years, the Church was relatively tolerant of magical practices. If you were proven to be involved in it, then all you had to do was to pay penance but later on, it was considered evil and the Church's attitude became aggressive and all people suspected of witchcraft and socery were now charged with having made a pact with the devil, and using their supernatural powers to

harm people. Most of the Heath people suspect Eustacia of being a witch as Jonny Nansuch explains to Venn, 'They say she's clever and deep, and perhaps she charmed 'en to come'. She is linked to witchcraft often because she seems to have an unnatural power over men. She also strange habits, roaming the countryside at night, lighting bonfires. As the story develops, the fear of Eustacia as an evil force is shown in the cruel treatment she receives. Susan Nansuch believes that Eustacia has spellbound her children and when her son Johnny becomes ill, she believes Eustacia is the cause and makes a wax effigy of her and throws it into the fire after sticking it with pins.

'To counteract the malign spell which she imagined poor Eustacia to be working, the boys mother busied herself with a ghastly invention of superstition, calculated to bring powerlessness, strophy and annihilation on any human being against whom it was directed'.

Diggory Venn, the Reddleman is also a victim of the heathfolks superstition. The fact that he is 'trapped' in his red colouring and the myths associated with his lonely trade cause many of the images associated with Venn to be Satanic. Hardy mentions that the Reddleman was the favourite bogeyman that Wessex mothers used to threaten their naughty children as they told them 'the Reddleman is coming for you'.

Dorset Festivals

Ashmore village in Dorset hosts the Filly Loo celebration on the nearest Friday to the longest day, June 21st. Villagers dance beside the village pond. A traditional morris band plays to the crowd who dance in the street. A Green Man arrives in a procession and takes part in the first dance to start the evening. There are display dances followed by public dancing, then at dusk, the celebrations reach their climax with the Abbots Bromley Horn Dance. This is a torchlit procession with six antlered deer-men and four other costumed characters: a Maid Marion, a bowman, a hobby horse and a fool. The procession and dance is accompanied by a haunting solo melody in a minor key which is very atmospheric. The celebration finishes with the torches in the ground around the pond and everyone holding hands around the pond for the last dance.

Wessex Morris Men dance above the Cerne Abbas Giant, an ancient fertility symbol, at dawn, around 5.20am. They then walk down the hill collecting may and dance and process through Cerne Abbas accompanied by the Dorset Ouser (or Ooser), a horned animal-like figure.

Maypoles

The earliest sources suggest that the maypole acted as a focal point for May festivities or games, marking the spot of the where everyone should meet. There is no evidence that they were connected to pagan beliefs or worship - such accusations were first made by sixteenth-century Puritan reformers hostile to all dancing, drunkenness and merry-making, which they associated with idolatry. As a result, during the Protestant regime of Edward VI (1547-53) the May Day customs were curtailed. In the reign of 'Good Queene Bess' the Puritans seem to have been the first to link the maypole to 'heathen' worship

as a regular part of their propaganda and 'anti-ceremony' agenda. The matter became an issue of debate in ecclesiastical courts.

The Stuart monarchs seem to have had no objection to the maypole customs, although religious opposition from the Puritans continued. The issue of morris dancing and maypoles became a 'bit player' in a larger and more fundamental debate between Church and State. This reached new levels with the Puritan revival during the English Revolution (1640-60), when such 'folk' revelries were banned, along with celebrating Christmas and playing football. Maypoles were banned by Act of Parliament in 1664. Those local officials who did not comply could be fined 5 shillings a week.

On the restoration of the monarchy a Charles II General Wade raised the famous maypole in April 1661 on The Strand in London to celebrate the king's return to the capital.

The tradition of raising maypole to celebrate royal anniversaries began in the 17th century. In 1760 to celebrate the accession of George III maypoles were also erected. Likewise in 1887 and 1897 to celebrate milestones during the reign of Queen Victoria. Our present Queen, Elizabeth II, has also had maypole raised in celebration of her Jubilees in 1977 and 2002.

May customs and maypoles were brought into the industrial cities of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as part of the continued evolution of the celebrations.

Yet even as the old May traditions began to fade, they were revived as part of the cult of 'Merrie England'. Traditional song retained the May Day references. May Day acquired its connection with socialism at the end of the 1800s. In 1975 it became a public holiday again for the first time since 1640.

The majority of 'working maypoles' are only ribboned at the time of public festivities, such as May Day, and remain 'undressed' for the rest of the year. Maypoles are still ribboned for public dancing in different parts of England.

Mummers Plays

Mummers' Plays have been performed in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland for hundreds of years. They are folk dramas based on the legend of St. George and the Seven Champions of Christendom. They were originally mime or dumb shows (Thus mummers from the Middle English word mum, meaning silent.) where all the performers were disguised and known as 'Guisers'. All the characters were played by men who kept the same part for many years. Eventually, dialogue was added, but was passed on by word-of-mouth. Consequently, the 'Chinese Whispers' effect over the centuries and the loss of the real significance of the original story, makes present day performances very entertaining but virtually meaningless to most audiences.

The principal characters are St. George (â€¦of dragon fame.), Captain Slasher, The Turkish Knight, The King of Egypt, Doctor and several men-at-arms who challenge St.

George to a duel and are subsequently slain. The Doctor enters and demonstrates his skill by resuscitating the dead knights.

Many historians believe that this drama is a celebration of the death of the year and its resurrection in the spring.

"The Return of the Native" : A love-story

Hardly was a modern so far as his thought or philosophy is concerned, but the form of his novel is traditional. His plots arc all old fashioned. All of them turn on love. In all of them, we find the conventional love-triangle. Hardy's novels are all basically love-stories.

This is also true of the Return of the Native. It is also a love-story. And in it, there is not merely a love-triangle, but a- rhomboid (a four cornered figure) with a tail. The love triangle in the novel may be represented as follows:

(a) Eustacia-Clym Yeobrighl (b) Wildeve-Tliomasin-Venn

Both Clym Yeobright and Wildeve love Eustacia, and both Wildeve and Venn love Thomasin. Thus there is a double love-story, the path of the lovers cross, and the result is much sorrow and suffering, and ultimately tragedy. Love, in the present novel, as in other novels, is a lord of terrible aspect, a source of tragedy rather than of happiness. A detailed consideration of the love-triangle would make the point clear.

Clym-Eustacia-Wildeve: - Long before the novel opens, Wildeve and Eustacia have been in love with each other. They meet frequently on the Rainbarrow near Eustacia's home, and the sound produced by the dropping of a stone in the nearby pond is used as the signal of love. But their love is neither true nor sincere. They are strangely fascinated and drawn towards each other, and yet they are unfaithful to each other. The fact is that isolation in Egdon Heath has made Eustacia love-hungry, and she turns to Wildeve because there is no other more worthy object of love on the desolate heath. Wildeve too loves her because she is the most beautiful woman on the heath. However, as she is proud, hot and impulsive, he turns to pretty Thomasin who is the very opposite of Eustacia. He is a sort of lady-killer and likes to make love to a number of women at one and the same time.

On her part, Eustacia is equally capricious and changeable. She, too, transfers her love to Clym as soon as he returns to Egdon. She is disgusted with Egdon, yearns for the pomp and glitter of city life, and loves Clym because she thinks he would take her to Paris. However, her dream is frustrated. Clym has his own plan of educating the rustics, studies for long hours loses his eye-sight, and is compelled to take up the humble work of a furze- cutter. This is a great humiliation for Eustacia. At this juncture, Wildeve again crosses her path. The two dance on the village green, and Wildeve comes to meet her secretly at her home. The visit results ifi the tragedy of the closed door and the death of Mrs. Yeobright.

When Clym comes to know of the circumstances which led to the death of his mother, he is, quite naturally, angry with his wife. There follows a violent quarrel, and Eustacia leaves her husband and comes to live with her grandfather. Unable to tolerate life on Egdon, she decides to elope with Wildeve. They leave home on the night of the 6th of November. It is absolutely dark and a furious storm is raging. Eustacia falls into a pond and is drowned. Both Wildeve and Clym jump into the pond to save her. Wildeve is drowned, while Clym is saved by the reddleman.

In this way, Clym-Eustacia-Wildeve love-triangle results in tragedy for all concerned. Eustacia and Wildeve come to a tragic end. Clym's love for Eustacia is the direct cause of the tragic death of Mrs. Yeobright. No doubt, Clym lives in the end, but his is a life in death. He live haunted by a sense of guilt that he is responsible for the death both of his wife and his mother.

Wildeve-Thomasin-Diggory: - Wildeve-Thomasin-Diggory Venn have-triangle, on the other hand, ends more happily, largely, as a result of the patient and forbearing nature of Thomasin. Diggory Venn had loved Thomasin from the very beginning, but Thomasin rejected him for three reasons. First, because she did not love him, secondly, because she loved another person, and thirdly because her aunt, Yeobright, did not agree to her marriage with Diggory, by far their social inferior. Diggory was much frustrated. He was a small dairy farmer but dis-appointment in love led him to give up his farm and adopt the profession of a reddleman.

When the story opens we find the poor Thomasin has been jilted by Wildeve at the eleventh hour. They had gone to be married, but it was discovered that there was some technical flaw in the marriage license and so they could not be married. This is a great humiliation for Thomasin. Instead of returning home with Wildeve after the unfortunate event, she returns in the van of Diggory. In Egdon all supposed that they, Wildeve and Thomasin, were duly married, and so the Wessex folk even came to the Quiet Woman Inn to congratulate them.

Wildeve, instead of acting honorably and marrying Thomasin at the earliest, turns once again to Eustacia who is gratified to have her lover back. Diggory does her best to help Thomasin. He adopts his, "silent system", to scare away Wildeve from Eustacia, and keep him at home in the evening. At a critical moment, he offers himself to Mrs. Yeobright as a possible suitor for Thomasin. The result is that Mrs. Yeobright is able to talk to Wildeve from a position of strength, and to tell him frankly that if he does not marry her at an early date, there is another lover waiting to marry her. However, Thomasin is determined to marry Wildeve for, "her pride's sake". It is only though marriage with that she can wash off the disgrace from her fair name.

It is the return of Clym to Egdon that makes matters easier for Thomasin. Eustacia falls in love with him, and writes to Wildeve telling him that she no longer wants him, and he may marry Thomasin, if he so desires. The result is that Thomasin and Wildeve are married. But Wildeve does not remain faithful to her for long. He meets Eustacia by chance, dances with her and then visits her secretly, first in the evening, and then in the day. Thomasin knows all this, and suffers deeply as a consequence.

Melioristic Note: - However, her patience, tolerance, humility and prudence are rewarded in the end. Wildeve and Eustacia are drowned in the pond on the might of the 6th of November, and in this way she becomes a widow. The faithful Diggory still loves her and continues to court her. The episode of the lost glove touches her heart deeply. She now realises the sincerity and depth of his love. The result is that she now accepts him, and the two are duly married. We may be sure that the two lived happily together ever afterwards.

Thus the love story of Thomasin end; happily. Through her the novelist has introduced an element of meliorism in the novel. Life is tragic, and love is a cause of sorrow and suffering, but we can get some happiness even out of human life, if we are sufficiently gentle, humble, patient and forbearing like Thomasin and Diggory Venn. It is in this way that the tragedy of human life can be ameliorated or softened a little.

"The Return of the Native" : Significance of the Title

A good title must be appropriate and significant. Just as a signboard indicates the contents of a shop, a good title should indicate the substance or the basis theme of a novel is the story of the tragic consequences of the return of Clym Yeobright who is a native of Egdon Heath.

Clym Yeobright was born and bred up on Egdon Heath. He is its native. He loves the Heath, and is permeated through and through with its influences. He finds the hills congenial and friendly, and its very spirit is in his blood. His playthings have been the flora and fauna of Egdon, and he is as familiar with the face of the ancient Heath, as one is with the face of a close relative. He is the son of Egdon, Egdon is in his blood, and he cannot remain happy away from it.

As Clym, the native of Egdon, was a promising lad, he was sent to Paris so that he may prosper and rise in life. There he became the manager of a big diamond business. He was doing well there, but still he did not feel happy and satisfied. He felt bored and tired in the artificial and unnatural life of the city of Paris. He did not feel at home there. He felt that in Paris, "he was pandering to the meanest vanities" of libertines and shameless women. The call of Egdon was too strong for him and he returned.

The return of Clym to his native Egdon causes much sorrow, suffering in the life of at least five people —Clym himself, Eustacia, Wildeve, Mrs. Yeobright and Thomasin. Clym was disgusted with the life at Paris, and he intended to devote the rest of his life to the education of the Heath-folk. He intended to stay forever in his birthplace to start a sort of school for the education of the rustics. This is a noble end, indeed, but it too idealistic and is bound to result in frustration and disappointment. The illiterate Egdon people would never have appreciated his nobility or his attempts at education them. In order to put his plan into practice, he studies hard late into the night. The result is that he grows-semi-blind, and is obliged to take to the humble work of a furze-cutter to support himself. This is a great tragedy, and Clym's suffering can better be imagined than described.

But this is not all. His return brings tragedy in the life of others also. Eustacia, the Queen of Night, falls in love with him and marries him in the hope that he would take her to Paris, and in this way her craze for city life would be satisfied. She is disgusted with Egdon, regards it as a Hell, and yearns for the pomp and glitter of city life. When she finds that Clym has no intentions of returning to Paris, her frustration knows no bound. She turns once again to Wildeve, and plans to elope with him. The result is that both of them are drowned in the dark and stormy night.

Thus is cut short the career of the beautiful. Eustacia, and of Wildeve, the Rousseau of Egdon. Had Clym not returned, Eustacia would have married Wildeve, and all would have been well. As it is, his return makes Wildeve marry Thomasin, and the two ate incompatible by their very natures. Wildcve does not remain faithful to Thomasin for long, and makes love to Eustacia again. Thomasin suffers silently as long as he lives, and finally has to suffer the pangs of Widowhood. Her life would have been a long tale of misery, had not there been the faithful Diggory to marry her and thus bring a ray of sunshine into her dark life.

Again, it is the return of Clym to Egdon, which brings him into direct conflict with Mrs. Yeobright, his mother. Mrs. Yeobright loves her son deeply and devotedly. She lives for him alone. A wise and shrewd woman, she knows that Eustacia would never make a good wife to him. She, therefore, warns Clym against a hasty marriage with her. She strongly objects to their marriage. The result is that the two quarrel violently, and finally separate and live apart. The result is that both of them suffer acutely, but silently. Their suffering is terrible. When Mrs. Yeobright comes to know that her son has turned a furze-cutter, she relents and goes to his cottage to be reconciled. But cruel Destiny has willed otherwise. The door of Clym's house remains closed in her face, she turns back disappointed and exhausted, and dies on the Heath.

Thus the novel narrates the story of the tragic consequences of the return of Clym to Egdon, his native place. Hence the title is appropriate.

"The Return of the Native" : The Pessimism of Thomas Hardy

Is Hardy a Pessimist? : - Much ink has been spilt in proving, and disproving too, that Hardy is a pessimist through and through. But Hardy himself repeatedly denied this charge in his prefaces, letters and diaries. He called himself an "evolutionary meliorist" and a realist. Let us here examine the arguments, both for and against, and then from our own conclusions.

Arguments of Hardy's Critics: - Those who charge Hardy with being a pessimist do so on account of his 'twilight' or gloomy view of life. They point out that in Hardy's considered view all life is suffering. Suffering is the universal law and happiness is but an occasional episode. In one of his poems, "Tire Poet's Epitaph", he calls life a "senseless school" and in another one that "Life offers only to deny." In hide the Obscure a child, called Father Time, murders his step brothers and sisters and then hangs himself. He does so because he feels that life is not worth living, and it is better not to have been

born at all. Hardy himself adds the comment that Father Time symbolises the coming universal wish not to live.

Hardy Pessimistic about the First Cause: - Moreover, Hardy's critics point out, he is pessimistic about the governance of the world. He rejected early in life the Christian belief in a benevolent and omnipotent anthropomorhic God or First Cause. He rather conceives of Him as malevolent, as one who take delight in the suffering of us mortals. In Tess we are told, "Justice was done, and the President of the immortals had ended this sport with Tess."

In one of his poems he speaks of the Creator as, "Godhead dying downwards, with eyes and head all gone" and elsewhere refers to it as some "vast imbecility". Thus in his view 'the supreme power is blind, imbecile and malevolent and it takes joy in killing and torturing his innocent creation. In this ill-conceived scheme of things, with an hostile imbecility as the supreme governing force, there can be nothing but, "strange orchestra of victim shriek and pain." If this is not pessimism, ask the critics of Hardy, then what is?

Hardy's Own Point of View: - But Hardy vehemently denied this charge, times out of number. He pointed out that he was an artist and not a philosopher. It would be wrong to read any considered belief or theory of life in his mood-dictated writings. Expressions, like the one in Tess, regarding the President of the immortals, were simply poetic fancies, merely poetic devices like the use of ghosts, witches, fairies, etc., commonly used in all imaginative literature. Poems like "The Poet's Epitaph" were merely impressions of the moment and did not represent his considered view. He should not be judged by them. In his letters, diaries and prefaces he frequently explained his own point of view and called himself an, "evolutionary meliorist", or an "explorer of reality."

Hardy a Realist and Not Pessimist: - The fact is that Hardy was a thorough realist. Born and bred in a scientific age, he could not shut his eyes to the fact of suffering. Therefore, the cheap, blind optimism of poets, like Browning, who sang,

"God is in His heaven
All is right with the world."

failed to satisfy him. Rather, the brutal and ruthless struggle for existence which he saw being waged in Nature everywhere, the starvation, hunger, sickness and disease which stalks the earth, made him feel that God was not in heaven and all was wrong with the world. He claimed, and rightly, that his position was nearer the truth. Nor could he agree with the Romantic poets, like Wordsworth, who said that Nature had a "Holy plan" and that there was joy everywhere in Nature. How could it be so, when numbers of children were born to shiftless parents, like the Durbeyfields, to bring misery to themselves and to others. The world was already overcrowded; there were already too many hungry mouth to be fed. Acutely conscious of this fact of universal suffering, he felt with his own Jude that mutual butchery was the law of nature. This is not pessimism, but realism. This state of affairs can be mended not by turning our backs to it, but by facing it squarely. He therefore taught :

"If a way to the better there be
It implies a good look at the worst."

This is a perfectly sane and healthy view of life and no right-minded person can object to it.

Hardy's View of the First Cause: Scientific: - As regards the creation and the Creator, Hardy was much influenced by the scientific theories of his age. He agreed with evolutionary scientists, like Darwin, that the universe could not have been created out of nothing by a single act of creation. It was in a constant process of evolution. With all modern thinkers, he lost faith in the benevolent, anthropomorphic God of Christian orthodoxy and conceived of the First Cause as an inhering force or energy, working constantly from within. Thus Hardy's universe is in a constant state of evolution. He conceives of this energy as indifferent and unconscious, without any hostility or any sense of pleasure in causing pain. This is his considered view. But when carried away by his indignation, he shakes his fist at the cause of things and personifies it as a conscious and hostile Creator. For example, with indignation burning in his heart at the unmerited suffering of Tess, he calls the First Cause as the President of the Immortals who kill us for their sport. He may be excused for such poetic'fancies, for they have been made use of by all poets and writers of fiction. They do not reflect in any way this logical position.

Ultimate Enlightenment of the First Cause: - Moreover, he believes that this energy or power would gradually evolve consciousness and then human lot would undergo amelioration. Towards the end of his epic-drama, The Dynasts, his most philosophical work, he holds out a hope of the gradual emergence of a better order of things. In this drama, he calls the First Cause, Immanent Will, and says that already,

"..... a sound of joyance thrills the air,
Consciousness the will informing
Till it fashion all things fair,
And the rages of the ages shall be mended."

This is certainly not pessimism. It may be what Hardy called, "evolutionary meliorism."

Philosophy of Resignation, Not of Nihilism: - Besides this, Hardy is not a Nihilist. Except in his last novel Jude the Obscure, he never advocates a rejection of life. Suffering, no doubt, is the universal law but human lot can be ameliorated a great deal through tact and wisdom and through wise social reform. It is a philosophy of resignation which he teaches. The Wessex rustics are resigned to their lot and suffer patiently. Joan Durbeyfield's suffering is not so intense, because when faced with misfortune she again and again mutters, "It was to be", and then goes about her way as usual. Elizabeth-Jane and Thomasin tactfully adjust themselves to their circumstances and so escape much misery.

Emphasis on Wise Social Reform: - Social reforms can go a long way towards ameliorating human lot. Marriage laws, specially, should be liberalized in favour of the fair sex. 'Pure' women, like Tess, who are more sinned against than sinning, should not be looked down upon and treated as outcasts. Our double standards of morality must go. A marriage should be dissolved as soon as it becomes a cruelty to either of the two contracting parties, for it is then no marriage at all.

Hardy's View of Man: - Moreover, Hardy does not take a degraded view of mankind. Odious villains, detestable and condemnable rascals, are few in the Wessex Novels and none of them is an unredeemed villain. Thomas Hardy cannot draw completely odious people. David Cecil writes in this connection, "Odiousness implies meanness; and mean people neither feel deeply nor are aware of any issues larger than those involved in the gratification of their selfish desires." If Hardy tries to draw such a mean person, he is a dreadful failure. It does not mean that all his successful creations are virtuous. Henchard and Eustacia commit sins, but they do so in a grand manner. There is no calculated selfishness in them. Moreover, they know they are wrong : they are torn with conscience. They are simply carried away by an over-mastering passion. Therefore, we do not dislike them. Mankind for Hardy always assumes heroic proportions. The Wessex Novels are the, "apotheosis of the human spirit", and not expositions of its meanness.

Hardy a Humanist, and Not a Pessimist: - The spirit of, "Loving-kindness", Hardy advocates, should he the basis of all human relations. Much of human misery results from the imperfections of the First Cause, but much more suffering can be avoided if we are kind and sympathetic to each other. Instead of seeking refuge in nature and turning our back on life, we should rather turn to our own kind, for,

"There at least discourse trills around,
There at least smiles abound,
There sometimes are found,
Life-Loyalties."

A poet who could write like this cannot be called a pessimist. Thomas Hardy is a 'humanist" or what he called himself an, "Evolutionary meliorist."

To sum up, there has been hot controversy as to whether Hardy is a pessimist or not. Those who consider him a pessimist point out that in his view all life is suffering and happiness is only an occasional interlude.They also point out that the ruling power is blind, unconscious of human suffering and lacking in moral sense. Its activity is purposeless. Hardy considered himself a realist and an evolutionary meliorist. He believed that if a way to the better there is, it requires a good look at the worst. The ruling power would be gradually enlightened with the passing of time.Human lot can be improved by tactful and adjustment to one's circumstance, by wise social reform and "loving-kindness."

"The Return of the Native" : Hardy's Contribution to the English Novel

Hardy's Greatness as a Novelist: - Hardy has come now to be universally recognised as the greatest novelist of the Victorian era. Indeed, he is one of the greatest novelists in the whole range of English Literature. Some critics have even called him the Shakespeare of the English novel. Let us here consider the various merits and demerits of his art and then form our own estimate of his true greatness as a novelist.

The Classification of Hardy's Novels: - Hardy's first novel the Desperate Remedies appeared in 1871, and thereafter novels after novels flowed from his pen in quick succession. His-last novel, Jude the Obscure, which was published in 1895, was vehemently criticised as being immoral. This hostile reception made him give up novel writing for good, for exclaimed he, "a man would be a fool, to deliberately stand up to be shot at." The Mayor of Casterbridge, The Return of the Native, Tess of the D'urbervilles and Jude The Obscure are regarded by universal consent as his masterpieces, and they have been compared to the four great Shakespearean tragedies. Prof. L Abercrombie has divided Hardy's novels in to two groups — the dramatic and the Epic. Dramatic novels are those in which our interests is divided between a group of character whose actions and interests clash with each other, such conflict forming the main point of the novel. The Return of the Native and Far From the Madding Crowd are dramatic, for in them the chief interest arises from a clash between the main characters. In the epic novels the interest of the novel centres round the life of a single character. The background is vast and imposing and there is no sub-plot. Tess of the D'urbervilles obviously belongs to the second class, for in this novel the action centres round a single character, a milk-maid, whom Hardy calls a "pure woman". The Mayor of Casterbridge shares the qualities of both these kinds. Hardy was a born poet and even his novels are the works of a poet. Poetic scenes of great power abound, and they have earned for Hardy World-wide acclaim and popularity.

Hardy as a Regional Novelist: - Hardy is a regional novelist. He is the creator of "Wessex" a small tract of country consisting of six odd countries in South England. His knowledge of this limited region is as thorough as that of Scott of his beloved Scotland and that of Wordsworth of the Lake District. "Wessex" appears and reappears successively in one novel after another and it is seldom that he strays out of it. But his treatment of this locality is not narrow or provincial. He has raised it to the level of the universal. Wessex scenes and sights are made a part of universal nature and his characters are at one with humanity as a whole. Wessex heaths and woodlands have an epic grandeur and his principal characters have the greatness of epic heroes and heroines. He has thus imparted a new emphasis and significance to the regional novel which had already been dignified by the Brontes.

His Theme: - But above all Thomas Hardy is the creator of the philosophical novel. Uptill now the English novel was a vehicle of social criticism. Man in society had been its theme so far. But Thomas Hardy uses the novel to inquire into the cause of things. His novels are questionings about life. He constantly inquires about the why and whereof of things and constantly attacks accepted beliefs. Man's predicament in the universe is the theme of Thomas Hardy's novels. He has no faith in the benevolent and omnipotent God of Christianity. He conceives of the First Cause as blind, indifferent and unconscious. Man suffers owing to the imperfections of the powers on high. The Return of the Native is a tragedy of character and environment but even here chance and fate play an important role in bringing about the tragedy. Character is responsible for the tragedy only to a very limited extent. Thus his conception of tragedy differs radically from that of Shakespeare. His characters suffer for no fault of their own, but because they happen to inhabit a blighted planet. In Tess of the D'urbervilles, Tess suffers even though she has done no wrong. She is essentially a pure woman more sinned against than sinning. She has no 'tragic-flaw' in the sense in which all the tragic heroes of

Shakespeare have it. In this way, Hardy is the father of a new form of tragedy. He has given to the English novel depth, richness and significance.

The Creator of the Democratic Novel: - To Thomas Hardy must go the credit of having democratized the English novel. Aristotle had taught that the hero (at least the tragic hero) of an epic, drama, or novel must belong to the highest rank of society so that his fall from his previous greatness may rouse the emotions proper to tragedy. Writers in general followed this precept of Aristotle. Witness, for example, the great tragic heroes of Shakespeare. But the heroes and heroines of the great Hardian tragedies are all drawn from the lowest rank of life. Hcnchard, the hero of The Mayor of Casterbridge, is a haytrusscr, Tess is a milkmaid, Giles is a cider-maker and pine-planter, Gabriel Oak is a shepherd and Clym is a furze-cutter. He has thus completely broken away from tradition and his novels do not suffer in any way. He has revealed the essential nobility and grandeur of the soul of humble humanity that remains unknown in country isolation. Tess, though an humble milk-maid, has the nobility and grandeur befitting an empress. Hardy's tragedy is as great an apotheosis of the human spirit as the tragedy of Shakespeare.

Hardy: Treatment of Sex: - Hardy has broken new ground in another respect also. He was the first English novelist who dared to make a woman who had sinned, or who was an adulteress, the heroine of his novels. Tess is a woman with a past, yet Hardy has made her the heroine of Tess of the D'urbeivilles. Similarly, Sue Bridehead, heroine of Jude the Obscure, is an adulteress. Hardy thus shocked Victorian notions of morality and was vehemently criticised as being immoral and a corrupter of the people. His books were burnt. But he did not yield; he rather chose to give up novel-writing when the bitter attacks of his critics were too much for him.

Characterization: - Characterization is an important aspect of the art of a novelist and Thomas Hardy is a master of the art of characterization. Some of his characters are among the immortal figures of literature. They remind us of the immortal creations of Shakespeare. He chooses his characters from the lower strata of society because he believed that while the character and actions of people from high society are concealed by conventions, the rustics are free from any such control. Hence in their case character is fully revealed and can easily be portrayed. Thus Thomas Hardy excels in the portrayal of simple, elemental natures. His female characters are better and more forceful than his male characters, because women are more elemental, nearer to nature, than men. Thus his range of characterization is limited. AH his important characters belong to Wessex and to the lower strata of society. When he strays out of Wessex or attempts to portray complex characters drawn from the upper classes of society, he fails miserably. But this does not mean that his characters have only a topical or local interest. He deals with the universal passions of man and so his characters are universal in their interest. They appeal to people in all ages and countries. One has to think only of Henchard, Clym, Tess, Eustacia, Giles, Marty South, etc., to realise the truth of his statement.

Thomas Hardy's characters are all human beings, with common human weaknesses and virtues. They are neither saints nor angels, nor unredeemed villains. His characters may have some faults; they may sin but they are never mean. We never hate them, we love them despite their faults. They are grand even in the faults they might commit. They

have conscience, and they are torn within themselves when they do some wrong. Henchard is jealous and revengeful, his wrongs are the result of impulse, never the result of calculated malice. Whatever we may call him, we can never call him mean. Similarly, Tess has sinned, but she is essentially a pure woman whom we pity, and whose heroic struggle against heavy odds we admire.

Minor Characters: - Hardy's characters may be divided into two broad classes — major and minor. His major characters include such unforgettable and forceful figures as Henchard, Farfrae, Elizabeth-Jane. Clym, Eustacia, Giles, Marty South, Bathsheba, Gabriel Oak, Tess, Angel Clare, Sue, Jude, etc. His minor characters are sons of the soil, real children of the earth. They are representatives of antiquity. They perform the function of the Greek Chorus in the novels of Hardy. They comment on action and people and tell us of what has happened off the stage. They are the main source of humour in his novels. They provide a norm by which to judge the main characters of his novels. Often they are the spokesmen of Hardy himself and express his views on life. They appear in groups and generally remain in the background. They may be likened to the clowns of Shakespeare or to his rustics. They, too, are unforgettable and unique in their own way and constitute much of the charm of his novels. When they are absent, as from Tess, even the best of his novels lose something owing to their absence.

Plot Construction: - Hardy's novels are masterpieces from the point of view of plot construction as well. They have an architectural finish and symmetry. The architectonics of Hardy have been praised by all who have studied him. The forethought, the careful planning, the pattern and design, the majesty and grandeur of the plots of his novels, is explained by his early architectural training. They are all massively built. As an edifice rises brick by brick, joined together by mortar according to a particular plan, so are Hardy's plots constructed scene after scene, and his Wessex and his philosophy are the cement that wields the scenes into a single whole. Digressions are there, still everything develops according to a preconceived design. There is no looseness, unfinished odds and ends.

The Faults of His Plots: - But his plots are old fashioned. They are all love stories. The wrong man meets the wrong woman or vice versa and thus complications arise leading the characters to their doom. The "eternal triangle", is always there. Moreover, they follow the old fashioned dramatic plot-pattern in the convention of Fielding. There is action, sensation and thrill; but there is no such introspection, or psychol-analysis as we expect from a modern novelist, and as we get in the novels of writers like Henry James. While Hardy is a modern as far as the thought content of his novels is concerned, he is conventional and old fashioned in his plot construction. Moreover, his plots turn too much on chance and coincidence. This is unrealistic and jars upon the reader's sense of probability.

Style: - The style of Hardy has come in for a great deal of criticism. Mr. Erza Pound accused him of writing with a blunted pencil. Others have called him pedantic for his use of obsolete, dialectic words and such words and expressions drawn from the terminology of the arts and the sciences, as are unlikely to be familiar to the average reader. He has been condemned for his faulty grammar —for his split infinitives, unrelated participles, and the misuse of articles and prepositions. These are serious faults, no doubt, and it is

right that they should be pointed out. But the fact remains that Thomas Hardy's style is the best suited for his purposes. It is a poetic style. He has an almost Shakespearean felicity of expression, and has the rare, and invaluable nack of using the best word for his purpose. At every step his style reveals the sincerity of the man. He uses obsolete words and expressions, and scientific terminology only because he wants to be exact and convey his sense to the readers as accurately as possible. He is master of the use of similes and metaphors. When at his best, images after images come out of his pen as sparks from a chimney fire. His rustics speak their own dialect, but they use it most forcefully and effectively. Hardy instinctively chooses the best possible vehicle of expression for them and for himself.

The Modern Note: - Hardy is largely a traditional novelist. His plots, his characters are all conventional. His narrative is straightforward. We do not find in him that probing into the human soul which we find in the modern psychological novel. He does not, "move backward and forward in time as a stream of consciousness" novelist does. He does not disregard chronology or the logical sequence of events. His form is conventional, but as far as his matter is concerned he is entirely a modern. He is a modern in his views of God and religion, and in his free and frank treatment of sex.

To sum up, we can say that 'In the largeness of design, in the march and sweep of imagination, in the greatness of his great themes, he has given to the novel a simple grandeur and impressiveness, the more impressive for his preoccupation with the concerns of modem thought." Thus Hardy occupies an important place in the development of the English novel.

A Tale of Two Cities

THE VICTORIAN ERA (1850-1900)

The Queen Victoria (1819-1901), who was 18 when she became the Queen, had all the personal traits and characteristics of her age; in the arts she did not introduce any changes; she simply approved of them and became a symbol of them. She was a sheltered child, with well-marked personal traits which she demonstrated throughout her long life as the Queen of England. For the moderns, she represents false modesty, squeamishness in facing the facts of life. We associate with her name such concepts as complacent narrowness, artificial respectability, a code of 'decency' decided upon by the 'best' people. Victoria, as a queen was simply an ideal, who personally agreed with the practices and ideals of the new commercial upper-middle classes of England. Throughout her reign, she was adored by the people and was the symbol of the greatness and glory of England. Love of England meant love of the great and glorious Queen.

An Era of Peace and Prosperity: In the beginning of the era there was a widespread faith in unlimited progress. This sense of self-satisfaction or complacency resulted from the immense strides that England had taken in the industrial and scientific fields. The nation was prospering and ' growing richer and richer every day. Wealth brought with it many evils, like snobbery and social climbing. Money values prevailed, and as a result of increased materialism of the age, art and culture suffered. The British Empire was already a reality; the white man's burden; or the colonising mission of the English, was already bringing in rich dividends. They at-tributed all this prosperity to their glorious and dominant Queen Victoria. It was an era of prosperity, an era of aggressive nationalism, an era of rising imperialism. Hence, nobody wanted that the status quo should be dis-turbed; any questioning of the present order was frowned upon. Emphasis was on faith, faith in one's religion, faith in the Queen and those in authority, and faith in continuous progress. It there were doubts any-where, they needed to be compromised with the existing order.

Rapid Social Change: However, such a state of affairs could not continue for long. The Industrial revolution gradually destroyed old agricultural England. It shook the supremacy of the aristocratic class and landed gentry, and brought into being a new merchant class. This new class, quite naturally, clamoured for power and prestige, both political and social, and did not agree to the accepted order of things. Victorian traditions and conventions were thus subjected to greater and greater pressures and by the last quarter of the century there were large cracks in the Victorian fabric. Moreover, the lower classes, too, were acquiring political rights. There was mental and cultural emancipation all around.

Rise of Democracy and Liberalism: This spirit of emancipation is nowhere seen to better advantage than in the freedom which women gradually acquired. Victorian tradition and Victorian prudery placed ex-cessive emphasis on the chastity of women. Their proper sphere was within the four walls of the home; any contact with the outside

world was supposed to corrupt and spoil them. Their sole business was to look after the comfort of their menfolk. But with the passing of time the movement for women's emancipation gained ground; women were given political rights and more and more of them came out of their homes to take up independent careers. Florence Nightingale did valuable service to the cause of women. Problems of sex and married life were receiving increasing attention from thinkers and writers. Havelock Ellis and Freud were already working on their epoch-making works. Tennyson expresses his views on the problem in his The Princess.

Evolutionary Science andthe Spirit of Questioning: This breakup of Victorian traditions and conventions was accelerated by the rapid advance of science. Science with its emphasis on reason rather than on faith encouraged the spirit of questioning. Victorian beliefs, both religious and social, were subjected to a searching scrutiny and found wanting. The publication of Darwin's Origin of Species in 1859 is of special significance from this point of view. His celebrated theory of Evolution contradicted the account of Man's origin as given in The Bible. His theory carried conviction as it "was logically developed and supported by overwhelming evidence. Man's faith in orthodox religion was shaken; he could no longer accept without question God's mercy, etc., for such orthodox notions of God were contradicted by facts. Similarly, Darwin, with his emphasis on the brutal struggle for existence which is the law of Nature, exploded the romantic view of her as a "Kindly Mother" having a "Holy plan" of her own. The process started by Darwin was completed by philosophers like Huxley, Spencer, Mill, etc. The impact of these developments in science and philosophy on the literature of the period is far- reaching.

Pessimism of the Age: Thus the established order, customs, faiths, beliefs and traditions were losing their hold on the minds of the people, and the new order of things had not yet been established. Man had lost his mooring in God, Religion and Nature. The mechanistic, view of the universe precluded any faith in a benevolent creator. Man felt, "Orphan and defrauded". He took a gloomy, view of life, for he felt miserable and helpless with nothing to fall back upon. It was for the first time, says David Cecil that "conscious, considered pessimism became a force in English literature". The melancholy poems of Arnold, the poetry of Fitzgerald, Thomson's The City of God, and the works of Thomas Hardy all reflect the pessimistic outlook of the late Victorian era. This growth of pessimism was further encouraged by the flow of pessimistic thought from Europe, where pessimism was much in the air at the time.

The Victorian Compromise: A word may now be said of the famous Victorian compromise. The age in which Tennyson matured and produced was an era of social change. Man was caught between two worlds, with the old one crumbling down, and the new one not yet formed. Doubts and unrest possessed man's soul and everything was in ferment. The chief disintegrating forces of the Victorian age were three: (a) the Industrial Revolution resulting in the rise of a new, rich and prosperous merchant class, desirous of rank and privilege, (b) the rise of democracy, and (c) the rise of evolutionary science. All these forces tended towards the break-down of the existing order; hence an effort was made to reconcile the old and the new, to bring about a compromise between science and religion, between the demand for "progress" and the need of stability, order and peace.

Its Several Aspects: The Victorian compromise had several aspects. Politically it meant the reconciliation of the claims of liberty and progress with order. An orderly broadening down of freedom from precedent to precedent became the Victorian ideal. Government still remained an affair of "great families" whether Whig or Tory. But the aristocracy itself was recruited more freely from the middle classes. In every field the Victorians tried to uphold authority in the face of the rising tide of social change. In the political field "authority" meant State and established law: in the field of government it meant aristocracy; in religion it was represented by the Established Church: in the domestic sphere it meant the supremacy of man over woman. Victorianism emphasised authority, and in religion it was represented by the English Church. The emphasis on Church authority deepened in the face of the challenge from science and rationalism.

Social Morality: Morality and respectability were the corner-stones of Victorianism. This emphasis on conventional morality was partly a reaction against the corruption of the earlier age, scandals of Byron and the radicalism of Shelley who did not hesitate even from depicting incest. "Moral duty remained for most Victorians a categorical imperative." The Victorians expected the poets not only to amuse but also to instruct. Men of letters must show a sense of social responsibility in a high degree. It is reflected in the humanitarianism of Dickens, Kingsley and Charles Reade.

Avoidance of Extremes: The Victorians disliked extremes of feeling or passion or even language. There was a tacit understanding as to what was to be depicted on the stage and what was to be left to the imagination. A general reticence concerning matters of sex is a common characteristic of literature in the Victorian age. H.M. Jones remarks: Victorianism is the pretense that if you do not name a thing it isn't there. According to Elwin, "prudery and humbug" presided over the age. This prudery placed a real limitation on the contents of the novel. It made it impossible for the novelist and poets to portray a real, living woman. Hence it is that decorum and solemnity are associated with Victorianism.

General Characteristics: The Victorian Age, also known as the Age of Tennyson in English literature, witnessed an unprecedented change and progress in all spheres of life. It was an era of material affluence, political awakening, democratic reforms, industrial and mechanical progress, scientific advancement, social unrest, educational expansion, idealism and pessimism. The literature of this period, wonderfully rich and varied in personal quality, embodies the spirit of the age. The Victorian era is characterised by the following main currents which transformed both life and literature:

(i) An Era of Peace: The Victorian Era was remarkable for its uninterrupted peace. The few colonial wars that took place during this period did not seriously disturb the national life. Though the Crimean War directly affected Britain, the sores of this war were soon healed up. The liberals of this period were particularly ardent champions of universal peace, brotherhood and justice. They regarded war as an unmitigated evil on a relic of barbarism. It was a peaceful epoch when Englishmen could complete the transformation of all aspects of their industrial, commercial, and social life without any of those risks of violent interruptions that gave quite a different quality to the history of continental nations.

(ii) Prosperity and Progress: As it was an age of peace, it made remarkable progress in industrial and mechanical development. Factories were established all over England, and large-scale production added to the national wealth. The new commercial energy of England was reflected in the Great Exhibition of 1851 and it was hailed as the beginning of a new era of prosperity. Carlyle writes in Signs of The Time "It is the age of machinery, in every outward and inward sense of that word; the age which, with its whole undivided might, forwards, teaches and practices the great art of adapting means to evils. Not the external and the physical alone are now managed by machinery, but the spiritual also. Men are grown mechanical in head and heart, as well as in hand. It was an era of prosperity, an era of aggressive nationalism, an era of rising imperialism.

Rapid industrialisation, commercial and material expansion also resulted in many evils, such as the appalling social conditions of the new industrial cities, the squalid slums, and the exploitation of cheap labour, often child labour, the painful fight by the enlightened few to introduce social legislation and the slow extension of franchise. The evils of Industrial Revolution were vividly painted by Dickens, Mrs. Gaskell and Kingsley. The disintegration of the village community, which was also necessitated by industrial expansion, is expressed in Hardy's novels.

(iii) The New Education: Educational expansion was registered by the passing of Education Acts, by which education to a limited degree became compulsory. The education expansion produced an enormous reading public. As the publication of books became cheap, their production was multiplied. Education brought political and social awakening among the masses. Press became a powerful political force. With the diffusion of education, a great reading public grew up unlike any that had existed before. The new reading public had no high literary standards. It asked for something to read. So, journalism and novel writing grew up. Edward Albert writes: "The most popular form of literature was the novel, and the novelists responded with a will. Much of their work was of a high standard so much so that it has been asserted by competent critics that the middle years of the nineteenth century were the richest in the whole history of the novel."

(iv) Victorian Compromise: It was an era of turbulent social changes. Man was caught between two worlds, the one dead and the other not yet formed. The new democratic, scientific and industrial forces tended towards the breaking down of the existing order. Hence, an effort was made to reconcile the old and the new, to bring about a compromise between science and religion, between the demand for progress and the need of stability, order and peace. In the field of political life there was a compromise between democracy and aristocracy. Harold Nicholson writes that the Victorians "desired to be assured that all was for the best; they desired to discover some compromise which, while not outraging their intellect and their reason, would nonetheless soothe their conscience and restore their faith, if not completely, at least sufficiently to allow them to believe in some ultimate purpose and most important still, in the life after death. In voicing these doubts, in phrasing the inevitable compromise, Tennyson found, and endeavoured passionately to fulfill his appointed mission."

(v) Social Unrest, Social Purpose and Realism: Victorian era was characterised by great social unrest. The class of wealthy capitalists and mill owners was rolling in

wealth and luxury, but, on the other hand, factory workers and labourers were leading a life of abject misery and poverty. The industrial revolution had appealed strongly to the baser instincts of the commercial classes. To the wage earning classes the new Wealth accruing from the vast increase of manufacturers meant little. The Poor living conditions of the industrial slaves attracted the attention of social reformers and writers. The writers were inclined to depict a realistic picture of contemporary life with a conscious purpose of reformation. W. J. Long remarks: **" The Victorian Age is emphatically an age of realism rather than of romance,—not the realism of Zola and Ibsen, but a deeper realism which strives to tell the whole truth, showing moral and physical diseases as they are, but holding up health and hope as the normal conditions of humanity."** Both poets and writers worked under the shadow and burden of a conscious social responsibility. In the stories of Dickens is faithfully mirrored, writes Rickett, **"the deplorable state of the Debtors' Prison, the Fleet, and the Marshalsea; the dismal abysses of elementary education; the oppression of little children; the prevalence of religious hypocrisy— these and many other dark corners of the life of London, were illuminated by the searchlight of his genius."**

The closer approximation of literature to social life is very marked in the Victorian era. Kingsley writes passionate social tracts in the guise of a story, cheap bread inspires Ebenezer Elliott; Elizabeth Barrett voices The Cry of the Children, and Thomas Hood immortalizes the despairing unfortunate. Carlyle plunges into the political problems of the day. Ruskin, starting as critic of the art of painting, turns in the new century to the more complex art of life, and no man of letters has tackled industrial problems with greater insight and more brilliant suggestiveness.

(vi) Advancement of Democratic Ideals: In the political sphere the progress of democracy was a remarkable achievement. The political supremacy of the landed aristocracy had been destroyed by the Reform Bill of 1832 but there was no improvement in the condition of the working classes. Agitation for electoral reforms continued. The popular movement, known as Chartism kept England for about ten years in a state of political unrest, which was further stimulated by the industrial depression and widespread misery of "the hungry forties". The glaring social and political problems stirred the conscience of reformers and gave immense impetus to philanthropic energy and the spirit of humani-tarianism. The repeal of the Corn Law in 1848 ushered in an era of improved industrial conditions. The Chartist movement came to an end in 1848. Subsequently the Reform Bills of 1867 and 1884-85 "transformed the essentially oligarchic England of William IV's time into "the crowned republic" whose praises Tennyson sang." The old feudal landmarks and distinctions gradually disappeared, and the growth of sympathy between man and man and class and class was evident. With the expansion of democratic and humanitarian ideals popular education also spread, which provided proper opportunities for personal development to all. Journalism also became popular. The literature of their period derived greater energy and driving power from the democratic and humanitarian ideals. Carlyle, Ruskin, Dickens, Kingsley and even Mrs. Browning were deeply influenced by these ideals.

Women's liberation also characterised the Victorian epoch. Women were given political rights, and more and more of them came out of their homes to take up independent careers.

(vii) The Impact of Science: The progress of science kept pace with the progress of democracy. Due to the spread of popular education, newspapers, magazines and cheap books, the facts and speculations of scientists and thinkers passed rapidly into the possession of the reading public at large. The doctrine of evolution which is generally associated with the names of Darwin, Wallace and Herbert Spencer had completely revolutionised all current ideas about nature, man and society. Faith in the Biblical view of cosmology and creation was shaken, and was replaced by the Darwinian theory of revolution through struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest.

The impact of science was so powerful on human mind that it had affected every channel of intellectual activity. It influenced human thought in two ways. First, it had fostered a spirit of restlessness; for by increasing man's material resources, it had commercialised human life at the cost of religious and spiritual values. Carlyle and Ruskin condemned growing materialism. Carlyle proclaimed the insufficiency of existing social ideals. The general spiritual unrest is voiced most remarkably in mid-Victorian poetry. Rickett remarks: "The questioning note in Clough, the pessimism of James Thompson, the wistful melancholy of Matthew Arnold, the fatalism of Fitzerald, all testify to the sceptical tendencies evoked by scientific research. It did not kill poetry but it stifled for a while the lyric impulse and overweighed verse with speculative thought."

The scientific method of observation and critical insight influenced the poetic art of Tennyson and other poets. "In accuracy of detail it would be impossible to rival the scenic descriptions of Tennyson," says Rickett, "whose nature poetry is like the work of an inspired Scientist……."

The scientific spirit is also clearly discernible fiction. The problems of heredity and environment attracted the attention of novelists. Biology, psychology and pathology influenced the works of Charlotte Bronte, Dickens, Kingsley and Reade, who deal with social problems. We come across the influence of Herbert Spencer and Comte in the novels of George Eliot. The analytical methods of science were more subtly followed by George Eliot and Hardy.

(viii) Revival of Interest in the Past: Though the Victorians were interested in contemporary social and political life, they still had a fascination for the old ages. Some of the writers and poets had romantic thirst for beauty, love and art. The Pre-Raphaelites remained unaffected by the sweeping tide of realism in fiction and they were attracted towards the Middle Ages. In the sphere of religion Keble and Newman pioneered the Oxford Movement which was based on spiritual romanticism. Just as Romanticism went back to old traditions and feelings in the same way the Oxford reforms refreshed religious life by a return to the past. Pater and Oscar Wilde were the pioneers of the Aesthetic Movement, which was a reaction against utilitarianism and pessimism. Cazamian explains that the spirit of Romanticism continues to influence the innermost consciousness of the age which sees a Tennyson, a Thackeray, a Browning and an Arnold, it permeates every thought just as it colours almost every mode of expression.

Even its adversaries and even those who would escape its spell are impregnated with it. England, like Europe, is not yet entirely free from the predominant influence of Romanticism; she still witnessing the development of its effects."

CHARLES DICKENS; 1812-1870

Charles Dickens was born in Portsmouth, England in 1812. As the second of eight children in a very poor family, he lived a difficult childhood. Eventually, his father was sent to debtor's prison, and Dickens himself went to work at the age of twelve to help pay off the family's debt. This troublesome time scarred Dickens deeply and provided him with substantial material for such stories as Great Expectations, Oliver Twist, and David Copperfield. Steeped in social criticism, Dickens's writing provides a keen, sympathetic chronicle of the plight of the urban poor in nineteenth-century England. During his lifetime, Dickens enjoyed immense popularity, in part because of his vivid characterizations, and in part because he published his novels in installments, making them readily affordable to a greater number of people.

The Industrial Revolution, which swept through Europe in the late eighteenth century, originated in England. The rapid modernization of the English economy involved a shift from rural handicraft to large-scale factory labor. Technological innovations facilitated unprecedented heights of manufacture and trade, and England left behind its localized, cottage-industry economy to become a centralized, hyper-capitalist juggernaut of mass production. In tandem with this transformation came a significant shift in the nation's demographics. English cities swelled as a growing and impoverished working class flocked to them in search of work. As this influx of workers into urban centers continued, the bourgeoisie took advantage of the surplus of labor by keeping wages low. The poor thus remained poor, and often lived cramped in squalor. In many of his novels, Dickens chronicles his protagonists' attempts to fight their way out of such poverty and despair.

A Tale of Two Cities, originally published from April through November of 1859, appeared in a new magazine that Dickens had created called All the Year Round. Dickens started this venture after a falling-out with his regular publishers. Indeed, this period in Dickens's life saw many changes. While starring in a play by Wilkie Collins entitled The Frozen Deep, Dickens fell in love with a young actress named Ellen Ternan. Dickens's twenty-three-year marriage to Catherine Hogarth had become a source of unhappiness in recent years, and, by 1858, Hogarth had moved out of Dickens's home. The author arranged to keep Ternan in a separate residence.

Dickens's participation in Collins's play led not only to a shift in his personal life, but also to a career development, for it was this play that first inspired him to write A Tale of Two Cities. In the play, Dickens played the part of a man who sacrifices his own life so that his rival may have the woman they both love; the love triangle in the play became the basis for the complex relations between Charles Darnay, Lucie Manette, and Sydney Carton in A Tale of Two Cities. Moreover, Dickens appreciated the play for its treatment of redemption and rebirth, love and violence. He decided to transpose these themes onto the French Revolution, an event that embodied the same issues on a historical level. In order to make his novel historically accurate, Dickens turned to Thomas Carlyle's

account of the revolution. Contemporaries had considered Carlyle's version to be the first and last word on the French peasants' fight for freedom.

Dickens had forayed into historical fiction only once before, with Barnaby Rudge (1841), and the project proved a difficult undertaking. The vast scope and somewhat grim aspects of his historical subject forced Dickens largely to abandon the outlandish and often comic characters that had come to define his writing. Although Jerry Cruncher and Miss Pross embody some typically Dickensian quirks—exaggerated mannerisms, idiosyncratic speech—they play only minor roles in the novel. While critics continue to debate the literary merits of the novel, no one denies the light that the novel sheds on Dickens's development as a novelist. More experimental than the novels that precede it, A Tale of Two Cities shows its author in transition. Dickens would emerge from this transition as a mature artist, ready to write Great Expectations (1860–1861) and Our Mutual Friend (1864–1865).

Literary & Historical Information:A Tale of Two Cities

A Tale of Two Cities is a popular, historic novel set in London and Paris before and during the French Revolution. It was initially published as a serial in the weekly entitled All Year Round, from April 30 to November 29, 1859. The novel concentrates on the social and psychological crises more than on a retelling of the actual historical event of the war. Dickens' vision of the Terror encompasses aristocratic exploitation and neglect of the poor, public bloodshed, and private vengeance.

Dickens' source of the French Revolution is undoubtedly Thomas Carlyle's monumental work, The French Revolution. He is also indebted to Bulwer-Lytton's novel Zanoni and Watt Philips' play The Dead Heart, both having the French Revolution as their background. Even though Dickens relied upon other works, his vision and view in A Tale of Two Cities are clearly his own. He expresses his views most clearly when he shows how uncaring the aristocrats were to the plight of common people. But he is able to shift his sympathy away from the mob of French patriot revolutionaries to the plight of the aristocrats and their families. His dislike of the mob is seen in an earlier historical novel, Barnaby Rudge. There the mob storms the Newgate Prison, but the authorities are able to quell the violence. The vengeful, bloodthirsty mob that storms the Bastille cannot be restrained.

Dickens handles the historic event with maturity. He reveals the similarity between the behaviors of both aristocrats and the revolutionaries. Dr. Manette is thrown into prison without reason or trial in the same way that the patriots send innocent people, like Darnay or the seamstress, to death by the guillotine without a fair trial.

There is an autobiographical element in the story, for Dickens identifies himself with both Dr. Manette and Sydney Carton. He was in love with Ellen Terman, and the way Carton worships Lucie is the way Dickens loved Ellen. Like Dr. Manette, Dickens lived in two worlds--one of stark reality that he chose to forget and an imaginary one that made his bad experiences more acceptable.

The novel displays several literary influences. Dickens refers to classical legend in the chapter titled "The Gorgon's Head." His themes and characters also seem to be influenced by the Bible, especially the New Testament and its concepts of resurrection and redemption. He finally draws on the techniques used in folklore, fairy tales, and fable to enrich the descriptive passages. The symbols, allegory, and irony thus become more effective.

Revolutions have occurred ever since the first oppressed people became tired of their tyrannical rulers. They have been the cry of the downtrodden since the beginning of time, symbolizing hope for a better future. The French Revolution, which occurred from 1789 until 1799, violently transformed France from a country ruled by a monarch with a rigid social hierarchy into a modern nation where the social structure was loosened and power passed increasingly to the middle classes. The weakness of King Louis XVI is regarded as a crucial factor that started the revolution. He ignored individual rights, rich and poor alike. During his reign, the ordinary French person was very poor, and food became scarce and expensive. The agricultural recession in 1776 forced property owners to exploit their sources of revenue; but the growing middle class threatened the established landed aristocracy. When the lower classes refused to pay more taxes, the royal ministers attempted to tax all landowners. This plan led to the Aristocratic Revolt. Their first meeting in 1789, in Versailles, was paralyzed because the Third Estate (the Commons) refused to meet separately as a distinct inferior body. On June 17, the Commons took the very important revolutionary step of declaring their assembly to be the National Assembly and thus the States-General was destroyed. They asserted their power, and to show who really was in control, the people of Paris stormed the Bastille on July 14. Riots broke out everywhere. The failure of the 1788 harvest and an exceptionally severe winter aggravated the discontent of the peasants. They robbed and burned the chateaux of the aristocracy and destroyed all records. This episode is known as the Grande Peur (Great Fear).

The National Assembly established a new legal structure; privileges and feudal obligations were abolished. On August 4, a Declaration of Rights was formulated and the king was the chief executive power, but he had no legislative power except a suspensive veto. Louis XVI was reluctant to sanction the new decrees, and this led to the second Parisian uprising--the so-called March of the Women. On October 5, a mob marched to Versailles and forced the king to sign. The king and the queen, Marie Antoinette, were moved to Paris, followed by the Assembly. France became a constitutional monarchy, and legal distinctions between Frenchmen disappeared. From 1789 to 1791, the National Assembly did much to modernize France. However, the reformed franchise excluded the poor. But the people had faith in freedom as shown in the first Festival of Federation, a celebration of National Unity on July 14, 1790, Bastille Day.

When King Louis tried to escape from Paris on June 20, 1791), civil war was imminent. The Assembly retained control, and the crowd that had assembled in Paris to demand a republic was dispersed by force. In 1791, the king was reinstated after he accepted the completed Constitution. The Revolution was then believed to be over. This, however, was not true, as religious and social strife had already broken the unity of the Third Estate.

On April 20, 1792, the New Legislative Assembly declared war on Austria as King Louis was believed to have asked them for help to stop the revolution. Austrian and Prussian forces invaded France, and riots broke out in Paris. On August 10, the palace was stormed, and Louis was imprisoned by a new revolutionary Commune of Paris. The Legislative Assembly now did not have any power and so ordered an election. Counter revolutionaries were massacred in the prisons of Paris.

On September 22, 1792, the National Convention established a republic, and the king was sent to the guillotine on January 21, 1793. France was divided by a militant minority comprised of the Monteguards and the Jacobins who wanted to take vigorous revolutionary measures, while their opponents, the Girondists, leaders of the amorphous majority, looked to the Provinces and hoped to consolidate the Revolution. In 1793, a savage royalist uprising commenced, and the hard-core revolutionaries began to gain ground. Emergency bodies were set up, but there was no leadership and the Parisian insurrection of June 2 forced the Convention to expel the Girondists and accept Monteguard control. The Reign of Terror lasted from 1793 until 1794. The Monteguard Convention had to deal with invasion, royalist civil war, and widespread revolts in the provinces. At first George Danton tried to placate the provinces, who were revolting against the dictatorship of Paris, but later Maxmillian Robespierre sent armies to subdue the rebellious cities. The city of Toulon surrendered to the British, and a demonstration in Paris forced the National Convention to establish a repressive regime known as the Terror. The Revolutionary Tribunal sent state prisoners, including Girondists, to the guillotine and agents of the Convention known as representatives of the people enforced bloody repression throughout France. The churches were closed on November 23, 1793. The republican armies were now in command, and the Terror became identified with ruthless and centralized revolutionary government. Any dissidence was classified as counter revolutionary, and Monteguards and extremists were guillotined early in 1794. Robespierre insisted on associating Terror with virtue, and his effort to make the republic a morally united patriotic community became equated with the endless bloodshed. Robespierre was overthrown by a conspiracy of certain members of the National Convention on July 27, 1794. The Robespierrist deputies and most members of the Commune were guillotined the next day, July 28.

The period from 1794 to 1795 of the Thermidorian Reaction was so weak that anarchy and inflation almost overwhelmed the country. However, the extreme republicans could achieve nothing, and the Convention broke the popular movement permanently with the aid of the army. The Constitution was completed in 1795, and it took effect after a reactionary rising in Vendemiare was suppressed by General Napoleon Bonaparte. The Constitution of 1795 established an executive directory, two assemblies, and a property owner's franchise. Care was taken to see that the country could not revert to either democratic Terror or monarchy. In 1797 the directors purged the parliament ruthlessly. Many deputies were labeled as royalists and sent to the penal colony of French Guinea--called the dry guillotine. Soon the moderates were outnumbered, and in 1799, the Consulate, with Bonaparte as the First Consul, was established. The revolutionary period ended with the creation of the First Empire, which lasted from 1804 until 1815.

The French Revolution

Dickens relied heavily on Thomas Carlyle's The French Revolution when writing A Tale of Two Cities, but he also assumes a certain amount of familiarity with the history of the Revolution. Because the novel is in large measure a historical novel, it is important to be aware of the background against which his characters are acting.

The causes of the French Revolution, which began in 1789, are still debated by historians. Louis XIV had consolidated absolute rule for the French monarchy, and France was governed by the nobility (Monsiegneur's class) and the clergy. The country ran into huge debt due to an archaic system of taxation and the government's financial support of the American Revolution. Because of financial difficulties, the King was forced to call the States-General (the French legislature) in 1789 for the first time since 1614.

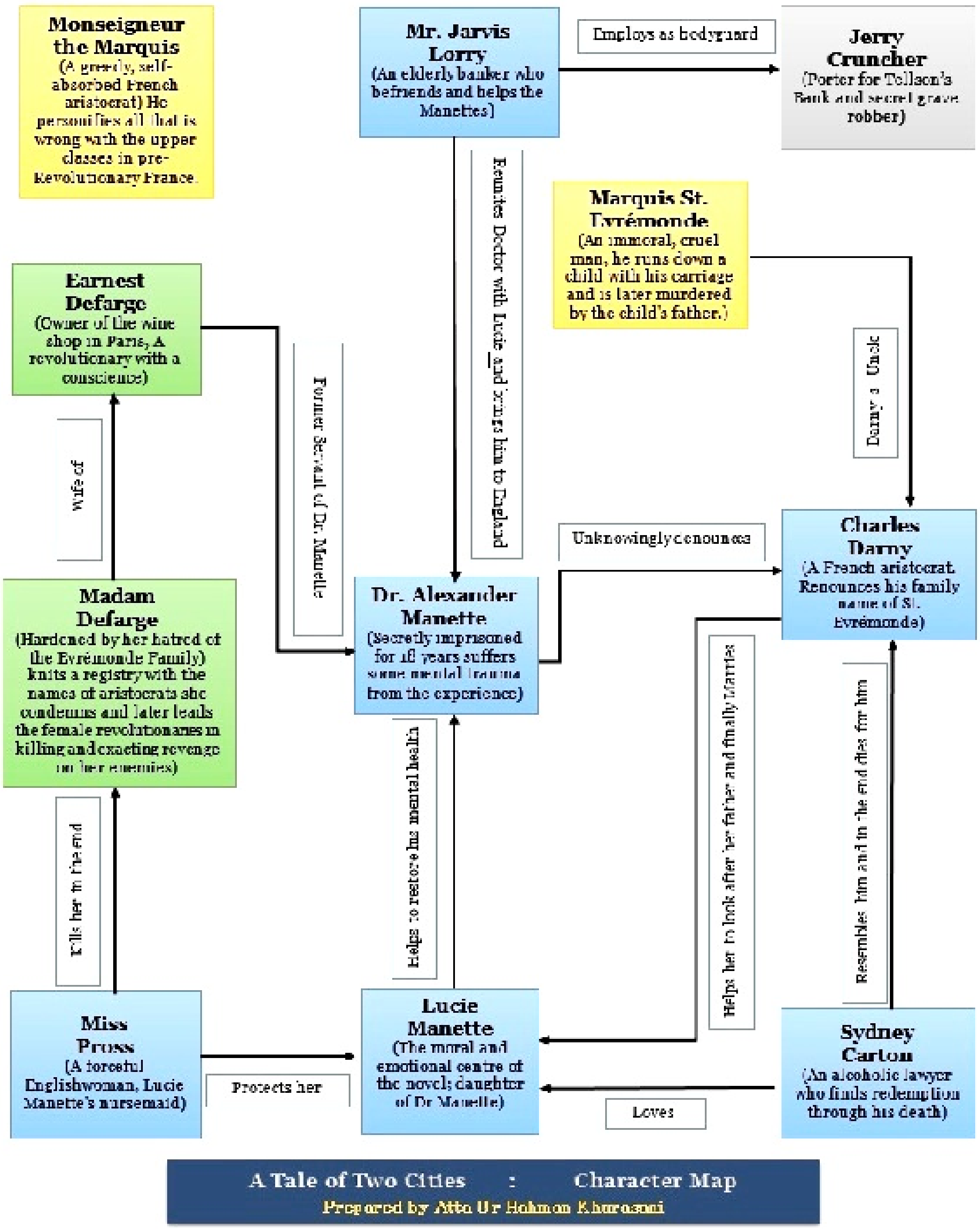
The Third Estate (commons) proclaimed themselves the National Assembly and took an oath in a tennis court that they would not disband until they had drawn up a constitution. On July 14, Parisians attacked the Bastille, a symbol of the other two estates (nobility and clergy). The people were mobilized by hunger and fear of retaliation by the nobles and moved to burn down chateaux belonging to noblemen (like Dickens's fictional Monsiegneur's) in what was known as the grandepeur ("great fear"). Riots and looting were rampant. A constitution created in 1791 created a limited monarchy with an elected one-body legislature. The king and queen tried to escape but were caught. They returned to Versailles and, humiliated, accepted the constitution. The Jacobin party was on the rise and "Liberty, equality, fraternity" became a catchphrase.

France declared war on Austria, and rumors that the king was guilty of treason turned the people against him. In 1792 a second revolution created the Commune of Paris, which suspended the power of the king and prompted arrests of suspected royalists. The September Massacres occurred thereafter, when mobs murdered 2,000 of these prisoners. The Republic was declared in 1792, and it became increasingly radicalized until Maximilien Robespierre took control and instituted the Reign of Terror, in which many were guillotined including the king and queen. The Revolution drew to a close with the death by guillotine of Robespierre himself in 1794 and the rise to power of Napoleon.

A Tale of Two Cities : Plot Overview

The year is 1775, and social ills plague both France and England. Jerry Cruncher, an odd-job man who works for Tellson’s Bank, stops the Dover mail-coach with an urgent message for Jarvis Lorry. The message instructs Lorry to wait at Dover for a young woman, and Lorry responds with the cryptic words, “Recalled to Life.” At Dover, Lorry is met by Lucie Manette, a young orphan whose father, a once-eminent doctor whom she supposed dead, has been discovered in France. Lorry escorts Lucie to Paris, where they meet Defarge, a former servant of Doctor Manette, who has kept Manette safe in a garret. Driven mad by eighteen years in the Bastille, Manette spends all of his time making shoes, a hobby he learned while in prison. Lorry assures Lucie that her love and devotion can recall her father to life, and indeed they do.

The year is now 1780. Charles Darnay stands accused of treason against the English crown. A bombastic lawyer named Stryver pleads Darnay's case, but it is not until his drunk, good-for-nothing colleague, Sydney Carton, assists him that the court acquits Darnay. Carton clinches his argument by pointing out that he himself bears an uncanny resemblance to the defendant, which undermines the prosecution's case for unmistakably identifying Darnay as the spy the authorities spotted. Lucie and Doctor Manette watched the court proceedings, and that night, Carton escorts Darnay to a tavern and asks how it feels to receive the sympathy of a woman like Lucie. Carton despises and resents Darnay because he reminds him of all that he himself has given up and might have been.



In France, the cruel Marquis Evrémonde runs down a plebian child with his carriage. Manifesting an attitude typical of the aristocracy in regard to the poor at that time, the Marquis shows no regret, but instead curses the peasantry and hurries home to his chateau, where he awaits the arrival of his nephew, Darnay, from England. Arriving later that night, Darnay curses his uncle and the French aristocracy for its abominable treatment of the people. He renounces his identity as an Evrémonde and announces his intention to return to England. That night, the Marquis is murdered; the murderer has left a note signed with the nickname adopted by French revolutionaries: "Jacques."

A year passes, and Darnay asks Manette for permission to marry Lucie. He says that, if Lucie accepts, he will reveal his true identity to Manette. Carton, meanwhile, also pledges his love to Lucie, admitting that, though his life is worthless, she has helped him dream of a better, more valuable existence. On the streets of London, Jerry Cruncher gets swept up in the funeral procession for a spy named Roger Cly. Later that night, he demonstrates his talents as a "Resurrection-Man," sneaking into the cemetery to steal and sell Cly's body. In Paris, meanwhile, another English spy known as John Barsad drops into Defarge's wine shop. Barsad hopes to turn up evidence concerning the mounting revolution, which is still in its covert stages. Madame Defarge sits in the shop knitting a secret registry of those whom the revolution seeks to execute. Back in London, Darnay, on the morning of his wedding, keeps his promise to Manette; he reveals his true identity and, that night, Manette relapses into his old prison habit of making shoes. After nine days, Manette regains his presence of mind, and soon joins the newlyweds on their honeymoon. Upon Darnay's return, Carton pays him a visit and asks for his friendship. Darnay assures Carton that he is always welcome in their home.

The year is now 1789. The peasants in Paris storm the Bastille and the French Revolution begins. The revolutionaries murder aristocrats in the streets, and Gabelle, a man charged with the maintenance of the Evrémonde estate, is imprisoned. Three years later, he writes to Darnay, asking to be rescued. Despite the threat of great danger to his person, Darnay departs immediately for France.

As soon as Darnay arrives in Paris, the French revolutionaries arrest him as an emigrant. Lucie and Manette make their way to Paris in hopes of saving him. Darnay remains in prison for a year and three months before receiving a trial. In order to help free him, Manette uses his considerable influence with the revolutionaries, who sympathize with him for having served time in the Bastille. Darnay receives an acquittal, but that same night he is arrested again. The charges, this time, come from Defarge and his vengeful wife. Carton arrives in Paris with a plan to rescue Darnay and obtains the help of John Barsad, who turns out to be Solomon Pross, the long-lost brother of Miss Pross, Lucie's loyal servant.

At Darnay's trial, Defarge produces a letter that he discovered in Manette's old jail cell in the Bastille. The letter explains the cause of Manette's imprisonment. Years ago, the brothers Evrémonde (Darnay's father and uncle) enlisted Manette's medical assistance. They asked him to tend to a woman, whom one of the brothers had raped, and her brother, whom the same brother had stabbed fatally. Fearing that Manette might report their misdeeds, the Evrémondes had him arrested. Upon hearing this story, the jury condemns Darnay for the crimes of his ancestors and sentences him to die within

twenty-four hours. That night, at the Defarge's wine shop, Carton overhears Madame Defarge plotting to have Lucie and her daughter (also Darnay's daughter) executed as well; Madame Defarge, it turns out, is the surviving sibling of the man and woman killed by the Evrémondes. Carton arranges for the Manettes' immediate departure from France. He then visits Darnay in prison, tricks him into changing clothes with him, and, after dictating a letter of explanation, drugs his friend unconscious. Barsad carries Darnay, now disguised as Carton, to an awaiting coach, while Carton, disguised as Darnay, awaits execution. As Darnay, Lucie, their child, and Dr. Manette speed away from Paris, Madame Defarge arrives at Lucie's apartment, hoping to arrest her. There she finds the supremely protective Miss Pross. A scuffle ensues, and Madame Defarge dies by the bullet of her own gun. Sydney Carton meets his death at the guillotine, and the narrator confidently asserts that Carton dies with the knowledge that he has finally imbued his life with meaning.

A Tale of Two Cities - Critical Analysis

In 1859, Charles Dickens wrote the book A Tale of Two Cities. In A Tale, Dickens writes about the French Revolution, and relates the events in the lives of two families, one French and one English. In addition to writing about a very interesting fiction plot, Dickens also tied in a wide variety of important themes and sub plots that keep the reader interested as well as portraying very valuable lessons for us even today. He chose very archetypical characters for the book, all strengthening or portraying one of the themes. The main themes are revenge, courage and sacrifice, and resurrection.

One theme involves revenge; the evil effects of revenge bring out one's bad side. Although it occurs many times in A Tale, Madame Defarge is the main character representing this theme. Her sister and mother were assaulted by the brothers Evrémonde. After this, she vows to herself that all members of the Evrémonde family will die. She turns into a ruthless killer because she must get revenge. When her husband tells her to stop, she replies, "tell the wind and fire to stop, not me". We now see that she is a person teeming with hatred. Revenge is so powerful. When she found out Charles Darnay is an Evrémonde and is planning to marry Lucie Manette, she began to knit his name into the shroud she was making, symbolizing his impending death. Also, she tried to kill Lucie and her daughter, just because they were related to an Evrémonde, even though Darnay (Evrémonde) denounced his heritage and disconnected all relationships to them. Lucie was in a state of mourning so Defarge jumped on the situation.

"She will be at home, awaiting the moment of his death. She will be mourning and grieving. She will be in a state of mind to impeach the justice of the Republic. She will be full of sympathy with its enemies. I will go to her." (p. 349)

She had no mercy, her main goal was to kill all descendants of the Evrémonde family, women and children included and even non-blood relatives. At the end of the novel, she receives an end fitting her ways; she was killed by Ms. Pross, who is the epitome of love and kindness. It is evident from here that Dickens believed that good would always win

over bad. Madame Defarge was going to kill out of hate and revenge, but she got killed because of the love Ms. Pross had for her friend Lucie.

Another key theme in the novel has to do with courage and sacrifice. There were many sacrifices in this novel by many different characters. Charles Darnay went back into the war-torn France from his safe house and family in England to save his former servant Gabelle from the hands of the rebels. He did this, for the simple reason that he gave his promise, many months ago. Also, Dr Manette 'sacrifices' his love for her for her love to Darnay. After the wedding, we see how much Lucie means to Dr Manette in his return to cobbling shoes.

Sydney Carton made the ultimate sacrifice. Because of his love for Lucie and his friendship with Darnay, Carton's actions portray one of the most important themes implied in this book. Carton helps others, and does not think so much of himself. As we first see Sydney Carton, he is a lazy man, who drinks his life away. However there is more to him as he said "I cause no harm to any man on earth, and no man on earth cares for me" (page 99). He does not like the other people's view of him, and he wants to change it. When Darnay was sent to the guillotine, Carton could have let him go, and possibly have Lucie for himself. However, he ended up being the true hero, and sacrificed his life for the life of another, in the name of love. Right before going to the guillotine, Carton visualizes a better life, a life where he gave to others, not thinking of himself. It shows the complete turn-a-round in his view of life for the better. Sydney Carton is really a courageous, loving man.

The final main theme in the book is the idea of resurrection. Book one of A Tale is entitled 'Recalled to Life'. This shows resurrection being a major theme. An example of this is Dr Manette's resurrection after being in prison for nearly eighteen years of mental torment, and when he got out, he was asked the question, "you know that you are recalled to life". We know that he has been, as he no longer refers to himself as "105 North Tower". He is spiritually resurrected with his daughter when they first meet. Lucie forms a relationship with him, which gives Dr. Manette a sense of pride.

"The Doctor was in his best condition, and looked especially young. The resemblance between him and Lucie was very strong at such times, and as they sat side by side, she leaning on his shoulder, and he resting his arm on the back of her chair, it was very agreeable to trace the likeness".

Throughout the novel, Dr. Manette has gone through several mentally tragic episodes. Every time he goes into a relapse, Lucie is the only one that can help him regain normalcy. Darnay also took a part in this theme of resurrection. Charles Darnay's soul had been spiritually resurrected and saved from being killed. Due to being an Evrémonde and for portraying his own family, he was tried and sentenced to death by the guillotine. Dr Manette tried to save Darnay many times, though Barsad would always seem to find a way to get him back to prison and succeeded in sentencing him to death. When the final day of Darnay's life came, it turned out a happy one for him, "The door was quickly opened and closed, and there stood before him face to face, quiet, intent, upon him, with the light of a smile on his features, and a cautionary finger on his lip, Sydney Carton". Sydney Carton, who resembled Darnay very closely, exchanged

places with him. Feigning illness, Darnay was thus snuck out of prison, and physically resurrected.

Often when reading a book, the individual tends to draw parallels in the literature. One parallel often used is the difference between the beginning and ending of the book. A Tale of Two Cities began and ended with a journey. In the second chapter of the novel, Jarvis Lorry travels to recall Dr. Manette to life. In the end of the book, Sydney Carton is taken to his death, because of Defarge's revenge. He saved his friends life. Lorry began with the theme of resurrection, and Carton finished off with the theme of sacrifice, dying because of revenge.

Themes of "A Tale of Two Cities"

Themes are the fundamental and often universal ideas explored in a literary work. The ever present possibility of Resurrection with A Tale of Two Cities Dickens asserts his belief in the possibility of resurrection and transformation both on a personal level and on a societal level. The narrative suggests that Sydney Carton's death secures a new peaceful life for Lucie Manette, Charles Darnay, and even Carton himself. By delivering himself to the guillotine, Carton ascends to the plane of heroism, becoming a Christ-like figure whose death serves to save the lives of others. His own life thus gains meaning and value. Moreover, the final pages of the novel suggest that, like Christ, Carton will be resurrected-Carton is reborn in the hearts of those he has died to save.

Two of the most outstanding and obvious themes in this novel are **resurrection and renunciation**. Resurrection appears here in several forms. Dickens elaborates his theme with the character of Doctor Manette. Early on in the novel, Lorry holds on imaginary conversation with him in which he says that Manette has been "recalled to life". As this statement implies, the doctor's eighteen-year imprisonment has constituted a death of sorts. Lucie's love enables Manette's spiritual renewal, and her maternal cradling of him on her breast reinforces this notion of rebirth.

The theme of **resurrection** is introduced at the very beginning when Mr. Lorry, who is travelling by the Mail-coach to Dover, sends a message to Tellson's Bank through the messenger, Jerry Cruncher. The words of Mr. Lorry's message are "Recalled to life." Under the circumstances, to bring Dr. Manette to England and to enable him to live again as a free man is nothing short of recalling him to life. It is truly a resurrection or a rebirth after death for Dr. Manette.

But a second resurrection for Dr. Manette has yet to take place. Dr. Manette cannot lead a normal life or enjoy his new found freedom unless he recovers his sanity. Under the loving care of his daughter, Dr. Manette begins to improve both physically and mentally. This, then, is Dr. Manette's second resurrection. If his release is a physical resurrection for him, his recovery from insanity under the care of his daughter is a mental resurrection for him. Then Charles Darnay is saved from the jaws of death at least three times,once at Old Bailey and twice in Paris after his trials by the Revolutionary Tribunal.

The necessity of sacrifice connected to the theme of the possibility of resurrection is the notion that sacrifice is necessary to achieve happiness. Dickens examines this second theme, again on both a national and personal level. For example the revolutionaries prove that a new, egalitarian French republic can come about only with a heavy and terrible cost-personal loves and loyalties must be sacrificed for the good of the nation. Also, when Darnay is arrested for the second time, in book the third chapter the guard who seizes him reminds Manette of the primacy of state interests over personal loyalties. Moreover, Madame Defarge gives her husband a similar lesson when she chastises him for his devotion to Manette an emotion that, in her opinion only clouds his obligation to the revolutionary cause. Most important, Carton's transformation into a man of moral worth depends upon his sacrificing of his former self. In choosing to die for his friends, Carton not only enables their happiness but also ensures his spiritual rebirth.

Among the obvious themes of this novel is **social injustice**. This theme is related, of course, to the French Revolution which was largely a result of those oppressive conditions under which the common people in France had been living for many decades. The first glimpse of the prevailing social injustice in France is given to us in the chapter called "The Wine - Shop"."**A large cask of wine had been dropped and broken in the street."**

After briefly describing the scene of poverty, the author goes on to describe the hunger which was rampant among the inhabitants of Paris"**Hunger was pushed out of the tall houses."**

Hunger was prevalent everywhere, says the author. The incident of a child being run over by the Marquis's carriage and getting killed also points to conditions of social injustice.

"That you people cannot take care of yourselves and your children .... He threw out a gold coin for the valet to pick up .... The tall man called out again with a most unearthly cry, "Dead!"

The Marquis throws a gold coin towards the bereaved father as if that would compensate him for the death of his child. The Marquis' attitude towards the widow who meets him on his way is another example of the gulf between the rich and the poor, between the privileged classes and the common people. But the most shocking example of social injustice in those times is the prolonged imprisonment of Dr. Manette.**"Did you ask me for my name?" ... Assuredly I did."..."One Hundred and Five, North Tower."**

It shows how much influence the members of aristocratic and titled families wielded in those days at the royal court and with the government ministers, and how ordinary people were victimized by them.**"To destroy the corrupt old world, they must seize absolute power. Yet absolute power is unjust, corrupt by nature."**

The **French Revolution and the violence and bloodshed** led to constitute another obvious theme. Without any direct analysis of the Revolution, Dickens succeeds in conveying us the logic of cause and effect. The Revolution took place because of the conditions of social injustice which prevailed exercised by the government over the

common people to whose needs it had become completely indifferent. The revolutionary scenes and episodes show clearly Dickens' view that, when the common people acquire unlimited power, they are capable of becoming as ruthless and cruel as the privileged classes had previously been. The revolutionary mob in the novel goes to the extreme and commits kinds of excesses.

The excesses come afterwards when for instance; eleven hundred persons are butchered by the mobs during a period of four days and four nights. The excesses are represented by two blood-curdling incidents, the sharpening of swords, knives etc. by a crowd of people on a grindstone, and the dancing of the Carmagnole. The obvious inference from these scenes and accounts is that revolution is a monster which should be shunned and that the only way in which it can be avoided is that the rich people should realize their responsibility towards the poor and take the necessary steps to relieve the misery of the poor before it is too late. Thus the novel contains an implied warning to the rulers and the privileged classes of all countries.

Coming to the less obvious themes, we find that much of Dickens' own life and experience in the past as well as at the time of his writing this novel has gone into the making of it.**"A Tale of Two Cities" equal history plus Dickens".**

A Tale of two cities is deeply coloured by Dickens's early experiences in life and by what was happening to his emotional life when he started writing his novel. His childhood, like many of those portrayed in his novels, was not a particularly happy one, owing in the main of his father's inability to stay out of debt. This led in 1824, to his father's imprisonment. Memories of this time haunted him for the rest of his life.

Early in his life he had been a helpless and miserable witness to be imprisonment of his father, and this imprisonment had left an unforgettable impression upon his mind.

Dickens elaborates his theme with the character of Doctor Manette. Early on in his novel, Lorry holds an imaginary conversation with him in which he says that Manette has been **"Recalled to Life".** As this statement implies, the doctor's eighteenth-years imprisonment has constituted a death of sorts, Lucie's love enables Manette's spiritual renewal and her maternal cradling of him on her breast reinforces this notion of rebirth.

The two lovers of Lucie seem to symbolize the duality in Dickens's own heart. Darnay and Carton who physically resemble each other were self-projections by Dickens. These two men represent the two different sides of Dickens's literary personality. Darnay represents the light, sunny and optimistic aspect of Dickens nature.

Carton, on the other hand represents the dark side of Dickens. Carton loves Lucie but at first he denies her by describing her as "a golden haired doll" and then he fails to claim her.

Madness is also a theme in this novel. Dr. Manette goes mad during the long years of his imprisonment. After he has been rescued, he is brought back to health through love and care. This recurrence of madness is a doubling of the original condition, and it

produces a feeling that one is never to be free. Doubling in this sense and in several senses is part to the structure of this novel.

Other examples of this kind of doubling are Darnay's double arrest, and the sudden announcement that Dr. Manette is one of the three persons who have denounced Darnay. The latter development is a notable irony because Dr. Manette had earlier been represented as an innocent man who had suffered a gross injustice. These cases of doubling symbolically represent examples of the contradictory nature of subjective experience even of the self, in relation to events. Certainly Dr. Manette had as much reason to curse the Evrémonde race as to protect his son-in-law.

Symbolism in "A Tale of Two Cities"

The word `symbolism' refers most specifically to a manner of representation in which what is shown (normally referring to something material) means by virtue of association, something more, or something else (normally referring to something immaterial).Anything that signifies something is a symbol. Even a word may be symbol. What a simple word or even a long sentence or a paragraph or even a whole poem cannot do what a symbol can. A symbol, thus, connotes (indicate) a huge corpus (quantity) of thought. Charles Dickens' **A Tale of Two Cities** is replete with symbols.

Let us review some of the major symbols of A Tale of Two Cities. Some of the **names of characters** in this novel have a symbolical significance. **Manette**, for example, is the diminutive (miniature) of `man'. A full-blooded `man' is crushed into a Manette. **Lucie** may mean the luminous one. **Evrémonde** may mean `everyman'.

Sydney Carton is the symbol of self-sacrifice and service. **Charles Darnay** symbolises composure (calm, mixture). **Lucie** stands for sweetness and grace. **Jarvis Lorry** stands for disinterested service. **Stryver s**ymbolizes pomposity (arrogance) and selfishness. **Madame Defarge** stands for cruelty, revenge and hatred. `**Monseigneur'** represents decayed aristocracy. **Marquis d'Evremonde** is the symbol of inhumanity and barbarism.

Blood is a major symbol. Gaspard of Saint Antoine Street dips his fingers in the red-blood wine that has spilt on the street, and scratches the word `Blood' on the wall. **Blood** becomes the **symbol of the French Revolution**, the leaders of which forgot the ideals of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity (union) and plunge Paris into a blood-bath. Marquis d'Evremonde watches the blood-red glow of the setting sound. He drives rashly on Saint Antoine Street and Gaspard's son is run over, lying in a pool of blood. The entire atmosphere looks as red as blood when the magnificent Chateau of the Evrémonde is set ablaze. The indiscriminate slaughter and the non-stop use of the guillotine have shed so much human blood.

Water is Dickens' favourite symbol. The water of the river, of the sea, of the fountain, of the reservoir is the elixir of life. At times the water is contaminated and ends the life. Water flows as time flows. In chapter seven of Book Two Dickens comments: "The water of the fountain ran, the swift river ran, the day ran into evening, so much life in the city

only ran into death according to rule". Running its own course is the law of nature. The water ran not in the city alone it flows in the village as well.

`**Footsteps'** is also a recurrent (repeated) image that becomes a symbol. Even in the tranquil atmosphere in Soho Square, London Lucie hears the sound of footsteps, the stampede (charge) of the frenzied (hyperactive) and furious revolutionaries that would not give a moment's rest to the poor Manette, who is destined to suffer.

Right at the beginning of Book one, the **Mail Cash bound for Dover is symbolical**. The journey is arduous, and has ominous associations. Horses are fighting shy as if they have seen something uncanny. All the passengers wear looks of suspicion and distrust. Even the guard grows suspicious. All things, living and dead, feel that dark days are ahead. And what can be darker than the French Revolution, the activists of which are on the spree (extravaganza) to shed blood.

Dickens uses **personal symbols** while referring to the **woodcutter and the farmer**. They are not babblers. They work continuously. They are represented here as not the bringer of fuels and the producer of daily food that sustains us. The woodcutter is the symbol of unchangeable destiny, at whose wish a man may live or die. He represents the inevitability of the Revolution that would overcome mankind. The farmer is the sower of the seeds of death—death that would come in the wake of the Revolution.

The Bastille spreads out before us as Dante's Inferno (firestorm), at the gate of which it is decorated: **"Abandon hope, ye all who enter here".** Hundreds of innocent men, who have caused the least irritation either to the monarchy or the aristocracy, have been committed to the vast prison with its dark cells to languish (decay) away. The human beings are reduced to mere numbers. Dr. Manette has forgotten his name and become Prisoner No. 105, North Tower. Tyranny, cruelty, injustice, exploitation—these are the vices the Bastille stands for. The Fall of the Bastille on 14 July, 1789 heralds (indicates) the end of tyranny.

The **Grindstone** is apparently harmless. In reality it is not Dickens who looks upon the grindstone not as a machine for grinding wheat into flour that keeps us alive. Most of the inhabitants of Saint Antoine Street area had to work round the clock at the Mill for their bare subsistence. As the wheat was being crushed by the grindstone, they were also crushed and bled white. Hence the grindstone had a dual role to crush the wheat and also the poor labourers. Child labour was there. Children worked at the Mill and lost their childhood-the period of primal joy, bubbling (sparkling) with life. Dickens must be thinking of his factory days. The Mill and the grindstone have more or less similar functions. Both crush wheat and the labours, children included.

The **grindstone** during the frenzied (hyperactive) days of the Revolution had another role to play. Men, women and children had to use the grindstone for sharpening not only swords and daggers (blade), but all metallic instruments to be used as improvised (unplanned) weapons to kill the enemies of the people.

La Guillotine becomes the symbol of **quick extermination** (killing) after summary trial. In the common parlance (idiom, manner of speaking), the guillotine was `the

national Razor to behead the aristocrats with. The King and the aristocrats- had their conventional, but lethal weapons for the liquidation (collapse) of the poor and the oppressed. Since the table was turned, the revolutionaries devised a new weapon, namely, the guillotine.

Resurrection is a major symbol. A devout (pious) Christian, Dickens believes in Resurrection. What Sydney Carton heard from the priest, while quite a child, at the funeral of his father—"I am the Resurrection. I am the life," had little meaning for him then. But with the passage of time, particularly when he chooses to be Charles Darnay, he is inspired by the words of Christ, "I am the Resurrection, I am the Life". From the temporary earthly life he is stepping into life eternal. It is Sydney Carton who resurrected Charles at Old Bailey. Dr. Manette is resurrected on his release from the Bastille, and gets a new lease' of life in the company of Lucie. Sydney Carton, who was suffering death-in-life, is resurrected by the profound sympathy and compassion of Lucie. He finds a new meaning in life, a purpose, a mission, to live for, and also to die for. And towards the end Sydney Carton's death and resurrection inspire all even amidst blood and vengeance.

Carmagnole, the frenzied dance of a section of the revolutionaries strikes terror in the delicate heart of the delicate Lucie. Flaunting (showy) their red caps, they gnash (grind) their teeth and sing in prison to give vent (expel) to their excessive joy over their well-organized and yet chaotic victory. What was a symbol of joy to the masses was a symbol of horror to Lucie.

So many symbols are there only to heighten the horrors of the Revolution and the supremacy of Resurrection in the long run.

There is another **symbol**, not **public** or **conventional**, but a **personal** one. It is the symbol of the **lion** and the **jackal**. **Stryver** is a symbol of **pomposity and conceit**. A barrister-at-law, he has an extensive practice. He, therefore, calls himself a lion, and Sydney Carton a `**jackal'**. A lion is the king of animals. Stryver, therefore, prides himself upon describing himself as the king of the beasts. The lion always takes the lion's share and the leavings are shared by the lioness, the cubs, and when practically nothing is left in the carcass (skeleton) the timid jackal steps in. Carton is far more talented and intelligent than Stryver. It is he who, with his quick perception and critical acumen (intelligence) easily solves the intriguing problems of the clients. Stryver owes his success to Carton. Stryver, in the fitness of things, takes more than the lion's share, and Carton, who has absolutely no material ambition, is thoroughly satisfied with wine that Stryver provides. Stryver does not understand that he is "stout fond bluff'. An egocentric person, he does not understand that his assistant, `the jackal' is the source of his professional success. He with his usual self-complacency claims to be the lion, the patron of Carton. And Carton, the charge, accepts the appellation `jackal'. He has no vanity, no inflated ego. That is why he dances attendance upon Stryver, as a jackal does upon the lion. We, however, feel that the position should have been reversed. But the jackal becomes the Christ-like figure and serves not one master, but the whole humanity with love and inspires them to avoid all cruelty and hatred, and make the world a better place to live in.

To sum Up, Dickens has used symbols artistically and significantly in A Tale of Two Cities. The symbols are a part of the plot and they are so well integrated with the theme of Revolution, resurrection and love that they make the novel rich in meaning, significant and dramatic.

A Tale of Two : A Sad Tale of Two Cities

The focus of A Tale of Two Cities concerns the impetus and fervor of 18th century European socio-political turmoil, its consequences, and what Dickens presents as the appropriate response of an enlightened aristocracy and just citizenry.

The tale opens with Dr. Manette having spent the last 18 years of his life in the Bastille - innocent of all crimes save his disdain for the base actions of a French Marquis. The heinous nature of his confinement induced a madness remedied only by the devoted love of his Lucie.

We next encounter these characters five years later attending the trial of Charles Darnay - a nobly born French immigrant who relinquished his station rather than partake in the barbarous class structure of 18th century France.

The beautiful and virtuous Lucie Manette is admired by both Sydney Carton and his repugnant legal partner, Stryver. It is the inherently ethical Carton, not the aristocratic (and bellicose) Stryver who realizes that marriage to Charles Darnay would bring the greatest happiness to Lucie. Their bliss is short lived however,as the honor bound Darnay returns to Paris.

His prosecution is propelled by a vengeful and newly empowered Madame Defarge a "patriot of the revolution" who utilizes the revolutionary "People's Tribunals" to redress grievances committed by the Evrémonde clan. Aided by her cohort (aptly given the code name of "Vengeance") retribution, not justice, is her sole concern. **"...I have this race a long time on my register, doomed to destruction and extermination."**

This savage character - **"Madame's resolute right hand was occupied with an axe,...and in her girdle were a pistol and a cruel knife".**- exhibits resolute and ferocious anger.

Dickens does not portray Madame Defarge and her compatriots as morally bankrupt but rather depicts their inevitable creation in the oppressive aristocratic class structure of 18th century Europe. A Tale of Two Cities is written in a perfectly linear progression of this theme. It initially portrays the oppressive nature of the aristocracy (the imprisonment of Dr. Manette, the accidental death of a child and the trite response of the Marquis - among other graphic illustration) which leads to the fervor of revolutionary assassins seeking justice. These zealots empty the Bastille and destroy all remnants of the oppressive regime in freedom's name, yet as products of this abusive system there is hatred latent in their persona. These "patriots" recreate the system which they so despised - "...the new oppressors who have risen on the destruction of the old..." (404);

as Madame Defarge, they no longer seek justice but vengeance. The graphic depictions of mob bloodlust hammer this point home.

European aristocratic society is not doomed however. Carton redeems his wasted existence by sacrificing his life for the life of Darnay and thus insures the happiness of his beloved Lucie. This redemption brings honor to his name for generations to come. Charles Darnay's renouncement of his Family's ill-gotten wealth results in his ultimate happiness. The implication is clear: the wastrels of the British aristocracy may yet redeem their virtue and save their love (Mother England) by pursuing societal equity and justice. It is only the noble pursuit of justice which can produce a society of the just. The hatred latent in oppressive societies results only in socio-political turmoil and the manifestation of evil.

Dickens harkens to the moral fiber of Charles Darnay and Sydney Carton as a necessity for the preservation of British society and European aristocracies in general. The heroism displayed by these two characters would avert the horrors of a mob inspired rebellion in England - thus such sacrifices would be - to paraphrase Dickens, a far, far, better thing to do.

"A Tale of Two Cities" equals history plus Dickens."

"A Tale of Two Cities" pertains to the period before and during the French Revolution.Dickens' projection of himself and his personal crisis into the story of this novel is a deeply personal quality (At the time this novel was written, Dickens was passing through a period of acute mental struggle and torture because of the collapse of his married life and his love affair with the young actress Ellen Ternan). At the same time "A Tale of Two Cities" is Dickens most impersonal novel, especially because of the grand objectivity of historical events with which it deals and the steady movement of its action.

It is the story of Dr. Manette, Lucie, Darney, and Carton. This story is told against the historical background of the French Revolution. The French Revolution was the great political upheaval which was caused by the evils of taxation and land-owning system which oppressed the lower classes in France.

"A Tale of Two Cities" is not a particular historical event that is his chosen dramatic setting but rather the relationship between history and evil". In 1792 the monarchy was overthrown and France was declared a Republic with "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" as its slogan and motto. The Reign of Terror started in 1793, the King and afterwards the Queen becoming the victims of the guillotine. The action of 'A Tale of Two Cities' covers the period from 1775 to 1793 which includes the years of the Revolution (1789-93).

"The human spirit, distorted by systems, produces distorted societies."Carlyle's book "French Revolution is Dickens main source for the historical scenes and events which find a place in 'A Tale of Two Cities'. By the time he wrote 'A Tale of Two Cities' he

was interested in history and was convinced of its importance in relation to his own times.

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way."

Dickens novel does not by any means depict the enormous sweep and drama of the French Revolution in all its complexity. Dickens has condensed the basic threat of the Revolution and the basic lesson that can be drawn from it by depicting the effects of the Terror, or the revengeful side of the Revolution, on a small group of people who get involved in these public events against their will.

In 'A Tale of Two Cities' Dickens depicts the beginnings of popular discontent in France, the rising dissatisfaction of the people with members of the privileged classes the turmoil caused by public fury, and the excesses and barbarities committed by the revolutionaries during the years of the French Revolution. Dickens gives us no connected account of the French Revolution, its progress and its culmination. He gives us brief and scattered accounts of some of the principal episodes. At the same time, Dickens takes no notice of the leading historical personalities of the French Revolution.

"Dickens emphasis is not on physical actions, speeches, battles, riots (the stuff of history) but on the pure passions, the dreams, joys, sorrows and self communings of his imagined characters."

In the first part of his novel Dickens sympathizes with the poor and down trodden people, but in the end these very people became the villains who therefore repel him. Dickens first reference to the outward causes of the French Revolution comes in the chapter called "The Wine shop" in which he uses the symbol of the mill to convey the grinding poverty through which the people of Saint Antoine are passing. Then there are the three chapters in which the arrogance of a particular nobleman is depicted. He also symbolizes the entire privileged class. One of the best known episodes of the French Revolution is then briefly described by Dickens in the chapter entitled "Echoing Footsteps." But the real excesses and brutalities of the French Revolution are conveyed to us in the final part of the novel, where we have a depressing description of the prisoners in La Force, a frightening description of the sharpening of weapons by the revolutionaries on the grindstone.

"To make an omelet you have to break a few eggs."

However, Dickens debt to Carlyle is much greater than has been indicated above. For instance, Dickens accounts of the trials, of prison, procedures, of the tumbrels, and of the guillotine all come from Carlyle.

Dickens main achievement lies not only in giving us graphic and stirring account in the manner of Carlyle, but also in interweaving the personal lives of a group of private characters with the events of the French Revolution. These private individuals are Dr. Manette, Lucie Manette, Darney and Carton, besides such less important figures as Mr. Lorry, Miss Pross, and John Barsad. The leading characters are drawn into the whirlpool of the revolutionary events not because they have any ideological interest in the events of the time but as innocent victims who have done nothing at all to deserve the suffering and distress caused to them. The sentence of death against Darney is most unjust when we realize that he was on the side of the people. He was visiting France briefly in an attempt to save the life of a poor man who was in danger. The others are drawn into the whirlpool for the sake of Darney and Catron's sacrifice of his life and his execution flown primarily from Lucie's involvement.

Although Dickens does not present any systematic theory of the revolution, he certainly reveals a well-defined attitude towards the revolution and seems to have formed certain definite views about it. Dickens was encouraged by Carlyle's views to regard the past primarily as a store house of lessons, and a terrible Moral drama. In writing his novel, he was very particular about integrating the personal lives of his characters with the wider pattern of history. It is the principal scheme of the novel to show the individual fate mirroring and being mirrored by the fate of the social order.

"The rape itself implies social exploitation or oppressing of the messes. The raped girl stands for thousands of unjustly executed victims—an historical fact well documented by Charles Dickens."

The doctor returns to life and finds its place in the new world. And Carton embodies both the novel's central narrative theme and its profoundest moral view: his past of sinful negligence parallels the past of 18th century Europe; his noble death demonstrates the possibility of rebirth through love and expiation. According to one critic:-

"There is no other piece of fiction in which the domestic life of a few simple private people is in such a manner knitted and interwoven with the outbreak of a terrible public even, so that the one seems to be part of the other."

Although Dickens was evidently obsessed with the violence which had erupted during the French Revolution, yet he was by no means a revolutionary himself. He makes it clear that the French Revolution was the natural and inevitable consequence of the social oppression which had continued in France for centuries. It is true that some critics have treated "A Tale of Two Cities" as a work of revolutionary intentions, and have claimed Dickens as one of them. It is also true that Dickens has always been a favourite author with revolutionaries. Both Marx and Engels appreciated his novels and regarded him **"As a fellow fighter in the war against the social abuses and injustices of Victorian England."**

Madame Defarge is the ultimate personification of the French Revolution in 'A Tale of Two Cities' and she is a person whose uncontrolled desire for revenge has changed her into a monster of pure evil. The final struggle between her and Miss Pros is a contest between the forces of hatred and of love. It is love that wins when Madame Defarge is

self-destroyed through the accidental going off of her own pistol. This incident shows that Dickens feels no sympathy whatever for the revolutionaries of Madame Defarge's type.

The actual fact is that Dickens regarded that revolution as a monster. That is why we remember the revolutionary scenes of A Tale of Two Cities, these scenes have the quality of a nightmare, and it is Dickens own nightmare. The moral which Dickens therefore wishes to teach us through his treatment of the French Revolution is that violence leads to violence, that prison is the consequence of prison, and that hatred is the reward of hatred."

He wanted that governments should not allow the people to become so frustrated and angry that they are compelled to revolt and become frustrated and not only violent but ruthlessly violent."Dickens attempts a painterly

A Tale of Two Cities : Story of Vengeance & Blood

In A Tale of Two Cities, Charles Dickens depicts how pointless the revolutionbecomes when the original goal of equality becomes lost when the anger,frustration, and desire for revenge of the third estate is finallydischarged. The trial of Charles Darnay, the words and actions of Madame Defarge and use of symbolism and foreshadowing show how anger drove the revolution to a state of pointlessness.

One major reason the revolution became out of hand was due tounscrupulous people running the courts and the imprisonment of innocentpeople for no reason. Charles Darnay happens to be a character in diretrouble, when he finds himself being imprisoned and tried before an unjusttribunal. Darnay was a wealthy man who left France, but returned to helpa former servant and **"was accused by the public prosecutor as an emigrant, whose life was forfeit to the Republic, under the decree which banished all emigrants on pain of Death"**. One way to impose revengeon the higher classes was to sentence them to death for little or noreason, which was the case with Darnay. At his second trial Darnayrealized that "before the unjust Tribunal, there was little or no orderof procedure, ensuring to any accused person any reasonable hearing.

There could have been no such Revolution, if all laws, forms, andceremonies, had no first been so monstrously abused, that the suicidalvengeance of the Revolution was to scatter them all to the winds.The chaotic and murderous atmosphere within the courts reflected thefrenzied state that lay outside of its dreaded doors. Another example ofrevenge can be seen in the character Madame Defarge.

Madame Defarge represents the people in France who gave in to hate tosatisfy the hurt and pain that had churned inside of them for so long, andis finally released in murder and acts of revenge. She was a womanwithout pity and virtue. It was nothing to her that an innocentman was to die for the sins of his forefathers; she saw, not him, butthem. It was nothing to her that his wife was to be made a widow and hisdaughter an orphan; that was insufficient punishment, because they wereher natural enemies and

her prey, and as such had no right to live". Many people showed this same type of vindictiveness, which createda curtain that blocked the original goal of the third estate.

Of course,there is a reason as to why Madame Defarge is the way she is. When MadameDefarge says, **" All our lives, we have seen our sister-women suffer, in themselves and in their children, poverty, nakedness, hunger, thirst, sickness, misery, oppression and neglect of all kinds,"** she isrepresenting all of the pain the third estate had suffered, and why it finally boiled over. Other instances of suffering and pointless actionsinclude the girl who stood by Sydney Carton while waiting to be executed,and a small boy run over by the Monseigneur. Symbolism and foreshadowingalso exhibit the peoples hate and suffering and how it's released inviolence.

A small girl is sentenced to La Guillotine and a boy is run over, bothare actions in which there is no meaning or gain. Neither helps to win the revolution. The girl has faith in the Republic, but questions what willbe gained from killing her.Addressing Sydney Carton she says," I am notafraid to die, Citizen Evrémonde, but I have done nothing. I am notunwilling to die, if the Republic which is to do so much good to us poor,will profit by my death; but I do not know how that can be CitizenEvrémonde". Wine is used to show how bloody and gruesome therevolution would become. When a wine barrel spills, Dickens usessymbolism and foreshadowing of death by writing, **"The time was to come, when that wine too would be spilled on the street-stones, and when the stain of it would be red upon many there,"**.

The French Revolution was fuelled by vengeance and crime. Instead ofsticking together in a mutual quest for equality, people turned againsteach other, and tangled the sticky web of the revolution even more. Although some positive reactions came out of the revolution, **"Far and wide lay a ruined country, yielding nothing but desolation. Every green leaf, every blade of grass and blade of grain, was as shrivelled and poor as the miserable people".** Everyone makes mistakes, but theimportant thing is to learn from them. Each of us needs to take themistakes of the French Revolution and learn from them, so that theneedless death and suffering doesn't ever repeat itself.

Theme of Love and Hate in "A Tale of Two Cities"

Love and hate are both emotions that are used in our attempt to express ourselves to certain people. Hate is more sinister of the two, without hate, the scales would be upset. We cannot always get the best of everything. However, in the novel "A Tale of Two Cities" by Charles Dickens, hate only adds to the story's appeal.

In the novel, both emotions are displayed by the characters in the book through the actions they carry out and the words that they speak, even though it can be justified that there are more examples of love than hate. The love between Lucie Manette and her father, as well as that of Charles Darney and Lucie and indeed many other characters are just some of the many examples of love. The more baleful emotion of hate is also revealed many times in the novel, by the French commoners and especially by Madame

Defarge when it came to Charles Darney being an aristocrat and the suffering of her own family.

The first strong example of **love** we read about in the novel is that of Lucie Manette and her father, Dr. Manette who has been kept in the Bastille for eighteen years. Lucie meets him with the help of another character, Mr.Jarvis Lorry, and tells her father that his agony is over and that she'll bring him to London and away from his previous sufferings. Later in the story, the night before Lucie is to be wedded to Charles Darney, we learn that Lucie has saved her last day as a single woman to be with her father and to reassure him that she'll still be with him even though she is to be married. **"Lucie was to be married tomorrow. She had reserved this last evening for her father, and they sat alone under the plane-tree.**"

Throughout the whole conversation with her father that evening, it is evident that her love for her father prevails even that between Charles and herself. **"If I had never seen Charles, my father, I should have been quite happy with you."**

The affection for her father does not go only one way. Her father's for Lucie is also clear as we can see by the following quote:

"Quite sure my darling! More than that, my future is far brighter, Lucie, seen through your marriage, than it could have been - nay, than it ever was - without it.".... "Believe it, love! Indeed it is so. You, devoted and young, cannot fully appreciate the anxiety I have felt that your life should not be wasted-wasted for my sake. Your unselfishness cannot entirely comprehend how much my mind has gone on this; but, only ask yourself, how could my happiness be perfect while yours was incomplete?"

In the first parts of Book Three, Dr. Manette helps to protect Charles Darney after he was captured by the French commoners and manages to free him after some time. During that time Lucie stood outside a window in the Bastille every day in all weathers so that Charles could see her when he walked past even when it was impossible for Lucie herself to see him. In other words, he could see her, but she could not see him. She begs Madame Defarge, who undoubtedly hates all the French aristocrats to help Charles and not harm him. **"As a wife and a mother, I implore you to have pity on me and not to exercise any power that you possess, against my innocent husband, but to use it in his behalf."**

Likewise, the fondness Charles has for Lucie has not gone unnoticed. **"He had loved Lucie Manette from the hour of his danger. He had never heard a sound so sweet and so dear as the sound of her compassionate voice; he had never seen a face so tenderly beautiful, as hers when it was confronted with his own on the edge of the grave that had been dug for him."**

He confesses his love for her to Dr. Manette and asks for his advice on the matter and says that he would never weaken the bond between father and daughter. That shows that he is willing to share Lucie with her father, and that in turn shows his love and

respect for Lucie and her wishes. **"But I love her. Heaven is my witness that I love her!"**

Besides Charles Darney, Lucie has other suitors but only one other character, Mr.Styver went forward with the idea of having Lucie as a wife and even thought of proposing to her. Sydney Carton, who works for Stryver, also has feelings for Lucie, but knows that he isn't good enough for Lucie, and says that he is willing to do anything for Lucie and her loved ones. He later carries this promise out by dying in place for Charles, thus saving his life.Even at his hour of death, Carton demonstrates his good heart by showing his love to a seamstress who is led to the guillotine before him.

There is one more character that is practically made of the emotion. Miss Pross, Lucie's maid, shows her unfailing devotion to Lucie, her ladybird, and near the end of the book, we discover that Miss Pross fights it out with Madame Defarge who is determined to exterminate Lucie and her entire family, so that Lucie, Dr. Manette and Mr. Lorry will have enough time to get away before they get caught and denounced for showing grief for a prisoner.

Another example that manifests love in the novel is that of the French commoners for France, and their own kind. That is shown after the riots started out; when families got together hoping that they would soon be free of the hold the aristocrats had over them.

The novel also has its fair **share of hate** which is displayed through the likes of **Madam Defarge and her fellow knitters** as well as **her husband, Ernest Defarge**, and the **Jacques.** There is no mistake that we can make regarding the relation between Madame Defarge and the emotion she lives by, Hate. Wherever she goes, she brings Hate around with her. She undeniably loathes the aristocrats and anyone with any relation to the higher breed of France, and we can see that by the conviction of innocent employees of the aristocrats such as the seamstress who saw the love and goodness in Carton. The following text rightly explains that Madame Defarge is a creature of hate.

" See you, I care nothing for this Doctor, I. But, the Evrémonde people are to be exterminated, and the wife and child must follow the husband and father." ... " In a word I cannot trust my husband in this matter, not only do I feel, since last night, that I dare not confide in him the details of my projects; but also I feel that if I delay, there is danger of his giving warning, and then they might escape."

She goes to look for Lucie but is stopped by and accidentally shot to death by Miss Pross. Although the hate between the French commoners and the aristocrats is not as sinister and fearful as that of Madame Defarge's, there are examples of them too. One of the more obvious examples is the storming of the Bastille where the French commoners invade the prison with many various weapons.

"Muskets were being distributed - so were cartridges, powder, and ball, bars of iron and wood, knives, axes, pikes, every weapon that distracted ingenuity could discover or devise. Every pulse and heart in Saint Antoine was on high-

fever strain and at high-fever heat. Every living creature there held life as of no account, and was demented with a passionate readiness to sacrifice it.”

The mob is ruthless and almost no one in their registers is spared. Monsieur Defarge and his allies, Jacques as they call themselves are mainly responsible for the revolution in Saint Antoine and organised most of the attacks and riots. Monsieur Defarge once said to Charles Darney that he would do nothing for him, and that his duty was to France and its people. **"I am the sworn servant to both (France and its people), against you. I will do nothing for you."**

In conclusion, the two themes of Love and Hate are indeed strong and widely shown, one if not the other, by each and every one of the characters. As a result of that, the novel is more engaging and tangible than if it lacked the presence of both emotions. Not only do the characters show that love and hate are strong themes, the events that unfold in the novel are evidence that support it as well. Love and Hate will continue to battle it out for the rest of humanity for purity and virtue, but also for the enjoyment of those who sit back and relax and who love to read books such as 'A Tale of Two Cities'.

Social Conflict in “A Tale of Two Cities “

Conflict is a necessary element in a novel to build a historical fiction. It is mainly used to build plot and suspense. In “A Tale of Two Cities “Charles Dickens used the development of a conflict between the French lower class and the French government and aristocracy to build plot and suspense. The nobility (the government and aristocracy) is extremely rich and the French lower classes are exactly the opposite, very poor. The French lower class suffered for a long time under the tight rulings and restraints of the French government and aristocracy. The lives of ignorant French poor people are described by Charles Dickens as dreadful:

“And who among the company at Monsignor’s reception in that seventeen hundred and eightieth year of our Lord, could possibly doubt, that a system rooted in a frizzled hangman, powdered and gold-laced, pumped, and white-silk stockinet, would see the very stars out!”

The deaths of seemingly worthless peasant-like poor people had not affected what so ever upon the wealthy. This created the strong and continual conflict between the two, totally opposite from eachother, classes in France. The poor rebelled against the aristocrats who had been oppressing them for so long and afterwards France took a long time to recover. Darnay was arrested twice mainly because he was born basically as a French aristocrat and revolutionists wanted him killed. With the help of others, Darnay’s conflict was resolved, but no doubt still stands an individual example of the larger external conflict of the Revolution.

It seems that the narrator of “A Tale of Two Cities” does not want or know to take a side in the conflict between the French lower class and the French government and aristocracy. He does not approve the actions of nobility but he does not approve the actions of the poor people as well. Especially in the first two paragraphs of chapter 15

(book third), the narrator uses very negative and sometimes strong words for the poor people but also for the noble people. Words like **Monsters**, the **carriagesof absolutemonarchs, the equipages of feuda nobles, the toilettes of flaring Jezebels, changeless and hopeless** are used quite often. In the entire novel it is also very clear that he sometimes understands the nobility and at another moment he understands the poor people. He also understands the reaction of the poor people but then at the same time he does not approve this. It is shown in the first paragraph already:

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way- in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only." (Charles Dickens, p. 3)

Dickens is now contrasting things to show or emphasize how everything has two sides in the time of the French Revolution as well; the side of the nobles and the side of the poor people. The narrator's opines that both sides are not acting rightly and both are making mistakes. The narrator views that the lower class people have good reasons to act the way they do, reasons like the way they have been treated by the nobility but at the same time he thinks the nobility is treated too badly for the barbarous things which happened or which they did in the past.

The main difference in the opinions of the narrator on the social struggles is that of the positivity and sympathizing with one side or both sides. Dickens does not know or seems to not want to choose a side. He thinks both are making mistakes and both are not acting totally correct but still he can understand the poor people as well as the government and aristocracy.

Dickens gives a lot of arguments why both, the nobility and the French lower class, are good in some way or another. He also could have left this out because they both did monstrous things to each other so why should he be kind to forgive them by mentioning their positive sides. This surprises the reader and makes him more able to understand the characters.

To conclude Dickens used the conflict between the social groups to build suspense and the plot. He sympathizes with people and gives the reader different images of the social conflicts. So in the end it is shown again that the way of narrating and using conflict as a kind of storyline leads to a well done work of literature.

A Tale of Two Cities : Resurrection through Love

The theme of rebirth is common in Charles Dickens's A Tale of Two Cities. Many characters are re-born or resurrected as they grow emotionally. They find meaning in

their lives and become better people through love. The love that makes this rebirth possible comes through the character of Lucie Manette. Lucie Manette, the female heroine of this book, is the source of the resurrections of Dr. Manette, Mr. Lorry, Charles Darnay, and Sydney Carton.

Lucie Manette is a compassionate and benevolent young lady who, at the beginning of the book, is only seventeen. Though her age would suggest the girl to still be a child, it is revealed that her wisdom goes far beyond her years. Lucie could be seen as an old soul who is wise enough to be able to find the good in everyone. We are unsure of this when Lucie is first introduced in her meeting with Mr. Lorry, as she seems to be over taken by emotion and fear. Yet Mr. Lorry takes note of her mature nature through the way she contains herself as he describes the perils of her father. **"You speak collectedly, and you – are collected. That's good!"** Lucie Manette, after being reunited with her father, devotes her life to restoring is mental and physical health. She finds a purpose and satisfaction in their mutual bond of unconditional love for one another. Lucie is reborn through her new relationship with her father, and through this relationship the window to Lucie's future is opened.

Just as Lucie Manette is given life through her father, her father is also reborn through her. After eighteen long years in the Bastille he is rescued by the Defarges who bring him to their wine shop. This is where he meets Lucie and Mr. Lorry. He is depicted as completely insane, and when asked his name he replies, **"One Hundred and Five, North Tower,"** the number of his old prison cell. Tormented by his days in the Bastille, he is often scared and appears to be completely defenseless. He is wholly incapable of functioning in the outside world. Lucie loves him unconditionally and assists him in regaining his sanity. Dr. Manette makes slow but definite progress with the help of his loving daughter and family friends. It is a long and tiring process but eventually he is fully recovered. As time passes, Dr. Manette becomes increasingly stable and through Lucie's love he is taught how to be human again.

Five years later we see Dr. Manette at Charles Darnay's trial, and he appears to be rehabilitated. Charles, however, is in danger of losing his life in quite a grotesque way.

"Ah!" returned the man, with a relish; "he'll be drawn on a hurdle to be half hanged, and then he'll be taken down and sliced before his own face, and then his insides will be taken out and burnt while he looks on, and then his head will be chopped off, and he'll be cut into quarters. That's the sentence."

Charles is on trial for treason, and although Lucie's testimony is very harmful to his quest to be found innocent he can't help but fall in love with her. Charles is found innocent, despite the testimonies from Lucie and her father. This escape from death is Charles's first rebirth in this novel. After Charles becomes a free man he cannot help but retain his fondness for Lucie. After a year of unrequited love, Charles pays a visit to the Manette household in order to wed Lucie. Charles has become a successful French tutor and is very well off. He has become a new man, renouncing his noble heritage in order to take-out a living of his own. After he and Lucie are married Charles finds bliss with his new wife, and though Lucie wishes to retain a close relationship with her father, this becomes too difficult. Thus, Lucie now has a new life that involves Charles and their new

daughter, Little Lucie. Little Lucie is as beautiful as her mother and has the same gentle nature, and through her daughter, Lucie's spirit is born again and carried-on.

Sydney Carton was the man who was responsible for Charles' escape from his death sentence of being convicted of treason. He is inspired to live a meaningful life through Lucie's belief in him. As the jackal, Sydney was a drunk who believed his life was worthless. He is a clerk for Stryver, the lawyer. He does all the work for Stryver, yet Stryver receives all the credit. Though Sydney has no inspiration, he longs for a life with meaning. He wants to have served a purpose, yet he is convinced that existence holds nothing for him. When he professes his love for Lucie Manette he describes himself as a **"self-flung away, wasted, drunken, poor creature of misuse."** He is convinced that his life will never get better, but Lucie discloses her faith in him and says that he is capable of better things. As he leaves Lucie that night, he says he will do anything for her. After this conversation with Lucie Manette, Sydney changes his life. He believes in himself now that he knows the woman he loves has faith in him. He endeavours to become the lion. He stops getting drunk and becomes a better person. It is because of Lucie that Sydney begins a new life. Her love gave him the strength to start over.

It is due to this great change in Sydney Carton that Charles Darnay is saved the second time. While in France, Charles Darnay is sentenced to death due to his family's past. Carton, who bears a great resemblance to Charles, traded places with him on the day of his execution. Sydney fulfills his promise to Lucie, sacrificing his life to show his love for her. His wish is finally granted; his life serves a purpose. By trading places with Charles he will surely die, but he will live on in the memories of the Darnay's and their children. Sydney is now resurrecting Charles through this ultimate sacrifice, and though Sydney wasn't particularly fond of Charles, his love for Lucie was stronger than one can imagine. The resurrection of Charles by Sydney is made possible only by the resurrection of Sydney by our heroine, Lucie.

It is also Lucie who creates significant changes in the minor character, Mr. Lorry. Mr. Lorry is a man who wants nothing to do with human emotion or human sentiment. **"Feelings! I have no time for them, no chance of them."** It is through Lucie and Dr. Manette and all of the other's changed by Lucie's charms that Mr. Lorry changes as well. Mr. Lorry eventually realizes there's more to life than business, and thus he truly begins to live. Since Mr. Lorry is not seen as often in the novel as the other characters, we don't see a gradual change in him. Instead, we see how his humanity has grown by leaps and bounds. **"Thank God,"** said Mr. Lorry, clasping his hands, **"that no one near and dear to me is in this dreadful town tonight."**

It is Lucie who is the central figure of rebirth and resurrection in Charles Dickens's A Tale of Two Cities. All of these characters, as they reform, have a heavy impact on one another's lives. Resurrection is prominent theme throughout the book. Lucie resurrects her father, marries Charles, and inspires Sydney to change his life. It is because of Sydney's rebirth that Charles' life is spared. Through Lucie's unconditional love and non-judgmental nature, hope is sparred in this otherwise dismal setting.

Sydney Carton from Zero to Hero

Charles Dickens extraordinaire (excellent)revolutionist novel **A Tale of Two Cities** portrays an excellent character of Sydney Carton who develops dynamically throughout the novel. Carton overshadows Charles Darnay who is the true lead character by being the actual centre of attention within the plots. Dickens characterizes Carton as the pivotal figure in his novel, not because of his heroic suicide at the end but merely because he embodies all the contrasting elements of the novel.In total, there are three arguments which can be say about Carton which are his character is personifies as Jackal by Dickens because of his personalities, have an affection towards Lucie Manette and one who finally proven himself worthy after all.

At the beginning, Dickens describes Carton as a Jackal due to his negative personality that overwhelms himself. Dickens has also portrays Carton as an alcoholic lawyer with no interest and motivation within his life as well as everyone who is around him. Firstly, Carton is a lawyer that does not really care about his owns obligation towards his duty. This can be seen during the trial of Charles Darnay of who is accused for spying in England.

"Mr. Carton, who had long sat looking at the ceiling of the court, changed neither his place nor his attitude, even with this excitement."

Dickens describes that during the trial, Carton only take a few notes while the rest of the time, he only stares at the ceiling and only speaks when is needed. Carton is a drunken lawyer who takes no credit for his own works. Next, Carton faces a serious drinking issue who like no other chooses alcohol to tranquil himself from his problems and stress. **"Think? You know I've been drinking."** Here, Carton confesses that he has a drinking issue that keep him from concentrating for his work and socializing with those around him. **"Then, bring me another pint of the same wine, drawer, and come and wake me up at ten."**

The relationship between Carton's character with his moral values are deeply intervened by Dickens when he writes masterpiece based on society ethic. Besides that, Carton is the one who does not care about anyone around him. "**I care for no man on Earth, and no man on Earth cares me."** Substantially, Carton's ignorance towards people around him brought an external conflict between him and the other characters in the novel especially those who care of him.

Despite his moral conflict that is within himself, the 'forbidden' love between him and Lucie Manette change Carton over the course period of the novel by interfering with his attitude and personality. Lucie possessinga charismatic charm mesmerizes (hypnotizes) Carton into changing his attitude by saying **"There is a great crowd coming one day into our lives, if that be so."** Carton admires Lucie's cleverness; he tells her how she makes him believe that, despite his ruined past, he still has a shred of goodness deep within him. Slowly, Carton develops the feeling of love towards her but is afraid to let it out. He knows that Lucie will be marrying Darnay and his chances of proposing her will not be accepted and he did not want to get dumped again by a woman. **"I know very well that you can have no tenderness to me; I ask for none; I am even thankful that it cannot be."**(Dickens 156) Here, Carton tells Lucie that due to his weakness in his heart, he is contempt to express his feeling towards her.

Next, Carton promises Lucie that he will offer to help her whenever time comes. Due to his feeling of rejected love, Carton decides that, to gain Lucie attention he will do anything for her in whatever circumstances it will be. "**Think now and then, that there is a man who would give his life, to keep a life you love besides you!."** Carton sacrifices himself at the end, fulfilling what he had promised to Lucie; shows how great and deep Carton loves towards her. Lucie did notice what he has done at the end and silently thanks him for the huge sacrifice.

At the end, Carton finally proves that his life on Earth is worthy after all in which Dickens expresses it as the greatest sacrifice of all. He not only proves to him that he is useful but also advertises that he really cares about those who are around him. When Carton heard that Darnay is captured by the revolts in Paris and is about to be hanged at the guillotine, he quickly plans on how to save Darnay and bring him back to England.

Finally, Carton sacrifices himself and is hanged at the guillotine by the revolts. **"I see the lives for which I lay down my life, peaceful, useful, prosperous and happy, in that England I shall see no more."**(Dickens 320) Carton keeps on reminding him on a verse from the bible that a priest had once said during his father funeral that is **"I am the Resurrection and the life, saith the Lord: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet he shall live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."**He dies quietly without uttering any words other than praying within his mind. His final quietude is to be accounted for in relation to Dickens aim to let Carton embodies **'quiet heroism'.**

To summarize, Sydney Carton begins his acts as an unmotivated lawyer, drunken and selfish towards himself and those who are around him. However, as the plots develop, Carton starts to change his attitude and personality after having a short date with Lucie Manette which eventually changes his life forever. He now knows his own abilities and starting to realize how useful he is in the world he lives. Dickens designs Carton to be a secretive hero that emerges out from nothing to a great hero in French revolution history.

Objectivity in A tale of Two Cities

Dickens, as a novelist, stands out for drawing attention to social evils, his humanism, his philosophic vision of life, his belief in the goodness of man, his characters and his use of humour, pathos and imagination. A Tale of Two Cities is a tale of two cities Paris and London and the French Revolution against which the story of a few characters is narrated. He skillfully weaves private lives and public events, fact and fiction, history and imagination. A tale of two cities is Dickens's most impersonal novel, especially because of the grand objectivity of historical events with which it deals.

Fantasy: - His blend of reality and fantasy is a result of his creative imagination. Though he writes about the Revolution, he has coloured the novel with fantasy. Though he focuses on the Revolution, its causes and effects, his main emphasis is on the meaningless horrors of the Revolution as in the context of the lives of a few private individuals. In doing so he makes use of fantasy. '

Insanity: - The element of fantasy is a result of his creative imagination. Insanity as a theme also enhances this element. Dr. Manette looks insane after his release and his ghost-like appearance lends an element of fantasy to the novel. He makes shoes to escape from his past. He gradually overcomes his fits of madness due to the love bestowed on him by Lucie. However, when he comes to know that Charles is an Evrémonde, the past haunts him once again and he resorts to shoe-making. The ghost-like man once again borders on insanity. Thus, the state of fantasy becomes an important part of his character.

When Charles is imprisoned the other prisoners appear to be ghosts of their former selves. All this is a part of fantasy having its root in psychic impulse.

Graphic Details: - The basic details of the Revolution are interwoven with the effects of Revolution on individuals. The graphic details of its horrific and nightmarish side, the fall of the Bastille and the Grindstone etc., all make the novel a mixture of reality and fantasy. However, to Dickens the Revolution is a lurid story of violence, vengeance and malevolence. He has drawn vivid pictures of execution and the La Guillotine. Insanity and frenzy is seen all round as corpses rot and the tumbrils move to and fro. The revolutionaries are waiting to devour the aristocrats who in their turn are waiting to be guillotined.

Doubling: - "Doubling" plays a major role in the novel as a part of fantasy. It appears bit improbable to our natural senses. Dr. Manette is imprisoned and he loses his sanity. He is then restored to normal life by his daughter but this insanity recourse with the unveiling of Charles's actual identity. It is the doubling of his madness. Darnay is re-arrested. Now Dr. Manette is the accuser who was once victim. Sydney Carton resembles Charles Darnay in his appearance. All these have been criticized as improbable or forced but they do contribute to the fast-paced action of the plot.

A Story of Suffering: - Against this view of the revolution, Dickens has given another picture that is imaginative. Dr. Manette is a symbol of suffering whose past haunts him throughout. Lucie is sweet loving and compassionate towards all. Charles disowns his legacy to expiate for the sins, of his ancestors. Sydney Carton, the profligate who cares for no one becomes a symbol of self-sacrifice, love, humanity and resurrection.

Thus, the Revolution incorporates personal incidents with history. As a result the larger dimensions of history are ignored. Dickens is not a historian, but a novelist. As an artist, he successfully blends reality and fantasy

Use of humour 'A Tale of Two Cities'

Humour is the quality of being amusing or comic, especially as expressed in literature or speech.A Tale of Two Cities, though tragic and full of bloodshed, violence and hatred, has abundant humour, comic elements, farce and satire. The humour, wit, satire, caricature and farce are an integral part of his work and relieve us of the monotony of endless seriousness and bloodshed.

Dickens' use of new devices of humour was a contribution to English literature at that time. Ungrammatical sentences uttered by the illiterate, fun in the contrariness of inanimate objects, the absurdity of the apt, the humour of the professional and over-riding egoism are the trademarks of his humour. In fact, though his humour is not intellectual, it creates laughter as it arises from contrast and humour of character, situation and theme. Humour is the soul of his work and mingled with pathos, it reflects his attitude to life.

Humour of Character: - Dickens lives chiefly in his comic characters. His humour of character is unsurpassed and we remember him more for his humorous characters than his stories. In fact he points out social evils with satire and fun instead of being serious. His wit, farce, satire and irony are not biting. He even treats the oddities of character, kindly.

In A Tale of Two Cities humour of character can be seen in abundance. Though Lucie, Charles, Sydney and Dr. Manette command our respect, the other characters are all comical in some way or the other.

Stryver, the lawyer is an egoistic character who makes a fool of himself. He is shallow and has no regard for Sydney to whom he owes his success. He is conceited like a lion but is vain and hypocritical from within. He takes credit for Charles's acquittal though actually Sydney had been responsible for it. His marriage proposal for Lucie is ridiculous as he is no match for the delicate Lucie. He is so self-opinionated that he thinks that he is doing a favour to Lucie by considering her as a marriage partner. According to K.J. Fielding, "his decision to honour Lucie with a proposal is magnificently comic with a rightful place in the story." Stryver the lion and Carton the jackal, create laughter. All this is possible in the hands of master of humour like Dickens.

Jerry Cruncher, too, is a comic figure. His spiked hair tickles us as much his humorous character and humorous interpretation of his secret profession do. Though he calls himself a "Resurrection man", he is irreligious and resurrects or digs dead bodies to eke out an existence and to promote the cause of science.

His mannerisms in calling himself **"an honest tradesman",** his profession of being a body snatcher, his habit of talking to himself and scolding his wife for "flopping, are a source of comedy in the novel. He fears that his wife's prayers will prolong people's lives, and his profession as a resurrection man, will suffer. The trait of malapropism is conspicuous in his dialogue that induces our laughter. For example, he calls a year "Anna Dominoes" instead of "Anna Domini". His belief that "Dominoes" is a popular game in England which was introduced by a sport-loving English woman Anna, creates humour and provides comic relief.

However, his presence, besides providing relief, is important for the plot In the course of his "resurrection business," he digs up the coffin of Roger Cly and finds the coffin empty as Cly had faked death to escape the wrath of his enemies. Later, he escapes to France and became a revolutionary spy. This information helps Sydney in blackmailing Barsad into allowing him to enter Charles' cell in prison and allowing him to die instead of him. So though a comic figure, he is important for the plot.

Miss Pross too is also a comic character who is good at heart. She is described as a wild looking woman, with red hair, covered with a bonnet like a Grenadier's wooden measure. She lays a brawny hand upon Mr. Lorry's chest and makes him fall. After this she fusses over Lucie and calls her "my bird".

Her exaggerated remarks about dozens of suitors who come to visit Lucie, create laughter. Her confrontation with Madame Defarge is comical as well as dramatic and serious. When she tells her "I'll not leave a handful of that dark hair upon your head, if you lay a finger on me", the tussle between the two assumes comic proportions. Though a comic character, she is a symbol of love triumphing over hatred. She also plays an important role in bringing about the death of Madame Defarge.Dickens sums up that the peculiar quality in "her character dissociated from stature was shortness."

Even **JarvisLorry**, 'a man of business' is comical. He keeps on telling Lucie that he is a man of business and this heightens the comic effect at times.

On the other hand, *two characters* who are comical in a **grotesque** manner are the **mender of roads and Madame Defarge**. When he shouts "God save the king, God save the King", he is funny because as a revolutionary he is supposed to hate the aristocrats, and not cheer them for a long life.

Later, again when he compares his wood-cutting activities to Solomon, the guillotine-master, he appears grotesquely funny and humorous. Equally grotesque is Madame Defarge who continuously knits the names of the doomed, inveterately.

Thus, it can be seen that Dickens' humour is sympathetic and satirical. While sympathetically portrayed characters make us laugh with sympathy, the grotesque and evil characters are portrayed satirically. His sympathetically delineated characters like Micawbers, Pickwicks and Miss Pross are simpletons and arouse our feelings.

Caricatures: - Dickens also evokes laughter by exaggerating the manners and oddities of his characters. His caricatures arouse laughter. Jerry Cruncher's spiky hair, Miss Press's red complexion and red hair and the mender of roads' funny gestures are all sparkle of Dickens's humour. His remarks about Tellson's Bank also create humour. The partners were "proud of its smallness, proud of its darkness, proud of its ugliness, proud of its incommodiousness".

Humorous Situations: - Besides humour of character, he creates humorous situations or scenes or themes. For Dickens, funerals and journeys are a source of comedy. Roger Civ's fake funeral procession is vividly described to arouse laughter.

Pathos and Humour: - Thus, we see that Dickens, the master of humour is comparable to Shakespeare. His humour is mingled with pathos, and this shows his realistic approach towards life. Life too is full of laughter and tears. However, he does try to wring an extra tear by giving vivid details. He does not let the situation speak for itself. For example, when Gaspard's child dies he overstates and exaggerates and does not let the situation speak for it.

Conclusion: - However, all said and done, his humour is commendable. He highlights evils and monstrosities in a humorous vein. His humour is present in his characters, phrases, descriptions, situations and contrasts while Miss Press's eccentricities are a foil to Lucie's gentleness, Cruncher's spiked hair and ridiculous clothes provide a comic contrast to the conservative Jarvis Lorry. The moody, morose Carton is a contrast to boastful, egoistic Stryver whose attitude often becomes out of the way and ludicrous.

John Forster complained that the novel has little humour. In comparison to his other novels, A Tale of Two Cities stands out for the grimness and gravity of the theme where the plot is focussed and characters are not abundant. Within this compact structure, which is absent in Dickens's other significant novels, we get few sparkles of the writer's treatment of humour which are brilliant, vivid and ludicrous with a tinge of irony.

Dickens Art of Characterization in"A Tale of Two Cities"

Characterization is the creation and convincing representation of fictitious characters. A Tale of Two Cities, written by Charles Dickens, has many different characters with interesting personalities. Some of the characters in the novel all share one common fact that Dickens used throughout the book. Charles Dickens **based the characters of A Tale of Two Cities on himself and his life**.

Charles Dickens based the **virtuous Charles Darnay as a version of himself**. Dickens portrays himself through Charles Darnay in the fact that Dickens and Darnay have the **same initials.** Dickens might be portraying that Darnay and himself have so much in common, so Dickens gave Darnay the same initials. Charles Dickens also presents Darnay's relationship with Carton to himself. Charles Darnay's relationship with Sydney Carton could portray Dickens' own problem with his honorable and commonly negative side. Darnay's relationship with Carton was strong, as seen in the last book where Carton takes Darnay's place on the guillotine to be killed. Dickens might have done this to symbolize love Dickens had for another friend, just like Darnay had with Carton.

As Dickens based himself on Darnay, Dickens might have also b**ased Dr. Manette as a version of himself**.Charles Dickens might have portrayed himself through Dr. Manette We can trace parallels between Manette's career as a physician and his selflessness in reporting the abuses of the nobility with Dickens' career as a journalist and advocate for social improvement". Dickens might have done this through Manette to show what issues Dickens stood for. Dickens portrayed himself through Dr. Manette in one more instance. We can see resemblance in Dickens's conception of alternative worlds in his books with Dr. Manette's conception of a place where he is only a cobbler. Dickens might have done this to basically resemble the two lives he has lived: one as a child working in a factory, and two growing up and becoming a great author. Dickens went through a lot in his "two lives".

As Dickens portrayed himself through Dr. Manette, he will now portray **Mr. Stryver** on **a lawyer friend**.Charles Dickens might have based Mr. Stryver on a lawyer Dickens knew. A Gale research source says, **"It has been surmised that Dickens based the**

character on an actual person, Edwin James, a notoriously, unscrupulous lawyer…"Dickens might be portraying Mr. Stryver on this lawyer to show the rudeness and lying nature lawyers sometimes possess. Dickens also might have based Mr. Styver on one other characteristic. Charles Dickens based Mr. Stryver on a lawyer who had a bad reputation; hence, Mr. Styver gets a bad reputation. Dickens might have chosen Edwin James to portray Mr. Stryver to show that all lawyers have bad names. It is sad that even lawyers back then had bad reputations. Dickens now portrays Dr. Manette in many different ways.

Charles Dickens might have based Dr. Manette on his own father. Dickens' father was not well with finances, and in 1824, Dickens' father was imprisoned for debt (Dickens: A Brief Biography", par 1). Dickens' father was imprisoned probably for not paying what he owed to other people. In the novel, the confounded Dr. Manette is also imprisoned. A Gale research source says, **"Imprisoned in the Bastille for his attempt to imprison the Marquis St. Evermonde's treachery, Manette was permanently altered from this experience".** Dr. Manette was also imprisoned, but in a different way than Dickens' father. Dickens might have portrayed his own father through Dr. Manette and his own imprisonment. As Dickens might have based his father's imprisonment with Dr. Manette's, Dickens might have also based the emotional and psychological problems with imprisonment on this experience.

Charles Dickens might have based the **emotional and psychological side of imprisonment with his father's and Dr. Manette's imprisonment**. When the finances of Charles Dickens' family were put to at least partly to rights, his father was released, the twelve-year-old Dickens, already scarred psychologically by the experience, was further wounded by his mother's insistence that he continued to work at the factory. The young Charles Dickens was hurt emotionally and psychologically because his father was in prison and he was forced to work in a factory with his whole family. Dickens might have portrayed emotional and psychological sickness through Dr. Manette and his experience with prison. Dr. Manette only identified himself as his jail cell number. Dr. Manette is emotionally and psychologically hurt so bad, it has effected his communication and social skills. Charles Dickens might have based his own emotional and psychological problem through Dr. Manette. Charles Dickens might have also based another event on imprisonment.

Charles Dickens might have **based solitude and loneliness through work and imprisonment on himself and Dr. Manette**. David Cody writes, **"His[Dicken's father] wife and children, with the exception of Charles, who was put to work at Warren's Blacking Factory, joined him in the Marshalsea Prison"** . Charles Dickens must have felt solitude and loneliness when he was put to work and all of his other family members were in jail. Dickens might have portrayed this event in his life through Dr. Manette and his imprisonment. While Dr. Manette was in prison, all he did was cobble, or shoemaking, which was all he learned to do in prison. Dr. Manette was so lonely and in complete solitude, no wonder all he did was shoemaking. Dickens might have portrayed his own case of solitude and loneliness with work through Dr. Manette's case of solitude and loneliness in prison. As Dickens based imprisonment on solitude and loneliness, he might have also based Lucie rescuing her father on an event in Dickens life.

Dickens might have based **Dr. Manette's rescue by his daughter** on an event in Dickens' life where he was rescued. His father, however, rescued him from this fate, and between 1824 and 1827, Dickens was a day pupil at a school in London. Even though Dickens' mother wanted him to stay working in the factory, Dickens' father rescued him from this doom and put him in school. Dickens' might have symbolized this event through Dr. Manette and when he was rescued. Lucie Manette travels with Mr. Lorry to rescue her father, Dr. Manette. Dickens might have allowed this event to take place to symbolize his own rescue from his father when Dickens was a child. It might have also felt good to remember as he wrote what happened and how his relationship with his father was strong. Dickens also bases some characters off love and relationships.

Charles Dickens **based many characters off love and relationships**. Sydney Carton loves Lucie Manette so much, he took the place of her, husband Charles Darnay, and Carton died because of his love for Lucie. Dickens might be portraying this relationship of love on Dickens own relationship with Ellen Turnan, an actress who Dickens fell in love. Charles Dickens also bases another relationship of his life off of one relationship between parent and child. Lucie Manette loves her father, Dr. Manette, so much that Lucie takes care of Dr. Manette after he escapes and leaves the prison, La Bastille. Dickens might be portraying his own love for his father through Lucie and her relationship with her father. Dickens' relationship with his father was much like Lucie's relationship with her father. Charles Dickens aptly based many characters on love and relationships.

Charles Dickens based the characters in A Tale of Two Cities on himself and his life. Charles Dickens portrays himself through the characters Charles Darnay, Dr. Manette, Mr. Stryver, and different relationships with certain characters. The way Dickens portrayed himself through his characters is brilliant and clever.

Conflict of interest &clash of characters

Next to Shakespeare, Dickens has created a world of rich, complex, simple and grotesque characters. His books are like mobs with people running to and fro. His galaxy of characters is individualized, alive and life-like. According to Compton Rickett, Dickens has both normal and abnormal characters.While the normal characters are tenderly portrayed, the abnormal characters are divided into grotesques, caricatures, villains and satirical portraits. The rest are comical and humorous. In general, he focuses on the external characteristics, physical oddities and mental quirks of his characters. He feasts on the face, gestures, clothes, and words of the character. Since he lays greater emphasis on the peculiarity and individuality of the characters, his characters become caricatures. They are exaggerated versions as they are a result of close observation

An Artist: - Though his characters are symbols and types who do not develop under the stress of circumstances, they are not abstractions but true to life, individuals and real persons of flesh and blood. He is an artist and not a psychologist and as such his characters are generally portrayed from outside. In fact, he is a like painter, who creates his characters imaginatively.

The Poor, the Rich and the Good: - A Tale of Two Cities is an apt illustration of Dickens' greatness in character portrayal. As a socialist and an advocate of the poor and oppressed, he focuses on the lower middle classes of London. In A Tale of Two Cities the focus is on the poor and oppressed lower middle classes of England and France. He satirises the rich and the egoists, like Stryver. His criterion of character is humanity, goodness and love and these qualities are present in Lucie, Sydney, Charles, etc.

Symbols: - Most of his characters embody ideas or values. While Lucie stands for goodness, Dr. Manette embodies suffering; while Charles Darnay symbolises passive goodness, Sydney embodies action, love, sacrifice and resurrection; while Jarvis Lorry is a symbol of goodness and service, Jerry Cruncher is a symbol of corruption; while Miss Pross is a symbol of love and duty, Madame Defarge is a symbol of evil and hatred.

Individuals: - Though symbolic, his characters are individualized. Dr. Manette is a victim of insanity who is resurrected by Lucie's sweetness and love. Lucie is a typical Dickensian heroine who is sweet and loving. Lucie in her goodness stands apart from Madame Defarge who is full of hatred and vengeance. Miss Pross, too, is different. So are Stryverand Jerry Cruncher. Though Charles and Sydney look alike they represent the dark and light aspects of man. One is passively good and the other is actively good.

Dialogue and Action: - Each of these characters is presented either through dialogue or action. While Charles is presented mainly through dialogue, Sydney is presented through action. His supreme act of sacrifice and love raises him to a divine plane. While the Defarges are presented mainly through action, Jarvis Lorry is presented through dialogues. Thus, both dialogue and action play important part in character portrayal.

The characters of Charles, Sydney, Dr. Manette and Jarvis are normal. Charles is noble, good and sacrificing. However, he hardly thinks or takes any initiative. He is too passive, even though he loves Lucie immensely. He is an honest and sincere man. He renounces his lineage, rushes to Paris to help Gabelle and faces his imprisonment with fortitude.

On the other hand, Sydney is a dynamic man of action. Though he appears as a wastrel and drunkard in the beginning, later he proves himself to be full of zeal instigated by Lucie's faith in him. He is rejuvenated and he sacrifices his life for Charles and humanity. He becomes a martyr and a saint, a symbol of love and sacrifice.

Jarvis Lorry, too, is a good man who is a normal character. He is a man of business with loyalty and devotion towards Tellson's Bank. He is equally devoted to the Manettes to whom he owes his resurrection from a man of business. He goes out of his .way to help the Manettes.

Dr. Manette, too, is a normal man who has become insane due to his suffering in the Bastille. His sweet daughter resurrects him and he becomes sane again. However, when Charles is imprisoned, he musters up his strength and desperately searches for any way to have him released. Fate keeps, torturing him and his past keeps haunting him. Eventually, he comes out stronger.

Abnormal Characters: - Besides these good and conventional characters, Dickens delineates some abnormal and evil characters. The Defarges are leaders of the revolutionaries and they symbolise hatred. While Defarge tosses back the coin at Evrémonde, storms the Bastille and digs out Dr. Manette's letter, he has a soft corner for Dr. Manette and Lucie. Madame Defarge is totally inhuman. She speaks less and conveys her attitude by her impassive face, raised eyebrows and her knitting. However, she does act when she beheads the Governor and engages herself in a jostle with Miss Press. She is a symbol of hatred and vengeance.

Vengeance, Jacques, and the mender of roads are also evil characters who are typecast. Their names suggest their characters. While vengeance stands for revenge, Jacques stands for the common man who has no identity of his own. It is a common name and the Jacques are tools in the hands of the Defarges.

Comic Characters: - The third category of characters is the humorous characters like Miss Pross, Jerry Cruncher and Stryver. Their idiosyncrasies and foibles are portrayed through their eccentric physical appearances and their mannerism. While Miss Pross has red hair, Jerry has spiked hair. Stryver, the lion - is stout and odd looking. The red haired Miss Pross has a habit of exaggerating, but she is devoted to Lucie and calls her "LadybirdThough Jerry Cruncher calls himself an honest tradesman; he is a resurrection man who digs out dead bodies and sells them. His manner of talking is comic. References to his wife's flopping are funny. The tag words attached to these minor characters are an important part of Dickens' characterization.

Stryver, too, has the tag 'lion' attached to him. He is pompous and egoistic like a lion. His proposal to Lucie and his dialogues with Sydney bring out the boorish aspects of his character, and create humour.

Female Characters: - Dickens' women characters are either sweet and loving like Lucie, or eccentric and comic like Miss Pross or shrewish and tyrannical like Defarge.His picture gallery of women characters generally consists of foolish, ridiculous, offensive or sweet characters.

Conclusion: - To sum up, Dickens is a master artist with a vast picture gallery of portraits. Though his characters are conventionally virtuous or vicious, he cannot draw very complex characters. His characters are characters of melodrama and he does not go into their psyche. According to Baker, he deals with characters and not character, with individuality and not a whirlwind of passions. In fact, his characters generally do not develop. However in spite of all this his characters are fantastic creations of his imagination. They are flesh and blood characters and they leave a deep impact on the minds of the reader.

Dickens as a Novelist

English novel in the hands of Dickens and his followers is entirely different from what it was in the hands of Scott. In short, there is now less of romance, more of realism. His is the romance of dreary London streets. Dickens was the first novelist who possessed

extreme sensibility with which he felt the sufferings of the poor, an intense imagination with which he depicted pictures of their lives, and aroused the conscience of the people. Dickens was immensely popular. His popularity is due to the fact that with the exception of Shakespeare, he is the greatest creative genius of England. He is among the greatest humorists of the world and for sheer variety and abundance of invention he has no equal. Dickens' novels are conspicuous for the following characteristics:

Realism: - Dickens is the pioneer of realism in nineteenth century novel. Chesterton says: **"Dickens used reality while aiming at an effect of romance, while Thackeray used the loose language and ordinary appearance of romance while aiming at an effect of reality. Dickens writes realism in order the incredible credible."** Dickens' power of minute and keen observation coupled with poetic imagination, retentive memory and remarkable instinctive power of reading character make him a realist of a high order. As a realist he centered his eye on London and low life. To him London was the epitome of contemporary English life. He knew London thoroughly. Hugh Walker remarks: "He knew it topographically, industrially, socially within the limits of middle and lower classes. He could penetrate into all obscure nooks. He was familiar with all its strange trades and with those who followed them—the dustman, the articulator of skeletons, the marine-store dealers, the, man who made a living by recovering bodies from the Thames, and many less innocent than he—Dickens knew them all better than we know our next door neighbours. It was from this material that he built his books." He was the first genuine story-teller of London life. He did not know the manners of high society. His gentlemen are colourless abstractions. His best characters are portraits from life, and the life that he knew best was lower class life. Instead of the pageant of the Middle Ages, Dickens showed the Pageant of contemporary English life, strikes and riots, factories and granaries burning, employee shooting employer, underground tenements, workhouses, truck-stores, wretched schools, model prisons, model cottages.

Dickens exposes various evils of Industrial Revolution, especially the employment of child labour. Child labour was inhumanly exploited. The sufferings of David as a child of ten in David Copperfield are the sufferings of many Victorian children. The sordid condition of English Prisons is brought to light in David Copperfield and Great Expectations. His Oliver Twist is a powerful indictment of the education of poor children Pt. his day. Abuses of the legal system and delays in the meeting out of justice are also criticised in David Copperfield. In one novel after another Dickens is sharply critical of poor laws and the working of the work-houses.

Prophetic Note or Purpose in the Novel of Dickens: - Dickens is a novelist with a purpose. He tended to suspect all institutions, churches, government offices, charitable institutions, laws, reformatories and even schools because he felt that they were attempting to do by mechanical means the good which could only come from the spontaneous action of the individual. He hated all class distinctions and the aristocratic system because they checked the natural free current of benevolence which should flow from one man to another. Dickens "is also a prophet," says David Cecil, "he is out to expound a gospel, a view of life, a score of values which he wishes his fellowmen to accept. As was to be expected, it is a very simple gospel; it does not appeal to the intellect, it is the result of intuition rather than of logic and learning. It centres round a

single belief — a belief in the primary, simple, benevolent impulses of man, his natural affections for home, mother and wife and sweetheart, his unconsidered movements of charity and gusts of gaiety, his instinctive wish to love and laugh and give and share."

Humanitarian Note: - All novels of Dickens are characterised by humanitarian note. He attacked the abuses in the existing system and throughout he considered himself as the champion of the weak, the outcast and the oppressed. Hudson remarks: "Humanitarianism was indeed the keynote of his work, and as his enormous popularity carried his influence far and wide, he may justly be reckoned one of the greatest social reformers of his age." Dickens' sympathy was always with the out-castes, the poor, the downtrodden, the exploited and all victims of society. In most of his novels a child is usually presented as a victim of society. Oliver Twist, Little Nell, Florence Dombey and David Copperfield, stand out in celestial innocence and goodness, in contrast to the evil creatures whose persecution they suffer for a season. They represent vividly the complaint of the individual against society. The cruelty the malign characters inflict on children is a manifestation of social wrong. Bumble's savage blow at Oliver Twist asking for more food, and Squeers' wicked exploitation of his pupils in Nicholas Nickleby expose utter want of human love and sympathy in the existing social system. In his novels we find a deep-seated reaction against the organised authority and established institutions. His three novels, Oliver Twist, Nicholas Nickleby and Old Curiosity Shop established Dickens as the pioneers of humanitarianism. He tried to arouse the conscience of the people against the exploitation of the oppressed and the downtrodden. Dickens saw life from the viewpoint of the poor and oppressed. He had himself known the lot of the persecuted at the root of the zeal for reform was the memory of his own bitter childhood.

Characterisation: - The genius of Dickens was for characters, not character. He could portray innumerable kinds of human beings, but he could not analyse the individual. He could vividly describe every detail of manners, appearance, dress and other external details of his characters. "Despite the broad brush of caricature, despite the over ¬insistence on the externals of his characters, he makes them live; and they live," says Rickett, "by virtue of their humanity."

It is generally said that Dickens gives us types, not individuals. His characters are types of the most abstract kind, something like the figures in the old moralities: embodied hypocrisy, selfishness, pride, and so on, masking as everyday mortals. Mr. Pecksniff is hypocrisy personified; Mr. Dombey embodies pride and Tom Pinch is amiably personified. His characters are oddities personified. But it must be admitted that this remark is applied only to a certain number of satirical portraits and not to his characters at large. Gissing remarks that Dickens "sees in them, not abstractions, but men and women of such loud personalities, so aggressively individual in mind and form, in voice and form, that they forever proclaim themselves the children of a certain country. Clothed abstractions do take hold upon the imagination and the memory as Dickens did from the day of their coming into life. The secret of this subtle power lay in the reality of the figures themselves."

Leaving aside the portraits of children, Dickens imparts some abnormality, some eccentricity of manner, some mental twist, some intellectual slowness to his characters.

He treats his characters primarily from without, and he highlights only such characteristics which may express themselves externally. He fashions his characters from skin inwards, never getting near the heart of them. His characters do not react upon each other; in truth, they do not act at all, they only behave, and show off their unlikeness one to the other. "Dickens," writes Rickett, "was not a scientific student of character; he was a shrewd observer of certain types of character, and although he did not confine his character studies altogether to these types, yet he was rarely successful when he diverged from them."

Humour and Pathos: - Humour is the soul of the novels of Dickens. Without his humour, he might have been a vigorous advocate of social reform, but as a novelist assuredly he would have failed. Humour is present in his writings from the very beginning. The Sketches have a touch of true humour, but there is much more of merely youthful high spirits, tending to be farcical. The admixture of humour, satire and farce is an important characteristic of Dickens as a novelist. Pickwick Papers is a veritable storehouse of humour and farce.

Dickens' humour arises from the heart and not from the lips. The farce inch is early work always results from the exuberance of spirits; later he introduces it deliberately, with conscious art, save perhaps at those moments when the impulse of satire is too much for him. The wild absurdity of the Miffin Company at the beginning of Nicholas Nickleby and the first chapter of Martin Chuzzlewit are examples of his early humour and farce. Dickens reaches the highest point of humour in the scene describing the marriage of Jack Bransby to the great Macstinger. It is the ludicrous in the purest form and it leaves behind it nothing but the wholesome aftermath of self-forgetful mirth.

The humour of Dickens is "broad, humane and creative". He is par excellence in creating humorous characters—Mr. Pickwick, Mrs. Garnp, Mr. Micawber, and Sam Weller. His humour is not very subtle, but it goes deep, and in expression it is free and vivacious. His humour takes a satiric turn when he exposes the evils of his age. His satire covers a great part of English life, public and private likeeducation, charity, religion, social morality in its broadest sense, society in its narrowest legal procedure, the machinery of politics and the forms of government.

Dickens is superb both in pure humour and satiric humour. "Satire, however, is one-half of Dickens' humour," writes David Cecil, "and not the most characteristic half. Dickens' unique position as a humorist lies in his mastery of "pure humour", jokes that are funny not for the satirical light they throw but just in themselves. The humour does not illustrate anything or tell us anything, one needs no extraneous information to see its points, and it is simply self-dependently, intoxicatingly funny.

Dickens' humour and pathos cannot be sharply differentiated. Like his humour the pathos of Dickens is overdone and too long drawn out. It shows lack of self-restraint. The theatrical element is repellent in his pathos. Dickens most effectively mingles humour and pathos when he deals with childhood. Rickett writes: "There we have a humour that caresses, a pathos that brightens, and a rainbow humour where the author is smiling at us through his tears. It is hard to overpraise Dickens' sketches of child life. Dickens did not describe a child—he became a child for the time being. He lived over

again his own childish days. Hence the poignancy and actuality of his pictures." Paul, David and Pip are his memorable studies of childhood, which combine humour and pathos. There is plenty of pathos in his descriptions of prison life. Pathos of the graver and subtler kind is the distinguishing note of Great Expectations. The old convict Magwitch, if he cannot he called a tragical personality, is certainly an impressive pathetic figure. Dickens' gentlest, brightest humour, his simplest pathos occurs in those unexciting pages which depict the everyday life of poor and homely English folk.

Dickens' Plots: - Dickens' novels, writes David Cecil, "have no organic unity, they are full of detachable episodes, characters who serve no purpose in furthering the plot. His characters are almost irrelevant to the actions of the books in which they appear. We remember the story for them, but the story could perfectly well go on without them." Dickens' early novels are usually simple in structure. Following the tradition of Smollet and Le Sage, he built his early novels on the picaresque tradition. Pickwick Papers and Nicholas Nickleby are, like Smollett's, bundles of adventures, connected, so far as they are connected at all, only by the characters who figure in them. In Martin Chuzzlewit, Dombey and Son and David Copperfield some effort is made towards greater unification, but even these books belong substantially to the loose, chronicle type. In his later books, however, he gained the power of constructing elaborate plots, and of creating characters of heroic dignity and tragic intensity, such as, Sidney Carton in A Tale of Two Cities, and Lady Dedlock in Black House. It is his first systematic attempt to gather up all the diverse threads of the story into a coherent plot. Little Dorrit, A Tale of Two Cities, Great Expectations, Our Mutual Friend and the unfinished Edwin Drood are planned, but there is still in them a great deal of episodic material. Moody and Lovett remark: "Dickens is remembered not as a dramatic artist in the novel form, but as a showman of wonderful resources. He is a master of vast and fascinating stage, crowded with farcical characters, with grotesque and terrible creatures, more devils than men, and with the touching forms of little children. The action is sometimes merry, sometimes exciting, sometimes pathetic. We have laughter, and horror, and tears; but the prevailing atmosphere is one of cheerfulness, as befits a great Christmas pantomime."

Dickens' Style: - Dickens is one of the masters of prose in his own way, though his style cannot be admired for flow of pure idiom or command of subtle melodies. His style is often too much mannered. At its best Dickens' style is neither polished nor scholarly, but it is clear, rapid and workmanlike, the style of the working journalist. His style in the early books is spoiled by funs, cockneyisms, and tiresome circumlocutions. The style of Barnaby Rudge is simple, direct and forcible.

Rickett writes: "None but a genuine dramatic artist could modulate his style as Dickens can so as to take on the mood of the moment." He could picturesquely describe the marshes at the beginning of The Great Expectations, with its creeping fog and flat loneliness in a language which consists of "a mist of words and phrases". In his description of a coach ride, the language quickens and slackens, becomes rollicking or deliberate, according to the pace of the coach. Dickens adopted a lyrical style, a kind of verse-in-prose in his more aspiring flights, in particular, in his deeply pathetic passages. Clutton-Brock says: "Dickens was a master of sound and even classical prose style. His teachers were Smollett, Fielding and Defoe, and he had learned from them thoroughly. He wrote like a man, with a masculine weight, clearness and balance." Rickett writes

about his greatness as a stylist: "With all its mannerisms there is the element of greatness about Dickens' style. For colour, movement and variety it is a remarkable style. Tawdry and mannered at times, if you will, but despite this, fascinating, arresting, and with the impress of the writer's infectious personality."

Dickens' Place: - Dickens, according to Hugh Walker, is the most original novelist of England. "A hint here and there, a turn of phrase, a situation, the outline of a character—he certainly adopted, but the substance of his novels comes from his own experience. Keen observation, a retentive memory and a remarkable instinctive power of reading character, were the gifts to which he owed his literary success." Dickens has left us a rich and varied inheritance. His characters, some remarkably humorous and not a few genuinely pathetic figures, are a memorable contribution to the world of noveldom. Dickens was a humanitarian who has touched with pity and tenderness the springs of our national life, and English life no less than English letters.

Adam Bede

GEORGE ELIOT: 1819-1880

Mary Ann (or Marian) Evans was born in Warwickshire in 1819, the youngest child of Robert and Christina Evans. She was deeply religious during her childhood and adolescence, a trait she developed partially from her family background and partially under the influence of Miss Lewis, the "principal governess" of a boarding school which Mary Ann attended from 1828 to 1832.

After her mother died and her sister married, Mary Ann ran her father's household. But in 1841, her brother Isaac married and took possession of the house, and Mary Ann and her father moved to Coventry. In the city the young woman's intellectual horizons widened and her early faith diminished; under the influence of Charles Bray and Charles Hennell, she became interested in the "new criticism" of the Bible and anonymously published her first work, a translation of D. F. Strauss' LebenJesu (Life of Jesus), in 1846. She also published a few articles and reviews in a periodical edited by Bray during this period.

Mary Ann cared for her invalid father, who strenuously objected to her changed religious views, until he died in 1849. After traveling in Europe for a time, she returned to England, where she became involved with a group of rationalists, best known of whom was John Chapman. In 1851, she became assistant editor of Chapman's Westminster Review. While in London, she met many prominent people, among them the philosopher Herbert Spencer. Through Spencer she came in contact with George Henry Lewes, a drama critic and author who was separated from his wife, and the pair fell in love. Lewes could not obtain a divorce, and he and Mary Ann decided to ignore the prohibitions of society and live together as man and wife. The union was a marriage in every aspect but the legal one and lasted until Lewes' death in 1878. Two years later, Mary Ann married J. W. Cross, and she herself died on December 22, 1880.

Mary Ann Evans did not begin writing fiction until relatively late in life. Her first pieces were three short stories, "Amos Barton," "Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story," and "Janet's Repentance," which were published in Blackwood's Magazine in 1857 and reissued collectively as Scenes of Clerical Life in 1858. They appeared under the pseudonym George Eliot, a penname which Evans used throughout the rest of her career. In 1859, Adam Bede, Eliot's first full-length novel, came out, and her reputation was established. The Mill on the Floss, an autobiographical novel, and Silas Marner both appeared in 1860. Romola, a historical novel set in Renaissance Florence, was published three years later and Felix Holt, the Radical in 1866. Middlemarch, widely considered to be Eliot's masterpiece, came out in 1871-72, and Daniel Deronda in 1876.

Eliot's work represents a definite break with the work of her immediate predecessors in several ways. In Adam Bede, she issued her declaration from convention and announced her intention to write realistically. "So I am content to tell my simple story, without trying to make things seem better than they were; dreading nothing, indeed, but

falsity." We, looking back towards Eliot, may be inclined to dispute her claim; her work may not seem realistic when compared with more modern efforts. But we must not lose sight of the fact that a number of the most admirable qualities in modern fiction derive, either directly or indirectly, from Eliot; her work was revolutionary in its own day and opened new directions for the development of the novel as an art form.

Eliot's writings are more realistic than those of her famous contemporaries in that she habitually presents characters which are not simplistic caricatures of human beings but complex, ambiguous, ultimately indefinable figures like those we meet on the street every day. They are analyzed at great length in the novels, and this psychological approach, in which the subtleties of motivation are laid bare, enables Eliot to present human situations as they really occur; both the mental and physical aspects of action are reproduced. She also attempted, perhaps with imperfect success, to break the stranglehold which popular morality had on the novel by showing that the good or bad fortune which comes to her characters is not the work of some unseen divine hand whose laws have been either followed or violated, but is the result of human will-choices. And finally she made the novel a more serious art form than it had hitherto been by using it as a vehicle for the discussion of significant moral and philosophical issues.

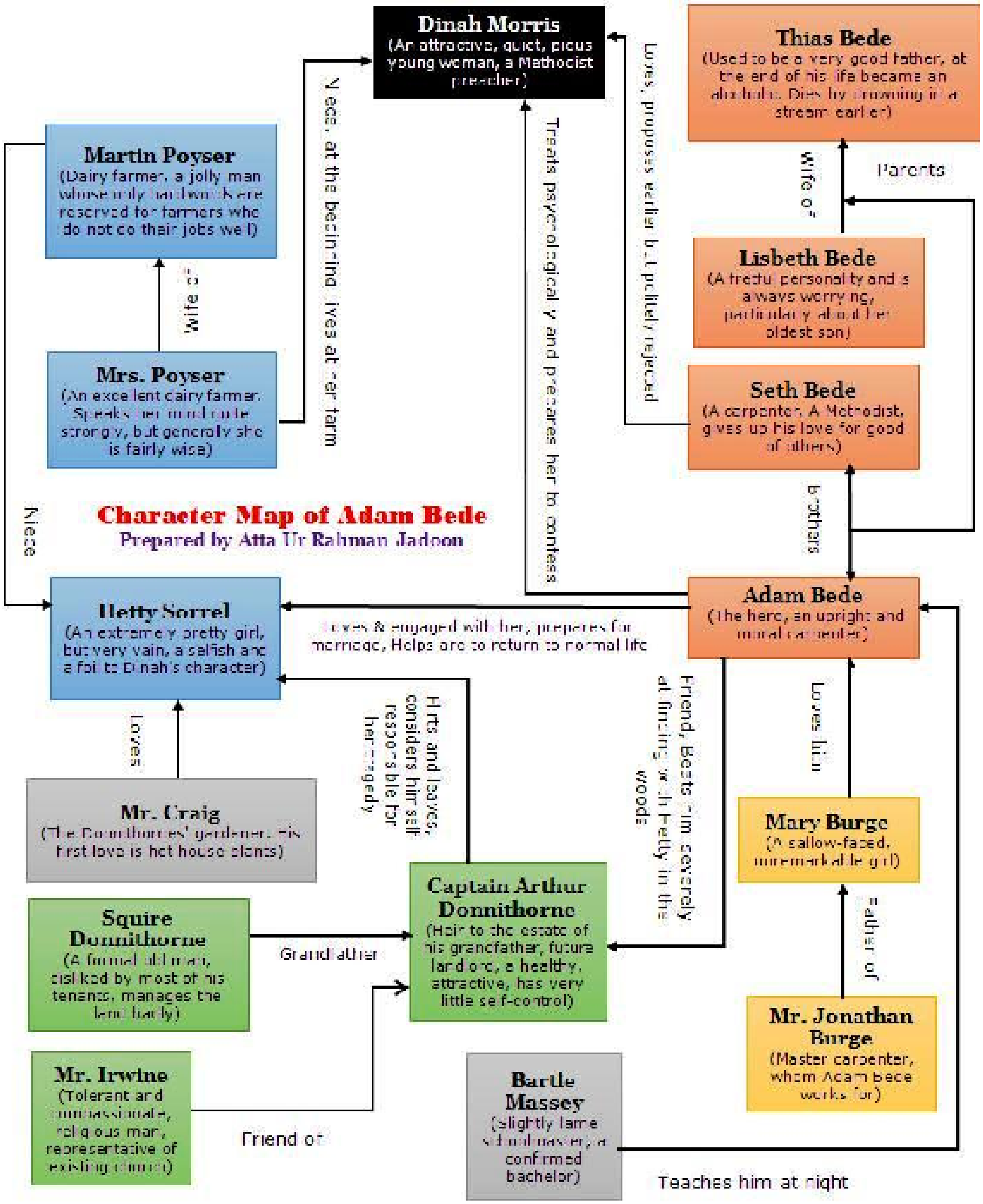
All of these qualities are observable in Adam Bede; indeed, as Eliot's first novel, it is her first experiment in the new fiction. Its revolutionary aspect is generally recognized; many scholars point to 1859, the year in which Adam Bede, Meredith's The Ordeal of Richard Feverel, Darwin's On the Origin of Species, and Dickens' A Tale of Two Cities were published, as one of the major turning points in the breakdown of mid-Victorian certainties. Adam Bede is a test case for a new view of the function of prose fiction; Eliot clearly feels that the novel need not be merely a form of entertainment for those seeking diversion from the problems of real life, but that it could, like poetry, be a vehicle for the expression and teaching of fine and serious ideas about the quality of the human condition.

It is difficult to see how the issue of man's responsibility towards himself and his fellows can cease to be vital, and the resurgence of interest in Eliot in our own day indicates how improbable it is that the relevance of her ideas and the value of the books in which she expressed them will "vanish altogether" in the foreseeable future.

Adam Bede : Summary

Adam Bede follows four characters in the rural village of Hayslope in 1799. It opens with the Bede brothers, Adam and Seth, at work in a carpentry shop. The other men tease Seth about his Methodism and the fact that he is in love with Dinah, the Methodist preacher. Dinah preaches in Hayslope that night and captivates even her skeptical audience. Seth walks her home and asks her to marry him for the second time, but she refuses, saying that it will interfere with her preaching.

Adam returns home to his mother, who is worried that his father is not yet home because he has promised to make a coffin for the next day. Thias Bede used to be an honorable man who taught his sons carpentry, but he has become a drunk in the last few years. Angry with his father, Adam stays up the whole night to complete the work on the coffin. He hears a strange rapping on the door, but nobody is there.



Captain Arthur Donnithorne visits his mentor, the vicar, and tells him about Dinah's preaching. They travel together to visit the Poyser farm so that the vicar can meet Dinah. At the Poysers' farm, Mrs. Poyser's niece, Dinah, and Mr. Poyser's niece are living with their aunt and uncle. Captain Arthur Donnithorne, whose aristocratic grandfather is

the Poysers' landlord, asks to see Mrs. Poyser's dairy, while Dinah impresses the vicar by explaining to him why she feels called to preach. In the dairy, Arthur flirts with Hetty and ascertains that she walks alone to his estate to learn lace-making from his housekeeper.

In the morning, Adam sets out to the village pub to find his father, but he finds him face-down, drowned in a stream. The news of the Bedes' misfortune spreads fast around the village, and Dinah visits Lisbeth Bede to comfort her. Despite the fact that she does not usually like Methodists-or any young women who she suspects could take her place in her sons' affections-Lisbeth takes to Dinah. She stays overnight with the Bedes to help Lisbeth.

Arthur intercepts Hetty in the woods on her way to his estate. He flirts with her and kisses her. After she goes home, he decides that it is not a good idea to lead her on, and he resolves not to see her in the future. That night, Hetty dreams of marrying Arthur, becoming a gentlewoman, and owning beautiful women. Dinah surprises and frightens her by knocking on her door and saying that if she is ever in trouble, she should come to Dinah.

There is a well-attended burial service in the parish for Thias Bede. Adam visits the Poysers afterward to continue his well-established courtship of Hetty. Hetty's uncle and aunt both approve highly of the match, but Adam is frustrated because he cannot tell whether Hetty loves him or not. After this visit, he attends night-school, where he is learning mathematics to improve his skill at carpentry. Bartle Massey, the schoolmaster, tells him that he would be better off to stay a bachelor.

Arthur's and Hetty's secret affair continues, and he gives her a pair of beautiful earrings and a locket. At a celebration for Arthur's twenty-first birthday, he announces that he has appointed Adam Bede the steward for his estate's forest. This appointment will finally make Adam financially viable enough to ask Hetty to marry him.

Walking through the woods a few days later, Adam is reflecting on how happy he is until he sees Arthur and Hetty kissing. Hetty runs away, and Adam confronts Arthur. The two get in a fistfight, and Adam knocks Arthur down. He makes Arthur promise to write a letter to Hetty that will end the affair. Adam personally delivers this letter to Hetty, who is devastated. The letter says, however, to call on Arthur if she is in any real trouble. Hetty tries to think of how she can get out of her situation and decides that her best move would be to marry Adam. Adam thinks that she has learned from her mistakes. They get engaged.

As the marriage approaches, Hetty grows more and more worried. She gladly accepts as a pretext to run away her uncle's idea that she should leave to fetch Dinah from where she is preaching in Snowden. She takes all of her money and follows Arthur to Windsor where he has been stationed as a soldier. It takes all of her money to arrive there, and when she is informed that Arthur's troops have been sent to Ireland, she faints away. She remembers her cousin's invitation to look to her if she is ever in trouble. Hetty sets off in the opposite direction with the resolution that if she is too cowardly to commit suicide, she will find Dinah.

Hetty's family becomes worried when she does not return after a number of days, and Adam Bede sets out in search of her. When he arrives in Hayslope, he finds that she has never visited to collect Dinah at all. Alarmed, he traces her to Stoniton. When he returns back to Hayslope, the vicar informs him that she has just been arrested for the murder of her own child.

Adam is convinced that she is innocent until he attends her trial and sees the incontrovertible proof against her. One of the witnesses is a woman in whose house she delivered the baby. Another is a workingman who saw her near the spot where she partially buried the baby in a field before it died of exposure. Hetty is sentenced to execution. Dinah visits her in prison, persuades her to confess for the first time, and gives her spiritual counseling.

Adam has sent for Arthur, who receives word first that his grandfather has died, so Arthur returns to Hayslope without knowing what has happened to Hetty. When he hears the news, he rushes to get a special pardon for her. It is delivered in the nick of time. He rides up to where Hetty is riding in the death cart accompanied by Dinah with the pardon. Hetty is re-sentenced to exile rather than death. Adam and Arthur meet again and agree to end their old argument. Arthur says that he is joining the military, and the two shake hands.

Years later, Adam visits the Poysers as they try to convince Dinah not to leave on her preaching circuit yet again. She insists that she must go because of personal temptations. When Adam says that whatever she chooses will be right, she begins to cry. He brings her home to his mother, who is ill and wanted to see Dinah again. Dinah blushes every time that Adam talks to her, and Seth and Lisbeth see that she is in love with him. Lisbeth informs her son, who, after asking his brother's permission, asks her to marry him. She refuses, saying that her first priority is religion. She leaves for Leeds to preach. After she has been gone for a few days, Adam follows her to where she is preaching. He meets her on a hill, and she admits that she has been listening to her heart and what God is trying to tell her--and that it is to marry him. The two marry, and the epilogue depicts them living happily with their entire family, including two children.

Adam Bede : Introduction & Appreciation

Its Publication; Its Origin: - George Eliot finished Janet’s Repentance on the 9th October, 1857, and began Adam Bede on the 22nd October, 1857. She completed the first volume by the following March: wrote the second during the tour in Germany which followed and after returning to England, at the beginning of September, completed the third volume on 16th November. It was published in the beginning of 1858. When recording these dates in her journal she gives also an interesting account of the origin of the book. It was suggested by an anecdote which she had heard from an aunt, the Methodist preacher, Mrs. Samuel Evans:

“We are sitting together one afternoon during her visit to me at Griff, probably in 1839 or 1840, when it, occurred to her to tell me how she had visited a condemned criminal—a very ignorant girl, who had murdered her child and refused to confess; how she had stayed with her praying through the night, and how the poor creature at last broke out into tears, and confessed her crime. My aunt afterwards went with her in the cart to the

place of execution…..I then conceived the idea of blending this and some other recollections of my aunt in one story with some points in my father's early life and character.

The character of Dinah grew out of my recollections of my aunt, but Dinah is not at all like my aunt, who was a very small, black eyed woman, and (as I was told, for I never heard her preach) very vehement in her style of preaching.The character of Adam and one or two incidents connected with him were suggested by my father's early life; but there is not a single portrait in Adam Bede, only the suggestions of experience wrought up into new combinations. When I began to write it, the only elements I had determined on, besides the character of Dinah, were the character of Adam, his relation to Arthur Donnithorne, and their mutual relations to Hetty, i.e. The girl who commits child-murder—the scene in the prison being, of course, the climax towards which I worked. Everything else grew out of the characters and their mutual relations."

Time of Action: - Though Adam Bede was published in 1859, its action takes place in 1799. Those were stirring times when momentous events were taking place both at home and abroad. But Adam Bede is not a historical novel, and these stirring events are not even mentioned in the novel. The only historical event which is of any significance in the novel is Methodism. The Methodists or non-conformists or dissenters were people who did not agree with the doctrines of the established church. The founder of the Methodist movement was John Wesley, and he had allowed women to preach, but the Second Wesley Conference, 1798, forbade women preachers. This conference is mentioned in the novel towards the close. Methodism has been presented through Dinah Morris "the preacher-woman", and through her the best in Methodism has been highlighted. Besides this historical event, the novel is concerned with universal human passions, the tragedies of Sophocalian grandeur that take place in country solitudes. Hence the perennial appeal of the novel.

The Setting: - The setting of the novel is provided by the village of Hayslope in the county of Loamshire, and Snowfield and Stoniton in the county of Stonyshire, in the English Midlands where the novelist had been bred and brought up, with the characters, scenes and sights of which she had been familiar since her childhood, and which had fertilised her imagination. Indeed, the rendering of these country places is so faithful and the evocation of the Midland flavour is marked with such fidelity, that when the novel was first published anonymously, it was at once felt that its writer must be a resident of those parts, and many conjectures as to its authorship were made. No one, of course, suspected that an unknown and inexperienced, woman, like Mary Evans, was the authoress. Various landmarks of the places mentioned above have been given, and devoted scholars and George Eliot-lovers have visited the Midlands and tried to identify the villages and the counties with their real counterparts. However, all such attempts have remained futile, for Hayslope, Broxton Stoniton, etc., are dream countries or "countries of the mind". It is reality transmuted, glorified and modified by the imagination of the novelist.

The Characters: - The canvas of the novel is a crowded one, there being a number of characters both major and minor. First, there are the Bedes, village carpenters. The family consists of Adam Bede, the central figure, his brother Seth Bede, and mother Lizbeth and father Thias Bede. Then there are the Poysers, tenants of the Hall Farm. The group consists of Mr. Martin Poyser, his old father, his wife Mrs. Poyser—an immortal

figure of fun—their two nieces Dinah Morris and Hetty Sorrel, and their children, Totty and others. Another group consists of the old Squire or landlord of the village and his grandson Arthur Donnithorne heir to the state. They live at The Chase with a number of attendants. Rev. Mr. Irwine, the Rector of Hayslope and Broxton, his old mother Mrs. Irwine a majestic lady, and his two unmarried sisters complete the list of characters who occupy the front of the stage. In the background, are such figures as Bartle Massey, the school-teacher,Jonathen Burgess, the carpenter, "wiry" Ben, a romping girl called Bess, Molly, the maid servant, and a number of other minor figures. Through these characters, George Eliot has given us a cross-section of village society, of its various professions and occupations, of its sorrows and sufferings of its joys, traditions and customs, of its jealousies and tragedies and of its narrowness and conservation. In this way the novelist has presented a faithful picture of the life and society of Midlands, as she knew it.

The Story: - The tragic tale of Hetty Sorrel forms the core of the novel and all other events and characters are related to it in one way or the other. Adam Bede is in love with Hetty Sorrel, a pretty, empty-headed girl who lives on the farm of Martin Poyser, her uncle. Arthur Donnithorne, is unaware that Adam, his old friend, loves Hetty; since he is attracted to her himself, he meets her on several occasions secretly in the woods. As Hetty's fondest dream is to become a country lady, she encourages Arthur.

One day, Adam surprises the lovers in the woods and forces Arthur to fight. The bewildered Arthur tries vainly to make light of the situation. Conscience-stricken, he writes a farewell letter to Hetty and goes off with his regiment, in which he holds the position of a captain. Hetty, to make the best of a bad bargain, then agrees to marry Adam in the spring. But as the wedding day approaches, her pregnancy can no longer be concealed. She thinks of suicide, but vainly goes in search of Arthur. On the way, she prematurely gives birth to her child. In despair, she murders it and is arrested.

At the trial her stubborn silence arouses great indignation; she is found guilty of child-murder and is condemned to death. At the last moment, Arthur arrives with a document, showing that her sentence has been commuted to transportation. Later, Adam marries Hetty's cousin, the gentle Dinah Morris, the Methodist preacher. The novelist had abided an Epilogue to the novel, which shows them living happily together with their two children. Seth Bede also lives with them, and we are told that Hetty is released after eight years, and that she dies on her way back home.

Greatness of the Novel: - Adam Bede is one of the most powerful novels in the English language. W.H. Hudson, speaks of George Eliot's "power of weaving tragedy, and tragedy as poignant and deeply moral as anything to be found in Aeschlyus or Shakespeare, out of home spun material". He shows how the story of Hetty moves "from weakness to sin and from sin to Nemesis". The story of Arthur and Hetty is indeed so moving, painful and tragic that the novel loses much of its power when they pass out of the narrative.

The novel is outstanding, too, for its rural background the pictures of farm life and the delightfully drawn groups of characters—the tragic Hetty and Arthur; the moral and spiritual Adam and Dinah; the amusing Poyser family; the Squire's household, the Irwine family and the rustics.

Religion and its Treatment: - Edmund Goose, tells us: "What really made the book remarkable was the manner in which the novelist brought her philosophical training to the study of religious character. This was quite new, and the world, much exercised at the moment by religious questions, saw the souls of Dinah Morris, the Methodist missionary, and of the other converts analysed, by a sympathetic outsider, in accordance with close actual experience, and not caricatured from a distance, as is often the case with Dickens."

Wisdom and Psycho-analysis: - George Eliot was the most intellectual novelist of her time. She was critical, observant, a deep thinker, highly intelligent and imaginative. Many examples of her wisdom are to be found in Adam Bede:

> **"When death, the great Reconciler, has come, it is never our tenderness that we repent of, but our severity."**
>
> **"Our dead are never dead to us until we have forgotten them."**
>
> **"It is the favourite stratagem of our passions to sham a retreat, and to turn sharp round upon us at the moment we have made up our minds that the day is our own."**
>
> **"Our deeds determine us, as much as we determine our deeds."**
>
> **"There is no despair so absolute as that which comes with the first moments of our first great sorrow."**

It is in the novel that for the first trial George Eliot is seen as a modern novelist. The analysis of the motives and the mental processes in this novel would do credit to any of the great psychological novelists of recent times.

Mrs. Poyser, the Cause of the Popularity of the Novel: - However in the final analysis, it is neither the treatment of rural life nor psycho-analysis nor Dinah Morris nor Adam, that at once raised George Eliot to the first rank among English novelists. Says Leslie Stephen, "Adam Bede for most of us means pre-eminently Mrs. Poyser and owes its popularity to her presence. Her dairy is really the centre of the whole microcosm. We are first introduced to it as the background which makes the kitten-like beauty of Hetty Sorrel, irresistible to young Captain Donnithorne. But Mrs. Poyser is the presiding genius. She represents the very spirit of the place; and her influence is the secret of the harmony of the little world of squire and parson and parish clerk and schoolmaster and blacksmith and carpenter and shepherd and carter. Each of these types is admirably sketched in turn, but the pivot of the whole is the farm in which Mrs. Poyser displays her conversational powers. The little rustic world is painted in colours, heightened by affection. There is, it may be, a little more of Goldsmith's beautifying touch than of Crabbe's uncompromising realism. But it is marvellously life-like, and Mrs. Poyser's delightful shrewdness seems to guarantee the fidelity of the portraits. She has no humbug about her, and one naturally takes it for granted that they must be as she sees them. It is, indeed, needless to insist upon her excellence for Mrs. Poyser became at once one of the immortals." In her later novels one sometimes regrets that Mrs. Poyser did not come to the fore to temper the graver moods. Mrs. Poyser may take rank with Sam Weller as one of the irresistible humorists.

Adam Bede : Major Themes

Honor: - Honor is an ancient theme with special resonance in medieval times, which is fitting in a novel set in a town that has an almost feudal landlord. There are two types of honor in this novel: that of females, and that of males. Female honor is fairly passive and relies entirely on chastity. If women lose this chastity, they are helpless to regain their honor. Male honor is more complicated and more active. Honor is tied up in their profession, land, and overall identity. When Adam runs away as a young boy because of family unhappiness, he chooses to return partially in order to maintain the honor of his family by keeping it economically afloat. He knows that the only way to provoke Arthur to fight is by insulting his honor, so instead of reproaching him, he calls him a coward.

Love: - The novel includes a few examples of true love based on mutual attraction. One positive example of mutual love is the relationship between Adam and Dinah at the end of the novel. But it takes others around them to work out their feelings for them, showing that it is not only mutual love that is important, but also a mutual love that is recognized and supported by both of the families of the lovers. Indeed, society matters for love; in other relationships, the complicating factor is always socioeconomic class, because the novel is set in a time period when marriage was more of a contract than a romantic affair. This problem extends to both men and women. Adam Bede is expected to marry Mary Burge merely because it would be an advantageous business proposition. Afterwards, he could become partners with her father, a man who had been his boss. What is more, there are two class-related barriers to a love affair between Arthur and Hetty. The first is obvious: Arthur cannot easily marry someone so far below his social class. The second is more subtle: it is unclear whether Hetty would be as attracted to Arthur if it were not for his wealth. When she does dream of their future together, she imagines the luxuries that he could provide her with, rather than the life that they could have together. There is even an impediment to Adam's courtship of Hetty, a pair who might seem to be of the same social stratum. Before his promotion to steward of the forest, some townspeople say that Adam is reaching too high trying to land the niece of a large dairy farmer.

Nature: - Nature is a constant presence in all of Eliot's novels. Unlike many romantic novelists, she does not make the weather correspond directly with her principal characters' moods or feelings. Rather, she comments on the sort of injustice that the weather always seems to be at its most beautiful when man is going through a particular hardship. This disconnection of natural life from human life is part of Eliot's literary doctrine of painstaking realism. Rather than have the weather reflect her characters' feelings, she quite accurately has her characters mark their memories and experiences in the context of their actual environment. Adam marks his movement from happiness to adulthood by the beech tree that he contemplated moments before seeing Hetty and Arthur kiss under it. Hetty marks her homeward journey not to return to the family farm, but to regain some scenery that is familiar to her. Dinah and Adam always refer to his interception of her in Snowfield and their agreement to marry as "the meeting on the hill."

Industry: - Eliot wrote Adam Bede at the time that the Industrial Revolution was beginning to change the face of life in Britain. More and more ingenious inventions meant that farmers were caught up in industry, and many moved away from their small

towns into bigger cities. The village that Eliot portrays is a holdout against this new lifestyle, but the presence of new industry is indicated by the mill that Dinah works at when she is home. Eliot comments that Dinah is drawn to this town as well as to the industrial town of Leeds which, along with Manchester, was at the forefront of the Industrial Revolution. Dinah is drawn to such towns because of the great misery in them. Eliot seems to side with many poets and authors in lamenting the onset of industry insofar as it alienates people from nature. Eliot personifies the spirit of Leisure in contrast to this new industry, describing him as a portly old gentleman with excellent digestion.

Motherhood: - As a novel which centers on an infanticide by a mother, Adam Bede is necessarily preoccupied with motherhood. The most obvious example of a strong mother figure is Lisbeth Bede, who loves her son, Adam, almost too much. She is constantly worried about where he is, what he is doing, and whether he has had enough to eat. Her constant nagging, which irritates Adam, also ashamed him.Lisbeth's relationship with Seth is a much easier one, perhaps because she loves him just a little less--and therefore nags him just a little less. It is important to note that neither Hetty nor Dinah has a mother anymore. Both of them were orphaned and live with their uncle or aunt, respectively. The lack of a mother figure affects each of them profoundly. Dinah quickly grows into a mother figure herself, looking after and waiting on others before herself. Seth describes a young boy even climbing into her lap to be held during one of her preaching sessions. Hetty, in contrast, lacking strong guidance, grows up vain and petty. When she has a child of her own, admittedly under extremely tough circumstances, she kills it by burying it. She does have some motherly feelings, however, noting that she could not bear to look at its "little hands or little face" before she buried it. She imagines that she continues to hear it crying. This is why she returns to the spot where she buried it, and this is why she is apprehended as a criminal.

Sacrifice: - Because religion (in particular, Christianity) is of such importance in this novel, the issue of sacrifice and its nobility comes up quite often. The character most inclined toward sacrifice, Dinah, is also the most religious. Dinah is content to spend her life serving others if she thinks that she can bring them some comfort. This notion of sacrifice is parodied by Mrs. Poyser, who thinks that Dinah takes the idea to an extreme. Mrs. Poyser is upset that Dinah moves back and forth between different parishes, trying to calculate in which one the life is hardest so that she can choose the one needing the most help. Her aunt says of Dinah that she would only marry if the man were a Methodist and lame, consistent with her doctrine of help and sacrifice. Dinah must struggle against her conscience in order to allow herself to marry Adam, because she thinks that she loves him too much--it would be too little of a sacrifice. Eliot makes it clear that this argument (if not Dinah's whole perspective on sacrifice) is somewhat ridiculous, and besides, Dinah changes her mind in a short time and agrees to marry Adam. Eliot suggests that sacrifice is worthwhile for the most part, but not to an extent whereby it prevents overall personal happiness or other goods such as the creation of a family.

Female Identity and Autonomy: - The issue of female identity is often at the forefront of George Eliot's novels, even in one named after a man, such as Adam Bede. Of course, in the mid-Victorian period Eliot was writing in a male-dominated world; for instance, she saw a need to assume a male pen-name in order to protect her identity

and popularize her writing. Among the most memorable characters in the novel are women with strong voices who are attached to men.

The most confident female character is Dinah Morris, who asserts her identity to Lisbeth Bede in Chapter Ten, announcing: "I am Dinah Morris and I work in the cotton-mill when I am at home." Dinah is also a confident and effective female preacher. Her resistance to marriage because she is worried that it will curtail her religious teaching is resolved by Eliot in a manner calculated not to upset the male hierarchy. It turns out that Dinah was not in fact prevented from a traditional marriage by religiosity, but rather by the fact that no man that she truly loved had yet asked her to marry him. Indeed, she quiets into a typical housewife at the end of the novel, even consenting to discontinue her preaching because the Methodist men have decided that it is not a good idea.

Another strong female voice in Adam Bede is Mrs. Poyser. She is much more intelligent than her husband, and she has much more control over their farm than he does. She inevitably has her "say out," which involves working up her courage to tell her hated landlord what everyone in the community thinks of him. She prefaces this opinion with, **"Then, sir, if I may speak--as for all I'm a woman, and there's folks as thinks a woman's fool enough to stan' by an' look on while the men sign her soul away, I've a right to speak..."** Still, Mrs. Poyser's marriage to Mr. Poyser gives her an added ethos in contrast to that of an outspoken maiden or, in Victorian fiction, the stock character of a dangerous widow.

Hetty Sorrel, in contrast to these stronger women, lacks the power or the initiative to speak up for herself. Hetty does not speak very much, and her preferred method of seduction is to burst into tears rather than to have a conversation. She pays dearly for this quietness, because she is not able to ask for help when she becomes pregnant. When she finally admits to Dinah in the jail cell that "I did it," this first instance of her assertion of agency comes far too late.

Inner vs. Outer Beauty: - Eliot contrasts inner and outer beauty throughout the novel to express the idea that external and internal realities do not always correspond. Although Hetty is more physically beautiful than Dinah, she is cold and ugly inside. Hetty’s outer beauty masks her inner ugliness, especially to Captain Donnithorne and Adam. Even when Hetty cries or is angry, she still appears lovely to both men. Adam is so blinded by Hetty’s appearance that he often misinterprets her tears and excitement as love for him. Hetty’s outer beauty also blinds Captain Donnithorne such that he loses control when she cries and he kisses her. Unlike Hetty, Dinah has an inner beauty because she helps and cares for those around her. She comforts Lisbeth through the mourning of her dead husband, and Adam takes notice of this. Adam does not think Dinah is as physically beautiful as Hetty, but he is drawn to her love and mission to help those around her. His feelings for Dinah change after he witnesses Dinah consoling Hetty, and Adam begins to see Dinah as outwardly beautiful. Eliot’s description of the natural beauty of the English countryside also shows the contrast between internal and external beauty. On the day Hetty wanders off to find Captain Donnithorne, the day is beautiful and the countryside is magnificent. However, Hetty suffers enormously under the weight of her plight. Eliot uses this contrast to encourage the reader to look beyond the surface and explore a deeper meaning.

The Value of Hard Work: - One of the chief differences between the good characters and the evil characters is their commitment to working hard. Most of the characters in Adam Bede are hard-working peasants who spend their days laboring on farms, in mills, or in shops. Those characters are generally characterized by gentle intelligence and simple habits. They do their best not to harm others, and they produce goods others can use and value. Examples are Mrs. Poyser, whose dairy supplies the other villagers and whose cream cheese is renowned in the area; Adam, whose skills in carpentry are unmatched and who is a good and fair manager of people and resources; and Dinah, who works in a mill. By contrast, those few malingerers in the novel are generally evil as well as lazy. The strongest example of laziness is Captain Donnithorne, who often complains that he has nothing to do, and whose boredom may well have contributed significantly to Hetty's downfall. If Captain Donnithorne had been busy sowing fields, he might not have engaged in his illicit and unwise affair. Those who work hard take pride in their work, and they do not harm others because they are careful and meticulous and do not have time for idle self-indulgence.

Love as a Transformative Force: - Love has the power to transform characters in the novel. The characters who love are portrayed as gentle, kind, and accepting. Dinah, for example, is a preacher but is never preachy. She accepts Hetty as she is, even when Hetty is peevish and selfish toward her. Dinah's love transforms Hetty in jail because she comforts and listens to Hetty and does not judge her. Before, Hetty was selfish and only thought about her own happiness. After, she is sincerely sorry for the shame she caused her family and even apologizes to Adam. Another example is Mrs. Poyser, and how she can be harsh toward those she loves. When Hetty's crime comes to light, Mrs. Poyser is the only one in her family who does not seem to judge Hetty. Here, Mrs. Poyser transforms from strict and critical to a loving and accepting woman. The one character that is not transformed by love is Mrs. Irwine, who is critical and sharp and never manages to help others. She does not feel, and so she is neither transformed by love nor capable of transforming others. For example, at Captain Donnithorne's coming-of-age party, one of her presents to a peasant girl is an ugly gown and a piece of flannel. This gift only aggravates the girl and makes her reject the present. Mrs. Irwine thinks she is giving the girls only what they deserve, and therefore she is not transformed by love because she does not care for anyone. Love only transforms the characters that want to help people other than themselves.

The Consequences of Bad Behavior: - Bad behavior and wrongdoing have consequences that extend beyond the wrong-doer, and even relatively small transgressions can have massive collateral effects. The central lesson from Hetty's experience with Captain Donnithorne is that doing the right thing is important because doing the wrong thing might hurt others in ways that cannot be controlled. Though Captain Donnithorne is not inherently evil, he provokes bad behavior in Hetty because she cannot go to him for help when she learns that she is pregnant. Hetty is ashamed and only thinks of herself when she commits her crime. As she awaits the trial, Hetty does not think about how her bad behavior affected anyone else: she does not consider the shame she has caused the Poysers or the effect her crime has on Adam. Hetty feels no real remorse for her sins and just wishes to not be reminded of any wrong she has done. Eventually, she apologizes to Adam and asks God for forgiveness, but the lesson of the story is that bad behavior, evil, and wrongdoing cannot be undone.

Adam Bede : Historical Background

The Isolation of Hayslope: - Adam Bede was published in 1859, but its story takes place in 1799. They were momentous times and stirring events were taking place in Europe and in England, but Hayslope, a remote isolated community which forms the setting to the novel, remains unaffected by these events. It is as if they did not happen at all, and the outside world for this agricultural community was a vague, remote entity, of which they sometimes heard, but which did not affect them in any way.

Some Historical Events: - Adam Bede cannot be called a historical novel, for the earth-shaking political events of the day are of no consequence and have no impact on the action of the novel. In the United States the Civil War was fought, slavery was put down, the West was all but conquered, and the Industrial Revolution (and with it the rise of the rich capitalists) changed the form and face of American life for all time to come. Italy saw the emergence of Garibaldi and the drive for Italian unity and independence. Japan stood on the threshold of the door of the world after centuries of self-imposed isolation. And Russia, freed her serfs, whose bondage was prior by hundreds of years to the slavery of American Negroes. Prussia arose as a great European power, first conquering Austria, then France, and then providing the military and political force that culminated in the proclamation of the German Empire. Defeated France fell into the throes of internal strife, and finally there was the establishment of the Third Republic.

None of these momentous events are in any way fore-shadowed in Adam Bede, which takes place, as George Eliot says, in 1799. As a matter of fact, none of the great happenings in the world that were contemporary or prior to the action of the novel seem to have had any effect on Hayslope. The American colonies had fought Great Britain for their independence and won, establishing themselves as the United States. Liberation movements were beginning to flare all over Latin America, and France had executed her king and queen in the ten bloody years of her revolution. Napoleon Bonaparte had begun his far-flung conquests and was on the verge of proclaiming himself Emperor of France. By 1799, England had been at war with France for six years, her great leaders, Wellington and Nelson, battled to contain Napoleon. To these French wars, the only reference in the novel is that Arthur Donnithorne goes out to France with his regiment, falls ill, is advised rest at home and so comes back to Hayslope. Otherwise, all these great happenings sound as remote to the people of Hayslope as if they happened on the other side of the Moon. They have no impact at all on Hayslope life, or on Adam, Seth, Hetty, Arthur and Dinah, the principal figures in the novel. The only historical event that makes its impact on the novel is the movement for religious dissent from, or non-conformity with, the established Church, known as Methodism.

Brief Survey of Religious Dissent—Methodism: - It should be remembered that the established Church of England is based on compromise between Catholicism and Protestantism and there have been dissident movements ever since the days of Chaucer. This tendency towards religious dissent or separatism continued through the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and the Stuarts down to the eighteenth century and even beyond into the 19th century. Methodism or 'Evengelical Methodism' was the most important form religious dissent took in the last decades of the 18th century. In the novel the

established Church is presented by Mr. Irwine and Methodism by Dinah Morris, a staunch Methodist preacher and the heroine of the novel, thus providing the novelist an opportunity for comparing and contrasting the two. Methodism may be defined as, "a movement of reaction against the apathy of the Church of England that prevailed in the early part of the eighteenth century". The name 'Methodist' was originally applied to the members of a religious society established at Oxford in 1729 by the Wesleys and other members of the university, "having for its object the promotion of piety and morality. It was subsequently extended to those who took part in or sympathised with this movement." The term 'Evengelical' was applied from the eighteenth century onwards to that school of Protestants which maintains that the essence of the Gospel consists in the doctrine of salvation by faith in the atoning death of Christ. It lays more stress on faith than on action or on grace, and also strictly upholds the verbal inspiration of the Bible. It is the theoretical or philosophical aspect of Methodism.

Methodism: Its Founder: - The 'Methodist' movement was founded by John Wesley who was born in 1703 in Lincolnshire. He was educated at Oxford, and took holy orders in 1725. He became the greatest religious figure in eighteenth century England. The Methodist society was formed in 1729 when a few young men at Oxford came together under his, leadership. Their purpose was to observe strictly the fasts and festivals of the Church; to celebrate Holy Communion regularly and to keep them unspotted from the world.

In 1739, Wesley experienced great spiritual development. He now felt that he had a special message to deliver. He took the whole of England as his parish and went preaching from place to place. His influence was tremendous and thousands were converted, experiencing what they called "the new birth". His success was the greatest among the lower classes, which hitherto had often been beyond the influence of the established Church.

Its Popularity: - It became essential to have some organization to provide religious discipline for the thousands of converts, and the Methodist Society was strengthened, and its organisation extended to meet the need. Lay preachers were appointed; there were band meetings, class meetings and meetings in houses. Women who were able to preach, were allowed to do so. In the beginning they worked within the established Church but as the society grew, it became more independent, and in 1744, the First Wesleyan Conference was held. Formal separation from the Church of England, did not take place till after Wesley's death in 1791.

Dinah, a Typical Methodist: - Dinah is an example of the most sincere type of Methodist, whose greatest aim was to know the will of God and to follow it. "They believed in present miracles, in instantaneous conversion, in revelations by dreams and visions; they drew lots; and sought for Divine Guidance by opening the Bible at hazard." Dinah believes in all this, and she consults the Bible in this way whenever she has to take some crucial decision. Thus she consults it when she rejects Seth or accepts Adam.

Her Sermon and Her Impact: - Dinah's sermon on the village green is characteristic of Methodist preaching. The appeal is at the first general, with an emphasis on, God's love of the poor, then particular, with a rousing call to repentance, painting the misery of

souls lost in sin. Dinah communicated her belief in the visible manifestations of Jesus, so that Christ's agony in the garden became very real to the listeners. Then came the warning against worldly vanity. Compare the passage on the ear-rings and finery in Dinah's sermon with the following passage taken from one of John Wesley's sermons: "Wear no gold, no pearls or precious stones, use no curling of hair, buy no velvet, no silks, no fine linen, no superfluities nor no mean ornaments, however much in fashion. I do not advise women to wear rings, ear-rings, necklaces, laces, etc." It is also to be noted that the stress throughout is on the poor, and what the saviour would do for them. Chad Bess is moved by the sermon, and tries to hide her large ear-ring, though by and large the people of Hayslope are not affected by it. On the other hand, the poor and suffering people of Snowfield are more receptive to it.

From the Epilogue we learn that after a time the second Wesleyan conference forbode women preachers, for most of them "did more harm than good with their preaching". Dinah too stops preaching and is thoroughly domesticated. However, this is a loss to the movement, for she is a devout and inspired preacher who did only good, and caused no harm at all, through her preaching. Remember, the way in which she consoles Lisbeth in her grief, and goes to poor Hetty in the prison and moves her to open out her heart and confess. From the way in which she moves Bess Carnage with her preaching, we may safely presume that she must have made many converts from among the sinners and saved their souls. Even Mrs. Irwine, who belongs to the opposite camp, has profound respect for her, and regards her as a force for good.

The Element of Universality: - The fact is that the people in Hayslope are moved by universal human emotions, and the themes, "of God and godlessness, love and jealousy, life and death, sin and repentance, are universal and come about regardless of the Napoleons and the Hitlers, or perhaps inspite of them. What happens in Hayslope in Adam Bede can well happen in almost any agricultural community on earth and in almost any period of recorded history." The soil was rich and nature was kind, but for a tenant who farmed land he did not himself own, life was always hard, and only the most provident fared well. Despite the establishment of factories in nearby Coventry and other embryonic industrial centres, England was still largely an agricultural country in a time in history when agriculture, handicrafts, and trade were the dominant influences. "Except for the universal emotions, the only significant aspects of the background to Adam Bede in the village of Hayslope were the need to work hard and skilfully in order to survive, and the fermentation caused by Evangelical Methodism." The upheaval in the rest of England, on the Continent, and in the New World was indeed in another world. It was as if Hayslope existed by and for itself. If these rustics appear quaint to us we should remember that all over the earth, thousands of Hayslopes and their people still work hard for a living and lift their political hearts for a moment to listen to a passing preacher.

In India, of course, there are thousands and thousands of such Hayslopes, where the people live in isolation from the great and historical movements of the day, and still cultivate, plough and reap in their age-old primitive ways. However, tragedies of Sophoclean grandeur and intensity are daily enacted in these remote, isolated rural communities, and the Hetty-Adam-Arthur Donnithorne story is only one such instance.

Adam Bede : Major Moral Conflicts

George Eliot believes in "art for morality's sake". She feels that a piece of art must exercise an ethical influence on readers. That's why all of her novels are "dramas of moral conflict". Her moral conception can be defined as:**"Our deeds determine us, as much as we determine our deeds".**

To Eliot, if someone breaks the moral laws, either consciously or unconsciously, the consequent sufferings and punishment are bound to come.

"Adam Bede" also presents a moral conflict aroused by failure, to resist temptation, of both the characters of Hetty and Arthur. Both of them are creatures of "weak moral fibres", and this weakness invites the intensive tragedy into the story. Thus, Arthur – Hetty story shows:**"The movement from weakness to sin and from sin to nemesis"**

Eliot does not draw her characters as tempestuous or villainous, but it is always a slight error of judgment or a desire of a character or some weakness, which brings the downfall. Hetty is also drawn simply as a village girl, with her girlish dreams of leading an "aristocratic life" with her prince charming.

In the beginning, she is leading a "protected" and contented life at her uncle's farm, unaware of the hardships and difficulties of man in the outer world. But she is vain and frivolous, loves finery and always lost in her fantasy world. Adam Bede, an honest, hardworking but poor man, who cannot provide her the "luxuries of life", loves her. That's why when Arthur casts admiring glances on Hetty she does not care for Adam and feels that her dreams of splendid life come true, for Arthur is a squire's son with a huge fortune. As Eliot remarks:**"(Arthur's) … bright soft glance had penetrated her, and suffused her life with a strange happy languor".**

Through his attention, Hetty becomes "thoroughly aware of her own beauty", and not considering the "social and economic gap" between Arthur and herself; She presumes that she can lead her desired life, after marrying Arthur. This is the very flaw and weakness of her character, which leads her to the sin and the consequent sufferings.

She and Arthur meet in the woods, until one day Adam, who forces Arthur to put an end to his contact with Hetty, observes them. Thus, there is an abrupt ending to their relationship. This is the time when Hetty's sufferings begin and all her dreams and fancies, to lead a splendid life, scatter. Here Eliot beautifully exclaims:**"There is no despair as absolute as that which cones with the first moments of our first great sorrow".**

Hetty's desperation becomes acute, when she realizes that she is pregnant and that the marriage with Adam is "out of question". Torn out by depressive and torturing thoughts, she comes out of her sheltered world and there starts her "physical sufferings". She reaches Windsor, in search of Arthur but for it is good for nothing. While returning back to Stoniton, she gives birth to a mail child prematurely. Next evening half ashamed by abandoning the child but, naturally, being a mother, fails to stop the haunting cries of baby that follows her, she returns to the child but too late.

This is the point, when Eliot beautifully describes the condition of a weak person, experiences social condemnation. As Hetty has no "guiding principle" to follow, though she attended the church, regularly, but could not absorb a single Christian idea or feeling. Therefore, when she faces "public disgrace" of her trial, Hetty **"shut her heart against her fellow creatures".** She is sentenced to death, for the crime of child murder. Later her punishment is reduces to transportation by the efforts of Arthur. Thus Hetty "pays full price of her unthinking folly".

It is, but to tell half the story, with an account of Hetty's weakness and its consequences, for Arthur is also responsible for her tragedy as well as his own, rather he holds a much greater responsibility. As Arthur James points out:**"A weak woman is indeed weaker than a weak man".**

Arthur Donnithorne is a young, squire's son, with high and noble ambitions and innate desire to do "good to everyone". He is naturally good and king hearted man and his flaw lies in his goodness and his lack of control of his emotions. He is an "admirer of beauty" and when beauty comes in front of him in the form of Hetty, he cannot have power over himself from being tempted by that beauty. Getting conscious of his sentimental state, he tries to forget Hetty, but it results only in the more intensified thoughts of her. It can be seen when he blames Mr. Irwine for his feelings: **"If Irwine had said nothing, I should not have thought half so much of Hetty's as of Meg's lameness".**

If Eliot has not given the "insight to his mind and thoughts" it would have been very hard to differentiate Arthur from a perfect villain, for he treats Hetty as a "juicy morsel" to satisfy his lust. It is Eliot's "art of X-ray", which makes her different from her contemporary writers. Arthur does hectic efforts to overcome his passion to meet, even to see Hetty, only because he is "naturally noble" and does not want to be a part of any scandal. But all his efforts prove in vain, when he finally reaches the woods to see her. Eliot comments:"**It is the favourite stratagem of our passions to sham a retreat, and to turn sharply round upon us, at the moment we have made up our mind that the day is our own".**

Thus, through Arthur, the author brings to light the psychological fact that the more he tries to suppress a passion, the more it grows stronger and fierce. The moral weakness in yielding to temptation, results in the devastating tragedy. Arthur also suffers from deep spiritual anguish. He tries his best to make amends and reduces the intensity of the catastrophe, which he had inflicted on himself, on Hetty, on Poysers and on Adam but could not save Hetty from transportation. However, by going away for several years, Arthur makes it possible for Adam and Poysers to remain at Hayslope. Thus, he**"Drinks the bitter cup of repentance to the full".**

In short, the novel is a study in **"moral weakness and its terrible consequences".** It seems that Eliot does not spare even the slightest "moral lapse" in her characters, and through their sufferings, gives definite "moral lesson". "There is a sort of wrong that can never be made up for".

Adam Bede : Plot-Construction

A compact whole: - The plot of Adam Bede is much better constructed than that of many other contemporary novels. This is so because the novel was not published in parts. It was not serialized in a magazine. There is not a single character or even in the whole of novel which doesn't further its action. The novel is a compact whole. It is like a well-constructed building from not even a single brick can be taken out without damaging the whole structure. The novels are George Eliot are 'organic wholes' in as much as the story, the character, the social environment are well-integrated. In AB, the life of Hayslope envelops the tragedy. It is an active society in which most men or women have work to and their characters are affected by that work.

Integrated Four stories and thematic unity: - George Eliot was quite alive to the problem of plot-construction. There are four different stories in the novel: (a) Adam-Hetty love story, (b) Hetty-Arthur love story, (c) Adam-Dinah love story and (d) the mutual relations of Arthur and Adam. The problem was how to integrate the four stories into a single whole. The story of Hetty, the heroine of the novel who is seduced by the Squire and later convicted of a child murder forms the core of the novel. The inter-linking of the various stories is made possible by the relation of Adam and Arthur to each other and to Hetty and the marriage of Adam and Dinah rounds up the whole and satisfies the contemporary conventions by linking the lives of the hero and heroine at the close. Even integrating the four stories has not kept away from the thematic unity of the novel. The theme is furthered by each action and event caused by the characters. The story grows up like a plant out of the idea or theme that, a failure to resist temptation is a moral weakness and any yielding to temptation is sure to followed divine punishment and consequent suffering. This theme is interlinked with the theme of moral enlightenment, self- education and regeneration. Such are the themes out of which the story evolves step-by-step, logically and the characters are their stories are exposition and illustration of these themes and ideas.

Social environment & the central tragedy: - The central tragedy is intimately connected with this background. The full effect of Arthur Donnithorne's yielding to the sensuous appeal of the pretty child-like Hetty depends on the relationship of the two to the world. The pride and well-grounded self-respect of the Poysers established in the reader's mind by the vivid pictures of their surroundings, their working, their home life, their Sunday observance and the neighbors' opinion of them, all play their part in causing the tragedy and in heightening the bitterness of its effect. It is the social background that the Poysers have provided for their niece and the standard of conduct that make it inevitable for Hetty to take flight before the birth of her baby; it is the esteem in which they are held by which the reader measures their shame. Similarly, it is Arthur's upbringing, his relations with his grandfather, his high conception of love and esteem, he will earn from all his dependants when he inherits the land that explain the price he pays for the weakness and his suffering. Not only are the story and characters integrated with their social environment, they are well-integrated in the present novel with their physical world. They are symbolic of it. They have the softness and fertility of Loamshire and it hardness, its spiritual deadness. They are not receptive to religion, for their life of ease and self-indulgence has made them spiritually dead. Dinah serves as a link between the two physical worlds. She has come from Stonyshire, rocky, hard and barren, but the people there are more receptive to religion, they are spiritually better alive. So whenever she feels that she is going to be engulfed by the spiritual deadness of

Loamshire, she retires to Stonyshire. It is also to be noted that nature-background changes in keeping with the change in the fortunes of poor Hetty. Her early happy life is lived in the physical environment of Hayslope; from here she goes to the barren and rocky Stonyshire where she is convicted and sentenced to death.

Major Flaws and Ending of the novel: - Even best of us have their faults andweaknesses so does Adam Bede. Despite being the best constructed novel in the world, its ending has come in for a great deal of criticism. It has been pointed out that the marriage of Adam and Dinah Morris is not properly motivated, so it seems unnatural and forced. It is merely conventional that Hero and Heroin must be united at the close. George Eliot is first a philosopher and her critical and intellectual ability often impedes her artistry in telling a story. The author's commentary sometimes holds up the story and makes it laboured. For example, the writer labels Hetty as the sinner and she considers Adam and Dinah well-nigh perfect, but the modern reader finds Adam a bore and Dinah an impossibly perfect.

Melodrama: - The fight between Adam and Arthur in the wood is melodramatic and it was introduced at the suggestion of George Lewes. The story of seduction, a child-murder and conviction of an innocent girl, is the common stuff of a cheap melodrama. According to Robert Speaight, "Too much space has been taken up building up the background." Joan Bennett says, "If the characterization of Dinah partially fails to produce the effect intended, it is not because she is too virtuous but because of the author's treatment of the subject." Dinah is afraid to accept Adam because she thinks that her love would come in the way of her vocation. She retreats to Stoniton to ponder over the issue and accepts Adam when she meets him at the top of hill in Stoniton. Obviously, a change has come over her. But we are not permitted to see the process of this change and this is a major flaw in Dinah-Adam lovestory.

Arthur James remarks, "**The central figure of the novel is Hetty Sorrel and the story should have ended with the conviction of Hetty. The continuation of the story after the point is fatal to the artistry integrity of the novel. His marriage with Dinah waters off the real sorrow for the tragedy of Hetty. As matter of fact, the further end of the story is a matter for another novel."**Lettice Cooper's comments are worth-noting here, "The weakness of the book, besides the oppressive virtue of Adam and Dinah is, as with many Victorian Novels, the sacrifice and probability to plot, and the tidiness of the ending. George Eliot was moving towards a new kind of novel in which representation of life was to be more important than the plot. Despite all these life-like and natural situations and atmosphere drawn in AB, the marriage between Adam and Dinah seems like a mechanical device to round off the story." However, Joan Bennett justifies the marriage of Adam and Dinah on the ground that it enables the novelist to put the last touch to her definition of Adam's character to make him realize that there was too much of self and pride in him. A better justification for the close of the novel is that life at Hayslope had been shaken and disturbed by the drama of Hetty and it has returned to normalcy because of Adam-Dinah marriage. George Creeger points out that Dinah-Adam marriage is not an anti-climax, but it essential, otherwise Dinah and Adam would remain incomplete human beings, for there can be no fulfillment without love. It also enables the novelist to point out the moral that common suffering

results in sympathy and it is sympathy which is the basis of truelove story. Sorrow is needed to make love true and lasting.

Conclusion: - The novel has its faults, but they are minor faults and they in no way detract from the novelist's skill in construction. It should be judged in the context of the age in which it was written and not by modern standards.

Adam Bede : A Psychological Novel

Introduction: - George Eliot is one of the founding-fathers of the modern psychological novel. As W.J. Long points out, "George Eliot sought to do in her novels what Browning attempted in his poetry. That is, to represent the inner struggle of a soul, and to reveal the motives, impulses and hereditary influences that govern human action.

Browning generally stops when he tells his story and either lets you draw your own conclusion or else gives you his in a few striking lines But George Eliot is not content until she has minutely explained the motives of her characters and the moral lesson to be learnt from them. It is the development of a soul, the slow growth or decline of moral power, which chiefly interests her. The Characters of Dickens and Thackeray are already formed when we meet them and we know what they will do under certain circumstances, but George Eliot's characters develop gradually as we come to know them. They go from weakness to strength and vice versa. " Her novels are a study of mental processes. As A.E. Baker rightly points out, "George Eliot's sphere was the inner man, she exposed the internal clockwork. Her characters are not simply passive. They are shown making their own history, continually changing and developing as their motives issue into acts and acts become a part of the circumstances that condition, modify and purify or demoralize the will. " George Eliot's power of psycho-analysis and her understanding of mental processes are fully exposed in AB. Therefore, many critics have called AB the first psychological novel as later exemplified by Joyce and Woolf because the psychology of the main characters, Adam, Hetty, Arthur and the Poysers is the theme.

Analysis of causes and motives: - The chapter called A Journey in hope; George Eliot spends far more time in Hetty's poor brain and heart than Hetty spends on the road in her unwise search for her runaway lover. This is psychology and the chapters immediately before and after this sufficient activity to keep the story rolling; there is much more inner activity than outer. George Eliot is deft in her psychological approach. Shortly after the death of Thias Bede, his wife Lisbeth was in the Bede Home alone with the body. After doing the necessary ritual cleansing and purification of the chamber where Thias lay, she slumped into a chair and contemplated her grief. When George Eliot's characters think we share their thoughts. When Adam accidentally comes upon Arthur and Hetty embracing in the woods, Hetty scurries away, and Arthur saunter forwards to Adam. He thought, "After all, Adam was the bet who could have happened to see him and Hetty together: he was a sensible fellow and would not babble about it to other people. Arthur felt confident that he could laugh the thing off, and explain it away. " But he misunderstood him. George Eliot's grip on psychological essentials enables her to draw complex characters much better than her predecessors.

Temptation and Moral Chaos: - The field of her most characteristic triumphs is the moral battlefield. Her eagle eye can penetrate though the entire sock and the smoke of struggle. She is particularly good at showing how temptation triumphs. No other English novelist has given as so vivid a picture of the process of moral defeat, as Arthur's gradual yielding to his passion for Hetty. She, with clearness, shows how temptation insinuates in the mind. David Cecil says, "Her characters always hang together, are of a piece, their defects are the defects of their virtues. We are not surprised that a man, so anxious for the good opinion of others as Arthur Donnithorne, should selfishly seduce Hetty, because we realize that the controlling force in his character is the desire for immediate enjoyment." With equal insight, she can portray the moral chaos that takes possession of the mind after wrong has been done. The guilt ridden conscious of Arthur is analyzed and we are shown the scorpions that sting him and prevent sleep. She lays bare the conscious and semi-conscious motives of Arthur. We see the workings of his innermost mind: He had been awake an hour, and could rest in bed no longer. In bed our yesterdays are too oppressive, if a man can only get up, though it is but to whistle or smoke, he has a present which resists the past. For Arthur, the loss of Adam's respect was a shock to his self-contentment, which suffused his imagination with the sense he had sunk in all eyes; as a shock. Arthur would so gladly have persuaded himself that he had done no harm if no one had told him the contrary.

Conclusion: - It is George Eliot's psychological insight into the springs of human action, the subtle analysis of character and motive accompanying the external action, which gives her peculiar and individual place among the Victorian novelists. She is one of them and yet how every different and original. She is the first of the great modern novelists who have a high conception of their art, who regard the novel as a serious art form, and who are given to the probing of the human psyche, to the subtle analysis of the subconscious and unconscious.

Adam Bede : A Novel of Rural Life

English Midland: - George Eliot began her career with a loving attachment to the region in which her youth was passed. Her interest was in a particular locality – English Midland which had a powerful pull on her imagination. Even in the simplest of provincial situation, life is revealed clearly, wholly and in depth. The Tragedy of Hetty Sorrel, a tragedy of Sophoclean intensity and grandeur, takes place in this rural setting.

Major divisions: - The rural world in AB possesses two major divisions: the counties of Loamshire and Storyshire (With their villages, Hayslope and Snowfield). Loamshire – most of the action takes place here and around the village of Hayslope. Regarded together, the Midland-shire and village constitute a kind of earthly paradise. Loamshire is a region of corn and grass – a fertile and sheltered land. Prosperity is not common and poverty is rare. Exile from this snug land is regarded by its inhabitants as the worst evil so the Poysers don't want to leave it. Stonyshire – throughout the novel we are reminded of a different kind of county which is naked and barren under the sky 'where the trees are few, so that a child might count them, and there is very had living for the poor in the winter' Poverty is common of these people. Loamshire is apparently soft and

fertile, but it has a core of hardness, so also Hetty beautiful and soft apparently, there is hardness within her which is perceived by Mrs. Poyser. This is expressed in her 'stubborn silence' after the child-murder. Dinah tells Mr. Irwine, the Rector of Hayslope, "But I have noticed that in these villages where the people lead a quiet life among the green pastures and the still waters, there is a strange deadness to the world." Loamshire people are spiritually dead, while those of Stonyshire are more responsive to religion, more spiritually awake though they live in a hard region.

Sight and scenes: - The background against which the drama of AB takes place is picturesque and graphic and faithful descriptions of the region are abundant in the novel. Its scenes and sights, landmarks and customs, professions are transitions have been faithfully rendered. The geographical features such as inns, churches, mansions and road life have been honestly recorded. These sights and scenes play an important role in the novels of George Eliot. They appear and reappear in her novels and this imparts to them rare organic whole. The magic of the world works upon the reader in such a way that he finds himself passing through those instances of scenery. George Eliot's novels are highly pictorial and graphic in nature. She is a product of rustic and pastoral environment. She uses rich descriptions in this novel to provide a credible setting and to bring out the individual character of the setting and places where her characters live and to which they are bound by traditions, love, family, memory, work and affection. Finally, George Eliot uses landscapes to define, reinforce and foreshadow the events of the plot and moral situation. There are many scenes in the novel which we should not merely pass over as background materials. Mrs. Poyser is the voice of rural tradition and community, her home, the Hall Farm, provides a background that illustrates her character vividly. The Hall Farm is the center of orderliness, comfort, love, energy, security and peace. As Walter Allan says, "Mr. Poyser's images with his similes from unripe grain, are those of the farmer: Mrs. Poyser's those of the housewife."

Language, Professions & nature: - According to Anne Morley, "We do not know if our literature anywhere possesses such a closely true picture of purely rural life as Adam Bede presents it." The noblest achievement of George Eliot in the novel is the fact that she has succeeded in conveying to us the quality or flavor of the life at Hayslope. Its rude language, its typical dialect and the people in the novel all truly represent the rustic life. The characters in the novel represent a cross-section of Midland occupations and professions. The carpenter, the preacher, the Rector, the clergy, the farmer, the dairy-maid and the dairy hands, the common laborers and the vain village girls are all present in the world painted by George Eliot.

The symbolic word of Adam Bede: - George Eliot communicates the meaning of her novel partially by employing symbolism in the description of the physical world in which her characters live. These patterns point up contrasts and support, by an appeal to the visual imagination, some of the book's central ideas.

It is obvious that the names of the two counties mentioned in the novel and the names of the two towns where principal characters live are significant. Snowfield, Dinah's home town, is located in Stonyshire; as the names indicate, this is a bleak, forbidding region in which people eke out a poor living on the rocky hills or else work in a factory. Hayslope in Loamshire, on the other hand, is a pleasant spot where the farmers are prosperous and the workers comfortable; there are no factories, but only small neighborhood businesses like Jonathan Burge's workshop.

The "world" of the novel thus divides into light and dark, or hopeful and gloomy areas. Taking this world to represent life, we can see that Eliot is dividing experience into the pleasant and the unpleasant--giving us symbols for the "light" and "dark" sides of life. Dinah lives in Stonyshire; she is familiar with the darker side of life, accepts human suffering as necessary and inevitable, and knows how to deal with it. Adam, Arthur and Hetty, on the other hand, take a much more optimistic view of things and must learn what Dinah already knows. The crisis of the novel takes place in Stonyshire (in a town called Stoniton, as a matter of fact) and it is here that the three Loamshire people discover the meaning of "irremediable evil."

This division is supported by another one-that between controlled and uncontrolled human actions. We noted in the commentaries that the seduction, the fight between Adam and Arthur, and Hetty's abandonment of her child all take place in the woods. These actions, prompted by "natural" urges rather than by a "civilized" use of intellect and will, form one of the two primary causes of suffering in the novel.

The other cause is that part of reality which is beyond man's control. This area of human experience is symbolized by the tapping at the door in Chapter 4 which, though a superstition, turns out to be a valid portent of death, by the force of blind circumstances, and by God. Religion in George Eliot's novels seems to mean a respectful attitude towards the great unknown. Dinah, the completely religious woman, realistically recognizes the existence of evil and is patient and humble. Adam, who is religious in a naturalistic way, and Arthur and Hetty, who are not religious at all, have pride in them and must learn humility through experience.

Thus the world of the novel is set up to show that man must recognize that life has its less pleasant side and that suffering derives from the nature of things and from a lack of self-control. Like Dinah and Mr. Irwine, he must act upon this knowledge, avoiding evil whenever possible, accepting and dealing with it when it cannot he avoided.

Adam Bede : Changing nature of individuals & their relationship

When we compare George Eliot with her predecessors, successors and contemporaries, she enjoys unique position because of many qualities which make her a true artist of prophet like stature. Her understanding of human character and circumstances allows her to portray character with realism as well as sympathy.

Her main concern in all her novel is individual and individual’s relationship with other individuals as well as individual’s relationship with the society he or she lives in. Another quality which we do not find in the writings of other writings is individual’s relationship. Tracing individual’s relationship with the self makes her novels what we now call psychoanalysis. Then relationship is not something static in George Eliot’s writings. They keep on changing and evolving. The final result of this change and evolution is an ideal state. Though this ideal is attained after lot of pain and suffering.

No novelist achieved this before George Eliot. Characters and relationships in the works of her predecessors and contemporaries and successors, to a great extent, are already formed and they remain static throughout their writings. On the other hand George Eliot

shows complete understanding of human relationship. She portrays and shows all the intricacies and complexities which involve human relationship.

In Adam Bede relationship between different characters changes and evolves and it is never static and the changes which the writer shows are based on reality and authentic. The relationship between Adam Bede and Arthur passes through different stages of development and finally reaches an ideally state where Adam forgives Arthur for all the suffering and wrong which Adam has to undergo because if Arthur. If we consider relationship between Adam and Arthur we see how circumstances affect their relationship. Adam and Arthur remain friends till Adam discovers Arthur with Hetty in the woods. His reaction to the situation is natural and rash. His animosity with Arthur continues and Adam really thinks of killing Adam for destroying Hetty's life when latter is arrested for the child murder. George Eliot shows the storms and whirlwinds of hatred building in the mind of Adam. He would have really destroyed Arthur and finally himself in his anger had there been no Irwin to guide him. The relationship remains strained between the two till they finally meet in the forest where they had quarreled once. Here Adam is convinced of sincerity and good nature of Arthur and comes to believe that Arthur would never have done what he did if he had a very slight idea of the consequences of his affair with Hetty. All this has been shown with such skill and dexterity that Arthur finally avoids the demonic status which would have become his fate if he would have been treated anyone else but George.

It is not strange that we do not fond villains in George Eliot's novel. Actually she had complete understanding of human nature and character; she knew that human beings are product of the circumstance in which they are placed; they are neither devils nor angels.

In Adam-Hetty relationship George Eliot shows us the emotion side of love on the part of Adam. He clings to Hetty even after he discovers her affair with Arthur. He never tries to understand what Hetty wants in her life. His egoism does not let him any other thing. Hetty's beauty is a madness for him. When Hetty gets ready to marry him, he feels himself in the seventh heaven without caring that he was not the first thing for Hetty. Adam's relationship with Hetty has all the overtones of adolescent love which is always blind and selfish. George Eliot shows all this like no one showed before.

Arthur-Hetty relationship has also been portrayed with meticulous details. Hetty lets Arthur love her because she thinks that finally Arthur would marry her and she would live a life of a lady with all the comforts and luxuries which she loved more than anything else. She was not wrong; same could have happened if Hetty could have met Arthur during the time of her trouble. On the other hand Arthur's love for Hetty was based only for the time being for he did not knew the consequences of this kind of relationship. However, once he comes to know the harm he has done to Hetty, his love comes in the fore and he becomes ready to go to any length to save Hetty but alas it was too late then.

So is the case with all the other relationship treated in the novel. In every case the writer seems to be showing her concern as an honest recorder of details of changes which take place in relationship under varying set of circumstances. Everywhere whether it is relationship of Adam's father and mother or Mrs. Poysers relationship with her nieces and children, the novelist gives us useful insight into human relationship. Adam's

mother grief over the death of her husband is realistic representation how wives are affected by the deaths of their husbands whether their husbands are good for nothing. Mrs. Poysers love for her kids shows the relationship between mother and her children. Mothers always love their children no matter how fussy they are.

The way Poysers behave when they learn about the allegation on Hetty and the way they change with the passage of time are very realistic. So is the change in Adam during the trial of Hetty. All this could not have expected from anyone else. Only George Eliot could have traced human nature and forces which govern human nature.

Actually George Eliot was unique genius. She was a woman living in Victorian England but through her observation, deep study and concern to show human being as they live she achieved superiority over all her predecessors and contemporaries and she showed characters from the inside of their souls and heads. The result is that she shows human relationship with all their shades and colours

Adam Bede : Literary Realism

Realism means the mode of writing that gives the impression of recording or reflectingfaithfully an actual way of life. The term refers, most of the times confusingly, both to a literary method and to a more general attitude. But what it interests us here, is the literary method which is based on detailed accuracy of description (i.e. Verisimilitude- which is very important in this period).

Adam Bede is believed that it is one of the best examples of literary realism in England and English literature. Realism, as we said above, has to do with 'recording' the life exactly as it is. So, writers do not have to imagine characters and plots that could fit in the real world. Furthermore, realists (and here George Eliot) focus more on the characters than on the plot. Also, realist literature appeared in England in 1840 and 'remained' for about fifty years. It had many differences from the previous movement, Romanticism, and people in the beginning found it difficult to 'deal with' the new idea of Realism and its meaning.

In Adam Bede George Eliot creates the false illusion of a steady and immemorial rural world. We can say that it is a realistic novel, first of all, because of the manifesto on realism in Chapter 17 and because of the plentifully observed details, which are really important in a realist novel. It also charts the consequences of moral action. The world of Adam Bede is immemorial and the village that George Eliot had chosen for her book is really very difficult to change, rather than a city, and many of the conditions of change would come from the outside (e.g. From cities).

George Eliot establishes the world in which the events of the novel take place, a world in which we live in, governed by the same natural laws that govern human existence in the world we know.

The first requirement for a true fiction is the 'hard' presence of a recognizably real world, and as we can see in many points George Eliot supplies it throughout the novel. For example, when she describes the workshop of carpenter (Adam's workshop), she tries to

give us the sense of how difficult it is this work, by the use of details and descriptions. Also, in the description of the dairy in which Hetty Sorrel makes butter, we have 'a symphony' in colours and textures. These details make us feel like we watch the whole scene and smell the fresh butter. Adam Bede offers the radical contrast of a world shaped through and through by moral judgment and moral evaluation.

The massively slow movement of Adam Bede is her shape making technique. It is true that we are generally persuaded of the actual slow movement of rural life, and it is rural life – the life of villagers, tenant farmers – that George Eliot describes. Actually, as we can see up to now, George Eliot uses many descriptions, many images and many details in order to succeed her purpose: to write a realistic novel. She also uses facts from common people who live in the country-side and they are much more sensitive to the changes of life. Of course George Eliot has done very well her job and we continue.

The characters in Adam Bede are ordinary in either social class or native endowment and frequently in both, its tragic action grows out of a commonplace seduction, and its setting is humble and representatively agrarian. Perhaps, even more important is the treatment of these subjects: there is a high degree of consistency and historical accuracy in details of time and place, the background is richly and minutely crowded with particulars, and the account of characters' motives always stresses ordinary causes, rationally explicable.'

The distinction between realism of subject and realism of procedure is an important one. Both kinds of realism exist in Adam Bede, as they do in most realistic novels, detailed presentation tending to go hand in hand with the selection of commonplace and usually unfamiliar and unconventional subject. Realism of subject in the novel has perhaps had the most thorough treatment, particularly in discussion of the rustic background and the 'unheroic' nature of the central characters.

Another 'key' of the realistic novel of Adam Bede is the description of the natural beauty of English's countryside, especially in scenes of sadness or evil. For example, when Hetty tries to find Captain Donnithorne, the countryside is very 'luxurious' and the day is beautiful . Many people would think that this appearance of the day, represents also the beauty of Hetty; the outside,but also the outside beauty. But George Eliot here, tries to mislead us and she encourages us to look beyond the surface of people and things to their deeper characteristics. So, Eliot as we can see, tries to pass to the readers some messages about the people in the real life and she wants to make her readers more 'conscious'.

In Adam Bede George Eliot also tries to represent the life of the 19th century in England and especially in the countryside. As we can see from the novel, people faced many difficulties and the community was pretty 'strict'. Even if some people were 'good' sometimes they had to become 'evil' and face the real life and the problems. George Eliot was also very careful about the use of language. She used the every-day language of that period in order to make the novel more persuasive about it realistic style.

An example of the difficulties that people faced in the society of 19th century is the life of Adam. Adam is a hard man who learns, first through the death of his father and then

through the suffering of an inferior being whom he loves, sympathy towards weakness. But what the idea of Adam represents in one's mind is not such a development, but something much more static. What it remains to the readers about him, are the qualities that he has from the first, summed up in his words to Arthur. ('I've seen pretty clear, ever since I could cast up a sum, as you can never do what's wrong without breeding sin and trouble more than you can ever see' (Chapter 16)). As we can see, Adam is a massive representation of the central Eliotic belief, but his dramatic existence, his learning through suffering, even his suffering itself, are by comparison notional.

As it mentioned in many books, the story of Adam Bede was actually the representation of the real life of George Eliot. In the beginning when people learned about that were a bit confused and 'afraid'. It was pretty hard for them to believe that everything or pretty everything that was written in Adam Bede was in reality the life of George Eliot. This shows us why the novel had so many details and descriptions. Also, because at first, the book was published anonymously, most of the readers believed that it was written by a man.

Finally, to sum up, we could say that Adam Bede is one of the first realist book in England. It represents reality in many different ways, using many descriptions, a lot of details,use of everyday language, representations of landscapes full of colours and 'smell'. Using the right methods and techniques George Eliot managed to write a realist novel which flurried not only because it was the story of the real life of George Eliot, but also because it was from the first novels with a realist context and it was pretty difficult for the readers of that period to understand it and understand its meaning. Unfortunately, there were many who 'fight' George Eliot and Adam Bede but when the years passed, they understood the value of this novel and they used it also in university studies.

Adam Bede : Social realism

George Eliot's Adam Bede is realistic novel of Victorian society including the social problem of highlighting the poor social presentation together with the retrace of rural areas of the country. Adam Bede is an example of Victorian literature aiming to reflect the social realism. Almost every literary genre of Victorian literature are engaged to reflect the realism of the contemporary society. So does this novel too.

At the central position of Eliot's Adam Bede there lies the basic tenant of social realism. The very rigid Victorian society has been reflected in the novel. Entire gamut of Victorian literature is inseparably linked with realism. Poetry, novel, drama and all pieces of Victorian writings are engaged in the representation of realism of either kind. In the same vein George Eliot's Adam Bede aims at representing social realism. At the core of Adam Bede lies the basic tenant of social realism. Let's examine in the narrative where the fundamental tenet of social realism lies.

Victorian society was rigid. It had a strict view concerning women. Victorian society was affiliated with blazes and prejudices. It has baize against women. If any women tried to move in the world of freedom and employment, she was mocked and ridiculed. Women were also expected to work in confined circles live household work. In this novel George

Eliot represented a character Dinah Morris. She was a Methodist preacher. When Dinah Morris becomes preacher, many people indirectly criticized her. Dinah Morris was beautiful by appearance. People were attracted towards her. Many people used to listen to her preaching. But it was simply pretence. They actually went to listen to her because they were actually tempted to see her beautiful face. Most of those who attempted Dinah Morris's preaching were hypocritical, under the mask of religious devotion of those Sermon listener ran the sexual intention and corrupt selfish psyche.

Victorian age was the age of Thomas Carlyle. Carlyle was extremely critical of the growing Victorian attachment with materialism. People were distractingly crazy for comfort and happiness. They hardly believed in the dignity of work. Victorian people were neglectful of the fact that the worker should derived pride and joy from the work they do. During Victorian time workers were becoming increasingly mechanical. To correct his age Carlyle introduced the most repeated and very much hallowed maximum work is worship. To work is equal to worshipping, God. Through your absolute belief in work you can make God happy. It is work which links you with God. The impact of this maxim of Carlyle was unbelievably pervasive. George Eliot must certainly have been influence by the motto of Carlyle work is worship. That is why her character Adam Bede is shown climbing the ladder of social success by virtue of his belief in work. Adam Bede is a carpenter. He has achieved excellence in his profession. He was popular as a good carpenter. His name spreaded far and near. Due to his growing popularity he was invited to attend the birthday party of Arthur Donnithorne. Even the owner of Hall farm was eager to accept Adam Bede as a partner. Adam had a vision to leave the world more liveable for the further progeny through cultivating an eternal belief and pride in work. Respect dignity and prestige not from birth but from good and excellent deeds was the guiding principle of Adam Bede. And Eliot shows Adam being successful in society by virtue of his cherished beliefs and ideals. From this viewpoints also we can catch a glimpse of one extra brand of social realism.

Social chasm was another problem. The vestige of feudalism was still alive in Hayslop village. Hetty sorrel belonged to working class. Arthur Donnithorne belonged to the feudal class. Feudal class had still certain fascinating charm to the working class people. Hetty Sorrel was madly attracted to Arthur Donnithorne. She was from a poor family. Her family background was not nice. So she had a dream to marry Arthur Donnithorne and be a wife of a respectable feudal man. But such a fantasy driven effort of Hetty ruined her own life. Her tragic end created a deep wound in the psyche of Hayslop people. This accident in the personal life of Helty Sorrel suggests one bran of harsh reality the society faces when two different unequal classes try to meet at a point through emotion not through reason.

Social realism consists of how several characters were conscious of their class status at a significant social gathering. At the time of Arthur Donnithorne's birthday several people came to see and celebrate their feudal master's son's birthday. People were represented as conscious of their class background. Only Adam was given a respectable place in the birthday celebration because Adam had elevated his position through hard work and labour. This moment of birthday celebrations serves as screen in which social realism concerning the class consciousness of several people get reflected. In this way whether it is the position Adam or it is the position of caption Donnithorne or Dinah or Hetty, even characters gives symbolic reflection of Victorian society. Their depiction has been highly coloured with the image of Victorian society. Overall novel is realistic It includes the

elements like realistic, social presentation, reflection of social problems, highlighting the poor people, setting in rural areas, presentation of Victorian morality, sense of brotherhood, religious, truth etc. are objective correlative to show the social realism in Eliot's Adam Bede.

Adam Bede : Ending of the Novel

George Eliot is a realist story teller. Her stories begin, develop and end realistically. As far as her novel Adam Bede is concerned, it not exception in this regard.

Adam Bede ends optimistically. Adam Bede marries Dinah, the Methodist preacher and they are shown living happily with their children. Seth also lives with them. Adam tells that Arthur has returned from his wandering in very poor health. We get information that Hetty was released from prison and she died on the way. We are also told about Poysers settling on their farm.

However, this ending of the novel has been criticized by many people because of many reasons. First great criticism on the novel is Adam-Dinah marriage. According to them this marriage is contrived and forced as an afterthought. Another criticism on the novel is the pardon which Arthur secures for Hetty through which her capital punishment is turned into life imprisonment and transportation. This seems to be ruin of what would have been otherwise a realistic piece of art. The way Arthur comes on his horseback is an episode which would have been accept in a romance but not in a realistic novel.

According to these critics the last part of novel is superfluous and unnecessary. They say that novel should have ended with the confession of Hetty and her punishment.

Let us see whether or not ending of the novels is satisfactory. Suppose the novel would have ended with the confession of Hetty and her punishment. The Victorian readers might have felt something lacking in the novel who always demanded poetic justice. We must remember George Eliot wrote Adam Bede for the Victorian readers and they always wanted all stories to be finished with a ray of hope. They demanded the punishment of the vile and reward for the virtuous. Both Adam and Dinah are virtuous characters and their union was central to the design of the novel. It is not strange that Dinah is introduced in the very beginning of the novel.

Dinah-Adam marriage provides this ray of hope. And to say that their marriage is contrived and forced as an afterthought lose ground when we see the whole design of the novel and George Eliot’s comments on the story and characters of the novel we feel that from the beginning Dinah was meant to be the heroin of the novel. In fact novel was meant to be show growth of two pure souls and their final union. It is true that the writer does not provide any clue that Adam and Dinah will be married till the time of Hetty’s punishment but does not mean their marriage was an afterthought. Dinah refused Seth’s proposal on religious grounds. But she accepted Adam’s proposal on the same grounds. In fact the novelist wants to show that like souls finally reach one another and Adam and Dinah finally reach other not because of contrivance and force on the part of the novelist. From the beginning it was clear that Hetty was not suitable and perfect match for Adam who was perfect human being in many respects and woman like Dinah should have a husband like Adam.

It does not make any difference that Dinah does not marry one brother and marries the other. It is something very common and we observe it even today when man does not marry a girl but marries her sister or vice versa. So it is not defect in the novel.

Now let us say something about the present ending of the novel and also see any other possible ending of the novel. The most important issue in this regard is if the present ending of the novel is against the principles of realism. Answer is no. it is very much common in real life that people marry someone else if something happens to the girl whom they want to marry. As far as Seth's love for Dinah is concerned, Seth himself gives his claim of marrying Dinah. It is also very common in real when brother fails to marry one girl and the other succeeds. So it must not be very shocking.

As far as the contention that the novel should have ended with the confession of Hetty and her punishment is concerned, by continuing the story afterwards the novelist shows us the regeneration of her characters. If she had finished the story where critics demand she might have left out a lot of things which she wanted to teach her readers. It is true that realism demands that life in literature should be like the life it is actually lived but this is narrowing down the scope of realistic literature. It should also show how life should be and how life should be restructured and reframed if some catastrophe disturbs actual course of life. We know that catastrophe keep on disturbing life and men should know how to behave and conduct during the time of crisis. This is what the ending of George Eliot's novel shows.

Still another objection on the ending of the novel is Hetty's death. Critics demand that Gorge Eliot killed because she did not know the solution of her problems. They say that George Eliot leads her heroines in difficult situations and when she fails to bring them out she kills them through some accidents. They say that she cuts the knot which she fails to straighten or untangle. This allegation is true to some extent. George Eliot was realist to the core of her heart. She once fallen if victim is a woman is fallen forever and only relief is the death.

We can conclude our essay that ending of the novel is appropriate and satisfactory and this ending allows the novelist to convey her message completely and convincingly. If she had ended the novel another way, she might not have told a story through which we erring human beings can learn lessons of care and optimism when we live our lives on this earth where we have but limited options.

Adam Bede : Maturity and education of Dinah

Dinah: Her Immaturity: - It is generally recognised that Adam, in the beginning of the novel, is not a fully integrated and mature personality. The head in hm outweighs the heart. He is proud, hard and self-righteous. But this truth is not generally recognised as far as Dinah is concerned. She is also not a fully mature person. She also lacks the balance of head and heart, the sign of maturity. The novel shows how, through her love of Adam, she attains this balance and becomes a fully integrated and mature personality. Thus it is also seen that the marriage of Adam and Dinah is not an artistic fault but promotes the central philosophical and intellectual purposes of the novelist.

Her Lack of Vitality: - Dinah in the beginning of the novel is mild, compassionate and a true and selfless devotee of God, but she strikes one as having very little genuine vitality. She is all heart. She scarcely seems to breathe in the midst of her enduring calm and takes little or no nourishment—only scant victuals as Mrs. Poyser would say. Confronted by a vigorous fruitful world, she retreats. The cause of her retreat is the fear of selfishness and hardness resulting from too great abundance of world by goods.

Lack of Involvement in Life: - There is a kind of unwillingness implicit in her fear to become fully involved in life. In this respect she is like her creator, who once said that it was a pity her life could not be managed for her, while she stood by, the passive but interested spectator. Just such a one is Dinah: she observes the human condition, with sympathy and compassion; it is true, but without involvement. Selfless is a word used frequently in describing her but, selfless means not only something different from selfish; it means also lacking in self. To lack this sense of human identity is to become something either less or more than human—a clod, perhaps, or a divinity." Talking of herself to Mr. Irwine, she says: **"I'm too much given to sit still and keep by myself: it seem as if I could sit silent all day long with the thought of God overflowing my soul—as the pebbles lie bathed in the Willow Brook. For thoughts are so great—aren't they, sir. They seem to lie upon us like a deep flood; and it's my bestowment to forget where I am and everything about me, and lose myself in thoughts that I could give no account of, for I could neither make a beginning nor ending of them in words.**

Her Retreats: - Such a psychological state represents a complete withdrawal from life, and withdrawal (or retreat) is characteristic of Dinah. Whenever, the going gets rough, that is, whenever life begins, paradoxically, to seem too pleasant and seductive, Dinah flees back to Stonyshire, barren and sterile under the "overarching sky". The most notable of these strategic retreats occurs after Adam has told her of his love. Following his declaration, Dinah replies that she could return his love save for the fear that she would 'forget to rejoice and weep with others', even forget the divine presence. Her peace and joy come from having no life of her own. Adam's love only raises the fear that she will forget Jesus, the man of sorrows, and become hard: **"And think how it is with me, Adam:—that life I have led is like a land I have trodden in blessedness since my childhood; and if I long for a moment to follow the voice which calls me to another land that I know not, I cannot but fear that my soul might hereafter yearn for that early blessedness which I had forsaken, and where doubt enters there is not perfect love. I must wait for clearer guidance: I must go from you".**

Here is clear expression of Dinah's fear of accepting full maturity; for the land which faces her (i.e. Loamshire and, of course, Adam) is a strange one; and who knows what life there may hold for her? Better, then, to return to the other land (Stonyshire and the self-contained world of childhood). There is at least no risk is run. If Hetty was incapable of growing up, Dinah is afraid to.

Her Growth and Maturity through Love: - We are not permitted to see the process by which Dinah is enabled to overcome her fear, and it is a serious flaw in the novel that it is so. All, we learn is that having been told by Adam of his love for her and

having admitted in turn a love for him, Dinah once more retreats to Stonyshire, not staying even long enough to participate in the Harvest Supper. Adam, after waiting for several weeks, is no longer able to endure the strain and sets out for Stonyshire to find her. As he leaves the Loamshire world and enters gray treeless Stonyshire, he is reminded of the painful past, but in an altered light, for now he possesses what George Eliot calls a "sense of enlarged being", the consequences of the fuller life brought about by his suffering. He sees Stonyshire now through Dinah's eyes, as it were, and if his vision includes the barren land, it also includes the wonderful flooding light and the large embracing sky.

Adam waits for Dinah to return from her Sunday preaching not at her home, but on a hill top. Here, in the midst of her world, he discovers that Dinah has undergone a change, the power of her love for him has in a sense overcome her fears; she feels like a divided person without him, and she is willing to become his wife. He, therefore, takes her back to Loamshire whence she had so fled. It is not, however, to the green and golden world of June with which the book began; rather to an autumnal mature world. Here, "on a grimy morning in departing November", when there is a tinge of sadness in the weather as well as in the joy which accompanies the wedding, Adam and Dinah are married. And it is fitting that the hint of sorrow should be present, for in the world which George Eliot reveals to us, life not only contains sorrow, it needs sorrow in order that there may be love. It is in the fitness of things that they should so come together, for they are bound together by their common suffering for Hetty and by their painful memories. Suffering gives rise to sympathy, and love based on such sympathy alone can be fruitful and lasting.

Conclusion: - Dinah is domesticated in the end. It is not to be regretted. It is not a reduction of her exceptional destiny to mere commonplace domesticity. Rather it is the giving up of an impressive but rather an eccentric role for the higher destiny of full participation in the common lot of humanity.

Adam Bede : Adam's growth to maturity through suffering

George Eliot's Adam Bede is a masterpiece of literature. The novel shows growth of Adam Bede, a carpenter, to maturity trough sufferings. It may sound strange to people who are contented with the surface meaning and consequently do not try to read between the lines.

Adam Bede seems to be a perfect human being having outstanding qualities of mind and heart. When it is said that Adam Bede grows to maturity during the course of the story, a common reader feels a sort of shock. He cannot think that a man like Adam Bede can also have some flaw. Here lies the craftsmanship of the writer as far as presentation of character is concerned and understanding of human nature as far as life is concerned.

Nevertheless, Adam Bede and growth appear to be opposites. He has been presented as a successful person, highly admired and loved by everyone who knows him. He is a favorite of his mother: his mother shows more concern for him than his brother, Seth, in spite of the fact that the latter is gentler and milder in every aspect of life. His employer,

the carpenter in whose workshop he works, wants to make him his partner. He has high esteem in the eyes of the young landlord of the area- the landlord treats him as his friend. With all these things on his side, the concept of Adam's growth appears to be extraneous- an outside idea.

George Eliot is a realist writer and her understanding of human nature is comprehensible that she can easily pick flaws in character which seems to be perfect outwardly. In the very beginning of the novel, the writer tells us that a beggar could easily ask Seth to give him some money but Adam's reputation in the area was established as person who would not give any beggar anything-rather he would scold them for not working and earning what they needed to live. This description of Adam's character is clear indication that Adam does not know the value of compassion and sympathy. This trait of his character is highlighted with respect to his relation with his parents. When he returns from his work and finds that his father has not completed the work which he was supposed to, he becomes very angry and starts working and when his mother asks him to eat something; he does not listen to his mother and goes on working.

Pride is yet another flaw in Adam Bede. George Eliot furnished many episodes to show us pride in his character. When he is given the charge of the management of the woods of the area, Adam's speech is criticized by many people for being devoid of gratitude and reflecting pride. In fact, he is a self-righteous person and this sense of self-righteousness makes him oblivious of the need of gratitude. We see how he finally comes to realize this shortcoming in his character.

He sees just one side of every issue. Rather he sees what he wants to see and what he does not want to see, he either shuts his eyes completely on that or at least does not think why things are not what he wants to see them. Here is lies the tragedy of his life. This trait of his character pushes him suffering. Though at times his suffering seems to be unjustified, he comes to admit this flaw in his personality during his second meeting with Arthur after Hetty's trial. This meeting is very crucial as for as Adam's growth is concerned. Even here Adam blames Arthur his suffering and Hetty's punishment. It is with the passage of time that he sees that Adam Arthur is also a sufferer and Arthur's suffering is as painful-perhaps more painful than anyone else-as that of Adam.

Yet another flaw in Arthur is his rashness and this rashness throws him in situations where he suffers more. His rashness is highlighted again and again throughout the course of the story through action taken by Adam whenever his character is put to test. It was his luck and presence of some very kind hearted people around that his rashness does not throw him in the dungeon of permanent suffering. Suppose he would have killed Arthur during his encounter with him in the Chase when Adam saw Hetty and Arthur love making, then what? Or he would have killed him in a fit of anger if Irwine-the country priest had not stopped him, then what?

If we study Adam's character carefully by shedding our chauvinism and idealism, we can easily see many defects in his personality. We find him a grown up child who does not understand the world and life around him. And because of this lack of understanding he suffers and his sufferings make him mature and Adam Bede at the end of the novel is different from the Adam we meet throughout the novel. He is compassionate, understanding and forgiving in everything now. He tells about his meeting with Arthur and talks about Hetty's death with words drenched in sympathy and forgiveness.

Many people say that the last part of the novel is additional and that the story should have finished with Hetty' confession. This is not a sound judgment on Adam Bede. Adam Bede is not about Hetty. Hetty is in the novel because of her relation with Adam. In other words, Hetty is in the novel as experience to bring about maturity in Adam. Hetty stands for physical beauty like the one that of Eve who tempted Adam, the father of mankind, to eat the apple and bring suffering in Adam's life. Her role is no more than this in spite of the fact that the writer gives a lot of space and attention to her character.

Nevertheless we can conclude our argument once again reiterating that the novel Adam Bede is about the growth of Adam Bede to maturity and this maturity comes through suffering and his rashness, pride and lack of compassion make his suffering inevitable. Adam's maturity comes through experience and Adam is guided by his luck and some very good people on the path of experience. Without these people Adam's suffering would have becoming perhaps permanent. Here the writer seems to be showing her faith in the society. Bartle Messy, Irwine, Dinah and Arthur represent this benevolent aspect of society.

Adam Bede : Methodism and its propagation

Methodism may be defined as "a movement of reaction against the apathy of the Church of England that prevailed in the early part of 18th century. John Wesley, who was a student at Oxford and took holy orders in 1725, founded this movement. Methodist society was formed in 1729 when a few young men at Oxford came together under his leadership. Their object was the promotion of piety and morality. The greatest success of this movement was among the lower classes. When the Methodist movement strengthened, lady preachers were appointed to meet the need. First Wesley Conference was held in 1744, in which women were allowed to preach but later they were restricted to preach. In the beginning, this movement worked under the established church, but as the society grew, it became more independent. However, separation was made after the death of Wesley in 1791.

"Adam Bede' was published in 1859, but the story of the novel takes place in 1799. This was the time of most stirring events all over the world. Civil war was fought in United States, in Italy there raised the Movement of Independence, Japan came out of self-imposed isolation, Russia freed her occupied areas, and France fell to internal strife. But Hays lope in England, in which the action of the novel takes place, remains unaffected by all these events. In "Adam Bede", the famous religious movement of the time, Methodism, is discussed.

Dinah Morris, who is one of the most devoted and firm Methodist, represents this movement. She is a very influential preacher and her sermons show the characteristics of Methodist preaching. Her first appearance in the novel is in a sermon at Hays lope. This sermon has a purely Methodist appeal. At first there is an emphasis on God's love for poor, then there is a call for repentance over the sins and in the end there is warning against worldly vanity. This speech is very much similar to one of the speeches of Wesley.

This speech creates a moving effect on the audience. However, by and large, the people of Hays lope remained unaffected by Methodism, while people of Snowfield are more receptive of it.

Dinah is an example of the most sincere type of Methodist. She has a soft nature and has great sympathy for the sinners. Her chief aim is to know the will of God and to follow it. She consults the Bible before taking any crucial decision. Hence, she rejects Seth and accepts Adam after consolation.

Dinah's Methodist spirit also appears on two occasions. First one is when she visits Lisbeth Bede to console her on her husband's death. With her soothing words and manners, she helps Lisbeth to regain her self-control. Dinah gets this healing touch through her Methodist learning.

The other occasion comes when Dinah meets Hetty in prison and makes her confess. Hetty has no concept of the agony of soul. She fears only for the suffering of the body. But Dinah makes her feel the physical presence of God with them. She urges Hetty, "To put a new fear within her-the fear of her sin. Thus, because of Dinah's efforts and prayers, Hetty realizes the sufferings of her soul, confesses her crime and repents on her sin.

The novel also presents the tolerant attitude of the established church towards Methodism. Through a short speech at the end, it is made clear that Dinah is not going to preach anymore. It is because the Second Wesley Conference has forbidden the women to preach. It was felt that women preachers did more harm than goodness with their preaching. But Dinah does not belong to that group of women. She is a symbol of purity and a force of good. Moreover, much of the story involves Methodism and hence it progresses through Dinah. However, Eliot is more concerned with the psychology of the characters and their moral choice. She wants to moralize the people and Dinah's Methodist approach also highlights the moral elements to be developed in the people.

Adam Bede : Art of characterization

In novel writing, in the same way as the emotional craft the importance of characterization can't be denied. Especially the current authors lay extraordinary stress on the genuine and mighty outline of characters. The incredible the nature of characterization, the higher is the request of fiction writing. This is precisely what we discover in just about all the extraordinary writings of George Eliot. She is rightly credited with presenting a very nearly progressive change in the depiction and presentation of characters. The authors of later era have completely recognized the significance of George Eliot in this respect. D. H Lawrence, a standout amongst the most powerful present day authors pays tribute to George Eliot in the after words: **"It was she who started it all; it was she who started to put all the action inside her characters**

George Eliot's expertise in characterization is currently completely perceived, however it is by and large accepted that this dominance is shown just in "Middlemarch" and all the more especially in the "Plant on the Floss". To some degree Eliot's inimitable ability is demonstrated similarly well in "Adam Bede", her first full length novel. Indeed here her

characters are made impeccably dependable and their intentions are completely settled. It has been specified by numerous commentators that she uncovered all the complex sentiments of soul that strike at the entryways of aggravate cognizant. She depicts the activity before it is submitted. She uncovers the moves when they are making shape into the hearts. When they are conferred their grotesqueness is uncovered. For cases, the character of Arthur is the best case of the change got by the writer herself. In depicting this specific character, she uncovers all the cognizant and in addition semi-cognizant feelings which urge him to activity. We see the working of his inward generally personality.

The characterization in “Adam Bede” is completely vivid and important. In the expressions of a critic, “There is not a solitary character in the novel which is not flawlessly drawn, regardless of the fact that the representation is yet a portrayal still it is a genuine one. Indeed the character of Mr. Irwin, the individual, is precisely drawn and assumes an extremely great part in the last dilemma of Hetty. His religious learning has made him an exceptionally sensible and minding figure. The sufferings and desolations of mankind appear to him his own particular sufferings. He stretches out full participation to anyone who experiences shamefulness, mistreatment and unreasonable treatment. Indeed such a minor character discovers full chance to make an imprint on the pursuers.”

The other critic, Hennery James and Gerald Bullet have discovered a few irregularities in the characterization in “Adam Bede”. For instance, it is their conviction that the real characters like Adam and Dinah don’t stimulate the sought investment. They likewise assert that the character of Mrs. Poysers has been over lauded. Her blamelessness, extraordinary enthusiasm toward life, her imparting ability, and incredible enthusiasm toward human mind and her free and forthright disposition in all matters of life make her an extremely finish character, the most suitable for the current fiction.

The entire exhibition of characters, from major to minor, has been delightfully anticipated to make coveted impact. The flawlessness and blemish of the identities of diverse characters comprehend a superb scholarly triumph by the incredible writer. The crest of characterization gets to be undeniable when we look at the mixture of characters, parts they perform and the internal coordination that they display at each level. The mental example of internal speculation is the trademark of unique endowment of characterization of George Eliot. The complex emotions continue adding to the general impact and the topical elucidations of the distinctive portions of the plot. No other writer of George Eliot’s period can claim to have created such grand interlink and mental treatment at such a masterful level. Characterization is doubtlessly an uncommon peculiarity of George Eliot’s craft of novel writing, which is hard to surpass.

To close, it could be said with supreme certainty that the writing of George Eliot are brimming with remarkable characters which are overwhelming. The regular kind of George Eliot’s own particular identity gives shade and more extensive measurement to her characters. The inimitable characters are the glad result of solid personality of the author. Adam, Hetty, Dinah and few others affirm this reality.

Adam Bede : Hetty Sorrel represents Loamshire

Hetty Sorrel is a typical specimen of the Loamshire world. The background landscape keeps changes in keeping with changes in her fortune and career. In the novel George Eliot's presentation of nature-background is strictly utilitarian, as in that of Hardy in Tess of the D'Urbervilles."

Hetty has the fertility of the Loamshire world and also its beauty but conceals an essential hardness. To think of Hetty as she first appears in the book is to think her a being in certain places, themselves microcosm of Loamshire, the Hall Farm dairy, its garden and the Grove of Arthur's estate. Each of these places has an individual aura, but all are suggestive of fertility and growth. Furthermore, these places are appropriate to a particular phase of Hetty's relations with Arthur. Their first meeting occurs in the Hall Farm. George Eliot emphasizes its cleanliness and purity, but it remains subtly sexualized because of its nature and associated imagery. More explicitly sexual is the meeting which takes place in the Grove of Arthur's estate. Henry James regards Hetty Sorrel as the least ambitious and, on the whole, the most successful of George Eliot's female figures. He is of the view that Hetty's misfortune makes her the central figure of the book. The part of the story which is concerned with Hetty appears to him to be the most forcible. He concludes, "About Hetty Sorrel I have no hesitation whatever. I accept her with all my heart."

A second link between Hetty and the Loamshire world is that of her beauty. George Eliot writes, "a spring tide beauty, the beauty of young frisky things." Such beauty, at once suggestive of fertility and is difficult to comprehend it effect. George Creeger says, "It is a false beauty because it conceals a core of harness, as does the beauty of Loamshire itself. The people of Stonyshire observe her apparent beauty and those of Loamshire know her hidden hardness as Mrs. Poyser says, "Hetty's heart is as hard as a pebble.' She is a heartless beauty or rather a beast personified as beauty. Hetty's hardness is childish or at best adolescent egocentricity. All people and events have value or significance only as they affect the narrow circle of her own life otherwise they are not important. At the news of Mr. Bede's death, Hetty is concerned only as long as she thinks it is Adam who is meant; when she discovers her error, she lapses into indifference. She cares little about the Hall Farm, her family, aunt and uncle. So there is a persistent strain of narcissism in her. One thinks of her inordinate love of fine clothes and adornment. In such scenes she looks as if she were a worshipper. Before a mirror she turns up her own sleeves and kisses her arms with the passionate love of life. Even her love of Arthur is tinged with the same quality; in him she finds the objectification of her day-dreaming desires. What she loves in him is not so much Arthur as her own self."

Loamshire-Hayslope is a sheltered world, an earthly paradise. It is rich, fertile and beautiful world where nature is generous and abundant in this beautiful and fertile world, the poor Hetty has lived a sheltered life, entirely free from cares and worries which are the common lot of humanity. The result is that she has grown up without maturity. Growing up needs struggle; it is a process of facing difficulties and hardships. Childish creatures like Hetty in the Loamshire world are not called upon to face any such challenges; hence they remain immature and childlike. She has fantasies and day-dreaming in which she lives. She has developed a subjective world which entirely prevents her from looking at the objective world with total impartiality. She has always wished finery, clothes and jewelry. She dreams of a majestic life like Mrs. Irwine's and

finds herself being taken in a splendid carriage. In the chapter entitled, Hetty's world, the novelist gives us detailed emotional fantasies. She couldn't marry Adam because he didn't come up the standard of her conception of a lover. It was only Arthur whom she adored. Hetty's dreams were all full of luxuries. The admiring glances from Arthur's eyes intoxicated he and she moved about and worked, lost in the world of her dreams. "A new influence had come over Hetty – vague, atmospheric and full of prospects." Hetty was quite uneducated - a simple farmer's girl, to whom a gentleman with a white hand was dazzling as an Olympus god. The Admiration of Arthur is like a strong wine that goes to her head and transports her to a world of fantasy. It is an enchanted world in which Hetty lives and moves. Arthur and Hetty are both wilful children living a sheltered life in Loamshire which may be called an earthily paradise. They are babes who fall an easy prey to the temptations of the devil. They are not mature enough to see the consequences of their actions. They realize only after the fall when it is too late. Much of the tragic catastrophe of both Hetty and Arthur springs from the fact that they are willful children performing adult actions in an age which is not golden. When the fantasy breaks and the dream are shattered on reading Arthur's letter, she is dazed and bewildered and heart-rending tragedy is the result. George Creeger points out that "Hetty is as much a victim of Loamshire as its representative."

To sum up, she has spiritual deadness and hardness so Dinah tries to prepare her for the possibility of pain in life in the early part of the novel, but Hetty remains deaf to all these things because she is self-centered. The effect of Hetty's ordeal is to externalize the hardness which is concealed in her heart, although she changes towards the end of the story. No one in the Loamshire is ready to accept the actions of Hetty not forgive her or in any way help her, but Dinah Morris is able to restore Hetty to humanity - to a better humanity, at least, than that with which she had been endowed by her own world.

Being superior to Hetty both in years and in experience of the world, Arthur's responsibility is much greater for the suffering and tragedy of poor Hetty. Discuss. (P.U. 2006)

George Eliot's' Moral Concerns: - George Eliot's novels are all dramas of moral conflict. She did not believe in art for art's sake, but in art for morality's sake. According to Leslie Stephen, "George Eliot believed that a work of art not only may, but must, exercise also an ethical influence." She believed that, "our deeds determine us, as much as we determine our deeds". If we yield to temptation and sin, suffering and nemesis are sure to follow.

We have to reap the consequences of our own actions. Her characters suffer because they violate some moral code, because they yield to temptation whether consciously or unconsciously, in Adam Bede both Hetty and Arthur suffer for this reason. Poignant tragedy is the result because both Arthur and Hetty are creatures of weak moral fibre. They are unable to resist temptation. This moral weakness results in sin, which is followed by punishment and intense suffering. Arthur-Hetty story traces the movement from weakness to sin and from sin to nemesis.

Hetty: An Intensely Human Figure: - Hetty Sorrel is the central figure in the novel. She is sketched neither as a temptress nor as an innocent virgin ruined by a profligate young man, but simply as a village girl who has romantic dreams of life with a handsome and rich lover. She pays the full price for her unthinking folly. Her suffering makes the reader take a sympathetic interest in the feelings and action of this limited, selfish yet intensely human figure. In respect of the suffering that she undergoes she is regarded as the central figure of the tragedy. In the words of Henry James: **"The central figure of the book by virtue of her great misfortune is Hetty Sorrel. Her suffering gives her special eminence. In the presence of that misfortune no one else assuredly, has a right to claim dramatic pre-eminence."**

Her Sheltered Early life: -In the beginning of the novel we find her, happy and contended, in her aunt's home, looking after the usual work in a diary. Excepting rebukes from time to time from her aunt Mrs. Poyser, who really is fond of her, she lives a sheltered life and has not to face the hardships and difficulties which are the lot of man on this earth. But she is vain and frivolous. She loves finery, and is often lost in a world of dreams and fantasy. She is a creature of weak moral fibre, and is unable to resist the temptation when it comes to her in the form of Arthur Donnithorne.

Moral Weakness: Inability to Resist Temptation: - Hetty is loved by Adam Bede, a skilled carpenter, hard-working and honest, widely admired and respected for his qualities of head and heart. He is a man of whose love every woman would be proud. Hetty, too, is aware of his sterling worth, but he is poor and so he cannot be her prince charming for he cannot provide her with all those comforts and luxuries, all those means to a splendid life, which she yearns for. Vain and frivolous as she is, the admiring glances of Arthur go to her head even during their first meeting in the dairy of Hall Farm. Foolish Hetty is intoxicated; it is her dreams of a Prince sharing come true. Her imagination is excited and she at once dreams of the splendid life she would lead after her marriage with Arthur.

Her Dream World: -The novelist comments on her dream world and writes, "A new influence had come over Hetty—gay, atmospheric, shaping itself into no self-confessed hopes or prospects, but producing a pleasant narcotic effect, making her tread the ground and go about her work in a sort of dream, unconscious of weight or effort, and showing her all things through a soft, liquid veil, as if she were living not in this world of brick and stone, but in a beautified world, such as the sun lights up for us in the waters. The poor child no more conceived at present the idea that the young Squire could ever be her lover, than a Baker's pretty daughter in the crowd, whom a young emperor distinguishes by an imperial but admiring smile conceives that she shall be made empress. But the baker's daughter goes home and dreams of the handsome young emperor, and perhaps weighs the flour amiss while she is thinking what a heavenly lot it must be to have him for a husband: and so poor Hetty had got a face and a presence haunting her waking and sleeping dreams; bright soft glances, had penetrated her, and suffused her life with a strange happy languor. Since then her inward life had consisted of little else than living through in memory the looks and words Arthur had directed towards, her—of little else than recalling the sensations with which she heard his voice outside the house, and saw him enter, and became conscious that his eyes were fixed on her, and then became conscious that a tall figure, looking down on her with eyes that

seemed to touch her, was coming nearer in clothes of beautiful texture, with an odour like that of a flower garden borne on the evening breeze". Hetty was quite uneducated, "a simple farmer's girl, to whom a gentleman with a white hand was dazzling as an Olympian god"

Yielding to Temptation: - Hetty was thus tempted, and the grown up child that she was, she at once yielded to temptation. When Hetty realized that Arthur loved her, she became thoroughly conscious of her own beauty. The scene in her bed-chamber shows her at her vainest. Dinah's serious talk upsets her, not because she responded to it, but because she had the timidity of a luxurious, pleasure-seeking nature which shrinks from the hint of pain.

Consequent Suffering: - But poor, beautiful Hetty was destined to face great pain and her lovely dreams ended in tragedy. "The parting with Arthur was a double pain to her: mingling with the tumult of passion and vanity, there was a dim, undefined fear that the future might shape itself in some way quite unlike her dream." Hetty's girlish happiness died on the night that she received Arthur's letter of farewell. There is no despair so absolute as that which comes with the first moments of our first great sorrow". They met frequently, and Hetty continued to live and move in a world of fantasy; till one day they were observed by Adam. The fight in the wood followed and Adam compelled Arthur to write a letter to Hetty telling her in unambiguous terms that he could never marry her. All the romantic dreams of poor Hetty were thus shattered.

And Punishment: - Hetty was tempted and she yielded to that temptation. This sin, the result of moral weakness, was followed swiftly by punishment and suffering. The two chapters—"Journey in Hope" and "Journey in Despair"—the two most powerful chapters in the novel, are the records of her deep spiritual anguish. She is dazed and bewildered by the tragedy that has over-taken her, moreso for when she realises that she is pregnant and marriage with Adam, has, therefore, become out of question. She is driven to desperation and contemplation of suicide by fear of shame and disgrace. She had no guiding principle to follow, for although she had attended church regularly, she had not absorbed a single Christian idea or feeling. Worn out with her wanderings to Windsor and back to Stoniton, she gave birth prematurely in the house of a stranger, Sarah Stone. The next evening, feverish and half-crazy, she went out and tried to escape from her shame by abandoning her baby in the woods. Its cry haunted her and she returned—but too late. Facing the public disgrace of her trial and the knowledge that she was condemned by all, Hetty "shut her heart against her fellow-creatures". Dinah alone was able, through her loving sympathy, to reach out and help her, convincing her of God's mercy and removing her dread of perpetual remorse beyond the grave. A sort of spiritual regeneration takes place when she opens out her heart to Dinah, confesses her crime, and prays with her for God's mercy. But this is not much of a regeneration. For Arthur is able to save her from execution, but not from transportation.

Arthur—His Weakness: - Thus Hetty's story illustrates the moral truth that sin—any yielding to temptation—is sure to be followed by punishment and suffering. This truth is also illustrated by the character of Arthur. He too is a man of weak moral fibre, he too yields to temptation, and the result is the tragedy that wrecks poor Hetty's life, as well as his own. He knew from the start that he could never marry Hetty, still he flirted with

her, and had intimate relations with her. He was a man, superior to Hetty both in years and in experience of the world. As Arthur James points out, "A weak woman is, indeed, weaker than a weak man", and so Arthur's responsibility is much greater for the suffering and tragedy of poor Hetty.

His Responsibility for Hetty's Tragedy: - The way in which Arthur seduces Hetty—treats her as a juicy morsel to satisfy his lust—would make him the conventional villain of a melodrama, without the insight that the novelist has given us into his mind and soul. His is the tragedy of a weak man who is unable to live up to his good intentions. R.T. Jones in writes this connection, "the innocence that Arthur represents consists in cultivating friendly relations with everybody; never willingly doing harm to anybody; and being willing to make amends for any harm he may accidentally do. This innocence is a matter of intentions, of meaning well and meaning no ill, and is necessarily presented in descriptions of his thoughts rather than in actions. Without the account of his intentions, his actions, objectively regarded, would be almost indistinguishable from those of calculated villainy." For example consider the following:

"Do you always come back this way in the evening, or are you, afraid to come so lonely a road?"

'Oh, no, sir, it's never late; I always set out by eight o'clock, and it's so light now in the evening. My aunt would be angry with, me if I didn't get home before nine.'

'Perhaps Craig, the gardener, comes to take care of you?'

A deep blush overspread Hetty's face and neck. 'I'm sure he doesn't, I'm sure he never did; I wouldn't lex him; I don't like him she said hastily, and the tears of vexation had come so fast, that before she had done speaking, a bright drop rolled down her hot cheek. Then she felt ashamed to death that she was crying, and for one long instant her happiness was all gone. But in the next she felt an arm steal round her, and a gentle voice said—

'Why, Hetty, what makes you cry? I didn't mean to vex you. I wouldn't vex you for the world, you little blossom. Come, don't cry; look at me, else I shall think you won't forgive me.'

'Arthur had laid his hand on the soft arm that was nearest and was stooping towards Hetty with a look of coaxing entreaty……'

Comments R.T. Jones, "If Arthur had been conventionally wicked Squire's son setting out to seduce the village maiden he could hardly have made a better start. Yet George Eliot enables us to look at this scene—with the additional knowledge that there is no prospect of Arthur's marrying Hetty—and still remain convinced that he means no ill."

His Good Intentions—His Fatal Error: - For we have seen how Arthur has tried not to allow himself to meet Hetty: "If he lunched with Gwaine and lingered chatting, he should not reach the Chase again till nearly five, when Hetty would be safe out of his

sight in the House keeper's room, and when she sets out to go home, it would be his lazy time after dinner, so he should keep out of her way altogether." His error is to underestimate the strength of his impulse to meet Hetty; this becomes more evident in the sentences that follow, but is already implicit in his apparent belief that after-dinner laziness will be an adequate deterrent. He goes, but returns early, and the author's generalisation serves to make the return intelligible to us and, at the same time, to make us aware of a common inconsistency which we may recognise in ourselves. "It is the favourite stratagem of our passions to sham a retreat, and to turn sharply round upon us at the moment we have made up our minds that the day is our own."

Stratagems of Passion: - The 'stratagems of passion' are seen with illuminating clarity when Arthur, after luncheon, is unable to 'recall the feelings and reflections which had been decisive in his decision to avoid Hetty'. We are told of his conscious thoughts, and the self-deceptions and distortions of truth that we see in them make, so to speak, a chart of the subconscious force of his impulse to see her—as a strong underwater current, showing nosing on the surface, is yet known to be present by the extent to which its pull on the keel of a ship alters its course. It is in such accounts of motives, conscious and unconscious, that Arthur is created and exists as a character in the novel. Our recognition of his good intentions, self-deceptions and weaknesses of will makes the portrayal real and acceptable to us.

His Suffering and Punishment: - As a result of his moral weakness in yielding to temptation, Arthur too suffers from deep spiritual anguish. His life is also wrecked. He is miserable, wretched and repentant. He tries to do his best, amends but he fails to save Hetty from transportation, and cannot heal the wounds that he has inflicted on himself, on Adam, on the Poysers, and on all those connected with the tragic tale of poor Hetty. However, by going away for several years Arthur made it possible for the Poysers and Adam to remain at Hayslope. He drank the bitter cup of repentance to the full, for, as he said to Adam, "I was all wrong from the very first, and horrible wrong has come of it. God knows, I'd give my life if I could undo it."

Conclusion: - In short, the novel is a study in moral weakness and its terrible consequences.

George Eliot as a Modern Psychological Novelist

Psychological Novel: It's Nature: - George Eliot is a Victorian novelist, but in many ways she is the first of the great modern novelists. She is a modern in her high conception of her art, in her view of the novel as a serious art form and in her interest in the human psyche.

A psychological novelist analyses the motives, pulses and mental processes which move his characters to act in a particular way. He depicts the inner struggles of his characters and thus lays bare their souls before his reader. Thus in psychological novels there is much soul-dissection, as in the dramatic monologues of Browning, and the novel acquires a hard intellectual tone. Samuel Richardson, George Eliot, and George Meredith are some of the pioneers to be mentioned in this connection.

The Inner Action: - George Eliot is an 'intellectual novelist' and she brought to bear on the art of the novelist an exceptionally well-cultivated and trained intellect, and extraordinary powers of observation and reasoning. Her concerns are primarily serious and intellectual; she is more concerned with the inner drama, the inner action, than with the presentation of the externals of character and action. She goes behind the external action, analyses the thought-processes, the motives, the springs of that action. Her novels are all novels of moral conflict, and the scene of that conflict is not the external world but the soul of the character concerned. Her novels are remarkable for their psychological realism, and this is her peculiar contribution to the English novel.

Spiritual Conflicts: Moral Disorder: - She goes deep into the obscure recesses of human nature, and deals elaborately and in great variety with those spiritual conflicts and moral disorders which bring about the ruin and downfall of an individual. The tragedies which take place in her novels are all tragedies caused by some moral lapse or weakness, and George Eliot shows how that moral weakness slowly but inexorably operates within the human soul, ultimately driving the individual to his doom. Each individual thus is shown to bear his own fate within him. A.E. Baker rightly points out, **"George Eliot's sphere was the inner man; she exposed the internal clockwork. Her characters are not simply passive, and they do not stand still; they are shown making their own history, continually changing and developing or degenerating as their motives issue into acts, and the acts become part of the circumstances that condition, modify, and purify or demoralise the will."** Our deeds determine us, as much as we determine our deeds. Thus she rationalizes life and character, bringing the obscure into clear daylight, with her zeal for truth applying the most rigorous logic to the resolution of each problem, working it out with the accuracy and solemnity appropriate to a judicial inquiry, and issuing verdicts as irrefutable as the results of a scientific experiment. This was to view life tragically, and the novel had to be reshaped to bear the stress of the new conception.

The Internal Drama: - Her novels are all biographies; Middlemarch interweaves the biographies of some fifty individuals. For the merely historical part, the loose epical plan that served Thackeray and Dickens was not inadequate. But the action invariably concentrates sooner or later into a crisis which automatically manifests itself in the inner drama. This is where the implicit idea, the central theme becomes clearly apparent, and the clash of motives and inhibitions which is the working out of the problem, now goes on to the logical conclusion. Such a novel is not dramatic in the sense that the action culminates in great scenes and spectacular events; there is a striking paucity of what usually constitutes incident in her novels. She rarely exhibits characters struggling together as on the stage. The drama is internal, it is the drama of moral conflict. The conflict is that of egocentric impulses, good or bad, with an opposing environment, and the antagonistic forces take many forms.

Portraits of the Inner Man: - Her psychological insight into the springs of human action is best seen in her delineation of her serious characters. She does not begin with the personality that appears to the outward world, but with the psychological elements underlying that personality. Her portrait is pre-eminently concerned with these elements. She may clothe them in outward idiosyncrasy, but this idiosyncrasy is never the principal thing about them. We do not remember her serious characters by their appearance or

the way they talked, indeed we do not remember these things clearly at all. Her portraits are all primarily portraits of the inner man.

Probing of the Psyche: - George Eliot's serious characters are envisaged exclusively in their moral aspect. They are portraits of the inner man, but portraits not designed like Charlotte Bronte's to exhibit the colour of his temperament, but the principles of conduct—his besetting sin, his presiding virtue. Such a portrait inevitably omits many of those aspects of a man—his manner, his mood, his face—which make living most of the great figures of fiction. All the same, George Eliot's concentration on the moral side of human nature is the chief source of her peculiar glory, the kernel of her precious, unique contribution to our literature. Her imagination is not a distorting glass like Dickens, vitalising her figures by accentuating their personal idiosyncrasies, nor is it like Charlotte Bronte's, a painted window suffusing them with the colour of her own live temperament; it is an X-ray, bringing them to life by the clearness with which she penetrates to the secret mainspring of their actions.

Penetrating Intellect and Observation: - Her penetrating intellect is the source of her success. Her power of drawing conclusions gave her a naturally sharp eye for symptoms of moral strength and weakness, taught her to discern them in all their varying modes of expression in well brought up girls, in men of the world, a poor weaver, a lusty young man, to note that Dr. Lydgate did not take trouble with an ugly woman, that Hetty always avoided being left to look "after the children." She could also distinguish between different varieties of the same characteristic; see how Dorothea's sense of duty differed from Mary Garth's, Godfrey Cass's self-indulgence from that of Arthur Donnithorne. "And she took advantage of her observation. She traced these expressions of virtue and weakness to their original source in the character, discovered the spark of nobility, the streak of weakness which are their origin. Finally, her disciplined generalising intelligence taught her to see the significance of her discoveries." Having analysed a character into its elements, she was able to distinguish their relative force and position. She could deduce its central principle so that, however complex, and inconsistent it might appear, she saw it as a unity. It is this grasp of psychological essentials which gives her characters their reality. We may not see Godfrey Cass as we see Pickwick, but we understand him.

Psychological Consistency: - The result of such clear understanding of the inner man is that her characters are all psychologically consistent. They have inner consistency which is lacking in the characters of the other Victorian novelists. They also act under the irresistible force of their directing principle, and so they are always true to themselves. Further, this psychological insight also enables the novelist to sketch successfully the growth and development of a character. The stages in the growth and deterioration of a character are well-marked and logically consistent as, for example, has been done in the case of Lydgate in Middlemarch and Silas Marner in the novels of that name.

The Central Principle: - Further, George Eliot's grip on psychological essentials enables her to draw complex characters much better than her predecessors. Writes David Cecil in this connection, "Drawing from the inside out, starting with the central principle of the character, she is able to show how it reveals itself in the most apparently

inconsistent manifestations, can give to the most varied coloured surface of character that prevalent tone which marks it as expression of one personality. Her characters always hang together, are of a piece, their defects are the defects of their virtues. We are not surprised that a man so anxious for the good opinion of others as Arthur Donnithorne should selfishly seduce Hetty, because we realise that the controlling force in his character is the desire for immediate enjoyment; so that his wish to sun himself in the pleasant warmth of other people's liking goes along with his inability not to yield to the immediate pleasure of Hetty's embraces. George Eliot can follow the windings of motive through the most tortuous labyrinths, for firmly grasped in her hand is always the central clue."

Source of Moral Defeat and Triumph of Temptation: - Her power of describing mixed characters extends to mixed states of mind. Indeed, the field of her most characteristic triumphs is the moral battlefield. Her eagle eye can penetrate through all the shock and the smoke of struggle, to elucidate the position of the forces concerned, and reveal the trend of their action. We are shown exactly how the forces of temptation deploy themselves for the attack, how those of conscience rally to resistance, the ins and outs of their conflict, how inevitably in the given circumstances one or the other triumphs. She is particularly good at showing how, temptation triumphs. "No other English novelist has given us so vivid a picture of the process of moral defeat, the gradual steps by which Mr. Bulstrode is brought to further Raffle's death, Arthur Donnithorne's gradual yielding to his passion for Hetty, Maggie Tulliver's to hers for Stephen Guest. With an inexorable clearness she reveals how temptation insinuates itself into the mind, how it retreats at the first suspicious movement of conscience, how it comes back disguised, and how, if once more vanquished, it will sham death only to arise suddenly and sweep its victim away on a single irresistible gust of desire when he is off his guard." With an extraordinary subtlety she describes how Maggie's passion for Stephen steals into her inexperienced mind, imperceptibly, so that she only realises it when it has become such an obsession that she is unable to see it in its true proportions. Alone in her room she can make the strongest resolutions but when Stephen appears the violence of her desire so overwhelms her that she can't see her conduct in perspective at all. She lives only in the present, and in the present she is only conscious that she is happy and must at all costs prolong her happiness.

Portrait of Moral Chaos: - With equal insight she can portray the moral chaos that takes possession of the mind after wrong has been done. She exposes all the complex struggling of a spirit striving to make itself at ease on the bed of a disturbed conscience, the desperate casuistry by which it attempts to justify itself, its inexhaustible ingenuity in blinding itself to unpleasant facts, the baseless hopes it conjures up for its comfort; she can distinguish precisely how different an act looks before it is done, shrouded in the softening darkness of the secret heart, and after it has been exposed in all its naked ugliness to the harsh daylight of other peoples' judgment. The guilt-ridden conscience of Arthur Donnithorne in Adam Bede is analysed in this way and we are shown the scorpions that sting him and prevent sleep. With rare penetration and insight George Eliot isolates and detects the various warring elements in Arthur's mind, his genuine compunction, his horror of being disapproved, of his instinctive resentment at disapproval, however justifiable, his inextinguishable hope that things will come right in the end, his irrational conviction that with him, at least, things always must come right.

One grows quite uncomfortable as one watches so merciless, so delicate an exposure of human weakness. The truth it embodies is universal. In exposing Arthur Donnithorne, she also exposes her reader.

Conclusion: - It is George Eliot's psychological insight into the springs of human action, the subtle analysis of character and motive accompanying the external action, which gives her a peculiar and individual place among the Victorian novelists. She is one of them and yet how very different and original. She is the first of the great modern novelists who have a high conception of their art, who regard the novel as a serious art form, and who are given to the probing of the human psyche, to the subtle analysis of the sub-conscious and even the unconscious.

"Eliot's Stories Grow Like Plants Out of a Theme or Idea in a Given Social Environment".

A Compact Whole: - The plot of Adam Bede is much better constructed, it is more coherent and well-knit, than that of many a contemporary novel. This is so because the novel was not published in parts. It was not serialised in any magazine, but was even, at first, published in book-form. So revision and excision could be possible. Loose odds and ends were tied up, and everything superfluous was rigidly excluded. There is not a single character or event in the whole novel which does not further it's action. The novel is a compact whole, it is like a well-constructed building from which not a single brick can be taken out without damaging the whole structure.

The Four Stories—Their Integration: - From George Eliot's own account of the genesis of the novel, it is clear that she was quite alive to the problem of construction. There are four different stories in the novel (a) Adam-Hetty love story (b) Arthur-Hetty Sorrel love-story (c) Adam-Dinah love-story, and (d) The mutual relations of Arthur and Adam. The problem was how to integrate these four stories into a single whole. The story of Hetty—the girl who is seduced by the Squire's son and is convicted of child-murder—forms the core of the novel. The inter-linking of the various stones is made possible by the relations of Adam and Arthur to each other and to Hetty, and the marriage of Adam and Dinah rounds up the whole, and satisfies contemporary conventions by linking the lives of the hero and heroine at the close.

Thematic Unity: - There is also thematic unity. The story grows like a plant out of the idea or theme that, failure to resist temptation is a moral weakness, and any yielding to temptation is sure to be followed by divine punishment and consequent suffering. This theme is inter-linked with the theme of moral enlightenment, self-education and regeneration. The moment of dis-enchantment, when all illusions and self-deceptions are shattered, comes to all alike. This is illustrated by the stories of Arthur, Hetty and Adam. Such are the themes out of which the story evolves step by step, logically and inexorably, and the characters and their stories are seen but to be the exposition or illustration of these themes and ideas.

Organic Wholeness: - The novels of George Eliot are "organic wholes" inasmuch as the story, the character and the social environment are well-integrated. The social

environment forms the outer circle which envelopes the inner circle, i.e. the principal characters with whose life and fortunes the novel is concerned. For example, in Adam Bede the life of Hayslope envelops the tragedy. We come to know all grades of its society, artisans, labourers, farmers, rector, schoolmaster, innkeeper and Squire. It is an active community in which most men or women have work to do and their character is affected by that work. That character is also the product of religious influences; we become aware of the impact of Methodism upon the inhabitants of Hayslope and of the more subtly pervasive influence of traditional Anglicanism. In the Third Book the whole community is assembled at Donnithorne Chase to celebrate the young Squire's coming of age; by that time the pattern of living out of which the central characters emerge is clearly established and their drama is already under way. After the climax, when Hetty Sorrel has been condemned to death, reprieved and deported, and another author would feel that the work was complete, there is a Sixth Book balancing the Third. In it the rhythm of Hayslope life is re-established and, with the inevitable gaps made by the intervening event, a Harvest supper reassembles the same community as celebrated the young Squire's birthday.

Social Environment and the Central Tragedy: - The central tragedy is intimately connected with this background. The full effect of Arthur Donnithorne's yielding to the sensuous appeal of the pretty child-like Hetty and of all that ensues depends upon the relation of both characters to their world. The pride and well-grounded self-respect of the Poysers established in the reader's mind by the vivid pictures of their surroundings, their working day, their home life, their Sunday observance, and the neighbours' opinion of them, all play their part in causing the tragedy and in heightening the bitterness of its effect. It is the social background the Poysers have provided for their niece and the standard of conduct imbibed from it that make it inevitable for Hetty to take flight before the birth of her baby; it is the esteem in which they are held by which the reader measures their shame and it is the clear sense he acquires of their identification with Hayslope by which he measures the anguish as well as the probability of their contemplated uprooting when the shame is known to them. Similarly, it is Arthur's upbringing, his relations with his grandfather, the Squire, his high conception of the love and esteem he will earn from all his dependents when he inherits the land, that explain the price he pays for his weakness and his suffering.

There is no part of what we have learnt of the outer circle that does not affect our sense of the inner. The cultured benignity of the Rector, the moral enthusiasm of the Methodists, the simple ignorance of the country-folk, all make their own impact on the central characters and help to determine the events. Although the impression while we read is of a leisurely sequence of naturalistic scenes of comedy or of pathos and of a world richly populated with entertaining characters, when we look back we find that every individual scene or character is directly or indirectly related to the simple story at the core of the book, of the carpenter's betrothed betrayed by the Squire's grandson. In its setting this commonplace story becomes widely significant. The simple, well-contrived pattern conveys the sense of a social structure enclosing four human beings as completely as the soil encloses the roots of growing plant and, in so doing, it illustrates one aspect of the author's vision of life.

Integrations with the Physical Environment: - Not only are the story and character integrated with their social environment, they are also well-integrated in the present novel with their physical environment. They are symbolic of it. They have the softness and fertility of Loamshire, but they have also its hardness, its spiritual deadness. Dinah's preaching on Hayslope green leaves the audience, with rare exceptions, untouched. They are not receptive to religion, for their life of ease and self-indulgence has made them spiritually dead. Adam is hard and self-righteous, the stubbornness and hardness of Hetty comes out during the trial and Arthur is self-indulgent.

Dinah as Connecting Link: - Dinah is the connecting link between Loamshire and Stony-shire. She has come from Stonyshire, rocky, hard and barren, but the people there are more receptive to religion, they are more alive spiritually. Therefore, whenever Dinah feels that she is in danger of being engulfed by the spiritual deadness of Hayslope, she retreats to Stonyshire to carry on her vocation there. Thus she leaves Hayslope without even participating in the Harvest supper, because she senses spiritual danger in the marriage-proposal of Adam. It is also to be noted that the nature-background changes in keeping with the change in the fortunes of poor Hetty. Her early happy life is lived in the idyllic physical environment of Hayslope; from here she goes to the barren and rocky Stonyshire where she is convicted and sentenced to death. Seasonal changes are also carefully noted, and well-integrated with the changing fortunes of the principal characters. For example, the marriage of Adam and Dinah takes place not on a green and golden morning of spring, but on "a grimy morning in departing November". There is a tinge of sadness in the weather as there is in the joy which accompanies the wedding. Their painful memories of Hetty colour and subdue their joy in the present.

Parallelisms and Contrasts: - There is thematic organisation of material and there is also close integration of the action of the novel with the social and physical environment. Further, the heterogeneous material of the novel has been organised and patterned through an elaborate system of parallelisms and contrasts. The structure is symmetrical. The six books of the novel divide themselves into three symmetrical parts, each with a central motif of its own. The centre of interest of Book I is the assembly of villagers on the village green to hear the preaching of Dinah Morris. The incident points to the force of Methodism that tends to take the villagers out of themselves, but it also gives a hint; that the Hayslope community is not capable of any drastic change in this direction. Till this stage the two Methodists, Seth and Dinah, loom large before the reader, but eventually it is not the Methodist, Seth Bede, but Irwine's favourite parishioner, Adam Bede, who will steal the show, in Book III the central incident is the assembly of the villagers at the feast in honour of Arthur's birthday. This can be regarded as a pivotal incident insofar as the evolution of the Arthur-Hetty episode is concerned. The Harvest Supper in Book VI is a similar focal incident. It restores the balance disrupted by the force generated by the outcome of Arthur-Hetty intrigue. Of all George Eliot's novels "Adam Bede" possesses the most clearly discernible pattern.

The Rhythm of Rural Life: - It may also be mentioned that the novelist has succeeded in capturing the slow, leisurely pace of rural life, as it was lived in, isolated communities like that of Hayslope, before the coming of the railways. Dorothy V. Ghent says in this connection, "the pace of Adam Bede is set to Mrs. Poyser's clock, to all that,

slow toil and activity that have made daylight and living valuable. Slower, organically, invisibly slow at the months of Hetty's pregnancy; the Poyser's clock, the clock at the Chase, do not keep this time with their eights and nines and half past nines. This other deep, hidden animal time drags the whole pace down to that of poor Hetty's journey in despair, a blind automatism of animal night where the ticking of the human clock cannot be heard."

Adam Bede : The Downfall of Hetty Sorrel

The tragic role of the character Hetty Sorrel is one that is central to the storyline of Adam Bede; her heinous crime of infanticide greatly unsettles the fictional community of Hayslope. Hetty aspires for something more than the manual labour of working on her Uncle's farm; she is initially attracted to the young squire Arthur Donnithorne, Arthur is attracted to Hetty and returns her flirtations without honourable intentions of marrying her, he believes that it would be wrong to marry outside of his own class. During their encounters Hetty naively romanticizes that Arthur will surely marry her, the marriage she visualises however is not one of love but one of luxury and finery, luxuries which would be unobtainable to Hetty as an orphan dependant on the charity of her uncle and his wife. Hetty gives herself to Donnithorne falsely believing that her dreams of grandeur will undoubtedly come true, however she immediately turns her affections to Adam Bede when she realises that Donnithorne will not make her a 'lady'. The characterization of Hetty Sorrel seems to vary throughout the novel in the earlier chapters she is condemned by the author for her vanity and selfishness, however in the later chapters of her suffering she appears to be dealt with more sympathetically.

Hetty is beautiful and is often described using metaphors symbolic of nature and of animal imagery; she has **'a beauty like that of kittens, or very small downy ducks'. 'Hetty's was a springtide beauty; it was the beauty of young frisking things', it was a beauty that seemed 'made to turn the heads not only of men, but of all intelligent mammals, even of women'.**

Hetty desires material possessions and she believes that her beauty can be her means to obtain a life of luxury, however, instead of marriage and the life she longs for she gets an unplanned and unwanted pregnancy. It is a pregnancy that Hetty is not emotionally equipped to handle as she repeatedly denies that she ever was and shows little or no emotion at her trial she looks 'down at her hands' throughout the trial and has a 'blank hard indifference', standing 'like a statue of dull despair'. Hetty is unsure what she feels for the baby as she says 'I seemed to hate it', but she is sure of one thing and that is that she 'longed so to be safe at home'. Hetty is continually linked with connotations of maternal ideology from her less than caring attitude towards her cousin Totty and baby animals to her subsequent crime of infanticide.

The character flaws of Arthur Donnithorne are not implicated in the events of Hetty's downfall, though he clearly displays characteristics for which Hetty is condemned. It is after all vanity that drives Donnithorne in his seduction of Hetty. He knows that his desire for her is impractical but he carries on in his seduction of her nonetheless. Arthur

is shallow and is ready to 'pitch everything for the sake of surrendering himself to this delicious feeling' that Hetty has created in him

Following Hetty and Arthur's encounter in the woods Arthur asserts he 'had not yet seen the woman who would play the lady wife to the first-rate country gentleman'. Moreover he is annoyed by Hetty's expectations of marriage **'her vision was all spun by her own childish fancy'**, and he goes on to say 'but Hetty might have had the trouble in some other way if not in this', further trivialising Hetty's fall and his own role in it. Arthur never offers to marry Hetty although he is free to do so, he writes **'I know you can never be happy except by marrying a man in your own station'**, remaining tenaciously class bound throughout the novel. Arthur's rejection of Hetty is a great shock for her, her earlier dreams of becoming a 'lady' are shattered by Arthur's letter but moreover her ego. At the conclusion of Adam Bede the reader is encouraged to believe that stability is brought about by learning through suffering and accordingly Arthur carries out a form of symbolic penance by going away to fight at war, on his return home he resumes his place as head of the community. Hetty receives no such redemption; she in fact dies during her journey home following the completion of her sentence, thus disposing of her in order to secure the acceptance of Donnithorne back into his position as head of the community.

George Eliot gives Hetty Sorrel the ultimate punishment of death for her ambition of marrying above her station, consequently George Eliot was merely a pseudonym used by Mary Ann Evans to hide her identity as a woman writer writing in a male dominated world. George Eliot continually presents Hetty 'in exactly the way she envisions herself, that is, as an erotic object', but that following Hetty's 'flight after she discovers she is pregnant with Donnithorne's child' that 'suddenly the narrator's condescending remarks about Hetty's triviality and sensuality become veiled accusations against his own sex.

In conclusion the story of Hetty Sorrel's downfall is essential to the moral development of the other characters in the novel as they ultimately learn to take responsibility for their individual actions. George Eliot aimed to portray through her characters, their relationships with one another and the eventual 'downfall' of Hetty Sorrel, that from suffering and pain there could be lessons learned and some good could be gained from an otherwise completely bad situation. It was also Eliot's aim to express that 'commonplace life is heroic' , her huge concentration on Hetty Sorrel's socially taboo story is significantly representative of Eliot's desire to convey the 'realism' of human nature and the power of emotional force, it is this coupled with her attention to detail that marks her distinctive approach to realism. Eliot's pen name was a conscious decision to popularize her fiction in the world of the male writer, therefore the masculine voice that she adopted within Adam Bede was consistent with her awareness of the patriarchal ordered society that she lived in. It was this awareness that lead to her condemnation of Hetty Sorrel's vanity, however, it can be discerned that it is the characters around Hetty who have provided her with the notion that she is exceptionally beautiful and that it is her most powerful attribute, it is not surprising that she feels a sense of entitlement and when Donnithorne begins to pay her attention and it is not so odd to believe that she would envision a future as his lady wife, with her at the centre receiving sole admiration from him.

Bacon's Essays

Development of English Prose upto Bacon's Time

The English prose of Alfred's days differs radically in its linguistic structure from the English of the 14th century. It has, therefore, little direct influence upon the development of the new literary prose. Alfred and his contemporaries had fashioned a prose which was wonderfully flexible. According to the nature of the subject treated it was either conversational and intimate in tone or sonorous and periodic in expression. The prose of the 14th century consists mostly of translation from Latin and French devotional writings and homilies. They aim more at the edification of the common people than at style. The writers had no conception of the function of the sentence. This defect persisted as late as the end of the fifteenth century. Malory's Morted Arthur illustrates this defect, admirably. It is a quick moving narrative translated and "adopted" from the French. It reveals the author's bold intention of fashioning a prose style from the ordinary speech of his time. Hi often achieved a striking rhythm. But it is clear that he often tried to make his sentences convey far too much. His prose is roughhewn from the common speech and has not yet developed into an art-form.

Elizabethan Prose:- The Elizabethans had a genius for poetry and drama but their prose is often intolerable. They enriched the language by adding to its vocabulary many new words and phrases. But some of their prose is heavy, pompous and undisciplined. This pomp and their indiscipline are one product of a quest of persuasiveness. They occur chiefly in the works of those who sought to achieve their object by writing periodic prose in the manner of Cicero. Other peculiarities mark the work of those who tried to achieve it by writing what is called euphuistic prose. This was a style John Lily made fashionable. Hooker modelled his style on the structure of the Ciceronian periods. His style is a typical example of the way in which the educated Englishman of the day under the influence of the Renaissance were trying to give to English prose the clarity, the massive dignity and rhythm of the choice of classical Latin. Latin construction sometimes plays havoc with the sentences. The style now and then has "a monstrous beauty, like the hind quarters of an elephant." It is unfit for tine discussion of the ordinary affairs of life. Hooker has sought to please his contemporaries by trying to make English prose as pliant, rich and dignified as Latin prose. But he has often sacrificed the two important essentials of good style i.e. perspicuity and appropriateness.

Lyly was a conscious and skilful artist and introduced euphuistic prose. The distinctive feature of Euphuism are the courtly affectation of smart sayings, epigram and antithesis. In each sentence he tried to achieve balance, rhythm and perspicuity by neatly pointed antitheses and parallel construction but the resulting effect is generally unspeakably artificial and tedious to the modern ear. He tried to give to English prose a definite and obvious brilliance by his peculiar method of writing. It must be said that Lyly hit upon a

fundamental aesthetic principle when he devised a prose style that was distinct from colloquial speech. He sought to satisfy the Englishman's desire "to hear a finer speech than the language will allow." But in this quest of persuasiveness he often sacrificed the virtue of appropriateness.

Bacon's Essays, much of the prose in Shakespeare and the Authorized Version of the Bible show the evolution of a prose style that combines dignity and rhythm with simplicity of expression. Bacon's writing is the distillation of many manners of prose writing up to 1602. The two main defects of English prose were unwieldiness and a tendency to "find writing". Bacon is the first scientific philosopher to write English in a clean, and terse style. The Essays have a note of authority about them. There is in his writing pithiness and relevance that hitherto had rarely been found in prose. But despite the brevity of his utterance, Bacon was Elizabethan in his power of imaginative suggestiveness. In their final form the essays are illumined with beautiful and moving imagery. Bacon's prose seems at times to lack appropriateness. He uses the same idiom and the same rhythm in his essays on 'Death' or 'Truth' and in his essays on trivial themes such as 'Travel', and 'Masques and Triumphs'. The Authorized Version of the Bible of 1611 is a production that towers above anything hitherto done in English prose. It is simple and concrete in language, rich and graphic in imagery and possesses supreme lyrical power. It yields its meaning with the utmost ease and directness. Bacon's Essays and the Authorized Version of the Bible helped to show to the writers of that age that the vernacular was capable of achieving literary excellence and dignified rhythm.

Sir Francis Bacon; 1561-1626

Bacon (afterwards Viscount St. Albans), son of Sir Nicholas Bacon (Keeper of the Great Seal under Elizabeth), born 1561. Became successively Solicitor-General and Lord Chancellor; deposed in 1621 for taking bribes. Died 1626. His philosophical reputation rests mainly on the Novum Organum (the "New Instrument" for investigating truth), a book written (1620) in Latin; his literary reputation on his English writings.

1597. The first edition of the Essays (ten included), the second edition (forty essays) appeared in 1625. Tennyson said: "There is more wisdom compressed into that small volume than into any other book of the same size that I know". Many of the essays are made up of extracts, compiled from commonplace books and his other published works, and woven together into a new whole.

1605. The Advancement of Learning (in two books). This work really laid the foundation of modern scientific methods.

1612, (?) The New Atlantis-the picture of an Ideal State, a curious but interesting romance, having points in common with More's Utopia.

1621. History of Henry VII. "With the exception of Raleigh's History of the World and Knolles's History of the Turks, there is no historical work produced at or near this period which will in any degree bear comparison with the polished style of Bacon." (Lumby)

Three Divisions of Francis Bacon's Works

1. Philosophical:
   (i) The Advancement of Learning.
   (ii) Novum Organum (New Instrument)
   (iii) De Augments Scientiarum
   (iv) Sylva Sylvarum
2. Literary:
   (i) Essays
   (ii) The New Atlantis
   (iii) The History of Henry VII
   (iv) Apophthegms (a kind of jest-book) New and Old.
3. Professional:
   (i) Maxims of law (1630, pleadings in law cases)
   (ii) Reading on the Statute of Uses (1642: Speeches in Parliament)

Bacon: A Historian: - As a writer of historical works Bacon is not much known to his readers. They generally associate his name with the famous Essays and some of his philosophical works. But he also wrote a remarkable book of History entitled, "History of the Reign of Henry VII. (1622)" It is the only complete historical work that we received from him.

Bacon: A Political and Moral Thinker: -His most important moral work is the Essays on counsels - civil and moral. These were published in the three editions during Bacon's life time. The first edition appears in 1597 containing ten essays. The third edition appears in 1625 in which the number of essays went up to 58. The moral tone of these essays is at times questionable. Quite often Bacon appears to be an opportunist. In his morals he is absolutely of this world. There are places where there is shallow worldliness which is highly disturbing and does no credit to this great man. For example even "such a noble and powerful sentiment as love appears to him to be a child of folly". Sometimes, even some of his conclusions are ordinary and common place. They do not show a very sharp mind behind them. But these essays are extremely widely read because of their worldly practical wisdom. They come home to men's business and bosoms. He is not preaching things of the spirit and the soul; his only concern is to show to men how to succeed in this life and world. Human nature and how to manage it would be good title for these Essays. As the French critic Legouis points out: "It is the art of success among men which is the subject to his Essays. He points men to the part he should play on the stage of special life, as is indicated in the sub-title of this Book: "Counsels-Civil and Morals." As morals of this world, his sayings have great force and weight. Many of them have become proverbs. Besides these essays there is a collection of ancient and modern sayings which Bacon did during the autumn of 1624 entitled "Apophthegms New and Old". He dictated from memory and they were published in 1625. There are about 300 of them, and some are very striking and some are dull. He

also brought out a collection of arguments on moral matters with answers to them. It was entitled "Of the Colours of Good and Evil".

Bacon: A Scientific Thinker: - As a scientific thinker we are not to look to him for any particular discoveries. In fact he did not know very well the many problems connected with scientific enquiry in his own time. In some cases he rejected truth, and followed old fashioned and wrong beliefs. But his influence as a scientific thinker, cannot be denied and at the same time underrated. The influence exercised by him was naturally of a kind which we should expect from a thinker who had taken the whole field of knowledge as his province. F.G. Selby points out: "Inquirers were naturally gratified by the dignity which he gave to their labours, and encourage by the prospects which he held out. He gave to science a human interest. He gave it high hopes and a definite aim." Very often the critics of Bacon try to belittle his importance by saying that he made no scientific discovery and his method of inquiry could never become the method of great scientists later on. This argument does not hold much water. The scientific discovery in itself is not as important as the faith that Science is an important field of human activity which could open up the secrets of Nature. Bush, the critic is very correct when he says "Bacon is not historically negligible a scientific thinker. His scientific deficiency does not essentially weaken the force of his message for his time". Indeed, it was Bacon who substituted the humble and critical interrogation of Nature for the arbitrary concept of traditional authority. It was a very big achievement indeed for a great lawyer, statesman. To quote Bush once again, "he not only summoned men to research, he brought the Cinderella of Science out of her partial obscurity and enthroned her as the queer, of the world. No one any longer could be deaf to the scientific and humanitarian gospel of experiment, invention, utility and progress". Thus Bacon made no scientific discovery as Newton and Harvey made. But he laid the solid foundation of science because he was the first man to point out the importance of experiment hi the study of knowledge. He was the first man who laughed at the idea of authority based on scientific observation. Once arbitrary Authority has been replaced by critical Enquiry and Experiment. Science in its true sense had taken birth. Bacon's contribution in this respect remains unique and outstanding.

Bacon: A Philosophical Thinker: - To the students of literature Bacon will remain a great name and force because of his Essays. But the legal, historical and even the moral works do not sum up his most valuable achievement in scholarship. His greatest contribution to the Advancement of Learning was made possible by his philosophical works. As a philosophical thinker he was inspired by two purposes: 1. He wanted to increase the bounds of human knowledge. 2. He wanted to make man powerful over Nature. In order to do that he had to survey the whole field of human knowledge and fight against many malpractices which had come into existence in the study of Science and Nature. In order to achieve his objects he formulated a grand scheme of philosophical studies which he called Instauration Magna. This scheme was highly ambitious and has six important parts.

Bacon challenged the basic beliefs of man e.g. truth, love, friendship, honesty, secrecy and reshaped them. He challenged the most established norm and ideals of mankind. He

questioned everything; he questioned what was, generally, considered unquestionable. He was an iconoclast. His approach was revolutionary. He begins his essays with a challenging statement i.e. what is truth, what is friendship and what is love.

He was very skeptical. He believed that the test of the truth of everything is in practical observation. He believes that experience is the basis of every judgment. This is called empirical approach. And no doubt he was an empiricist. His way of thinking was inductive. It was based upon facts and upon data. His spirit of inquiry and spirit of skepticism was the outcome of Renaissance. Bacon was very utilitarian. Like a scientist, he did only what was useful.

His training had been as a scholastic but his approach was anti-scholastic. He was bitterly against the scholastic approach. He said that the arguments of scholastics appear to be very intelligent and philosophical but actually these are nothing but only mental luxury. He said that scholastic try to prove the proven, means, who is God, what is sin or reward. In philosophy, this attitude is called begging in question. What is to be proved, it is taken as supposed.

Bacon says the reasoning of schoolmen is in fact very smart and full of life but actually this life is like the life of worms in rotten flesh. They appear to be very active but this is a very deadly activity. They are not agent of life rather they are the agents of death. The arguments of scholastics kill the mind than to develop the mind. Thus Bacon demolished the scholasticism with their own tools.

Bacon gave the theory of "duality of truth". He proved that ideals are definitely good but ideals are only for ideal and perfect people. Imperfect people can't follow the ideals and when they can't follow them they go reverse and tell lies. Bacon said that everyone should try to be as good as possible. One must realize his faculties. An imperfect man must compromise with his imperfection. Instead of cursing himself one should compromise with his imperfection. This is called "expediency". That truth is only for ideal people and for common man expediency should be the principle.

Bacon said that there are two kinds of truths – heavenly truth and earthly truth. He further said that heavenly truth is contained in Bible and it is for "salvation". But earthly truth is in the laws of nature and in the means of science and it is necessary for earthly success. And this earthly truth is different from heavenly truth. Both are opposite to each other and can't function for its opposite and one must be able to differentiate between them. This is called relativity of truth or duality of truth. L. C. Knight wrote that Bacon did not give the theory of the duality of truth but he only stated the facts who actually believe in their conducts.

What Bacon's essays reveal is that:

1. Man in relation to the world and society.
2. Man in relation to himself
3. Man in relation his Maker.

The Character of Francis Bacon

Long is of the view that, in Bacon we see; **"One of those complex and contradictory natures which are the despair of the biographer".**

Bacon had a dual personality. He was mental giant but a moral dwarf. It was this very complexity of Bacon's character which pope stressed in his usual neat, epigrammatic manner, when he wrote,

> **"If parts allure thee, think how Bacon shined,**
> **The Wisest, Brightest, Meanest of mankind"**

The facts of Bacon's life amply bear out that he was the brightest of mankind. Though he was born with the silver spoon in his mouth, he was left unprovided and friendless at the threshold of his career. His father died and there was no one to help him to get settled in life. In those days of intrigues and cunning party politics, nobody could hope to make his mark unless he enjoyed the patronage of the influential. Despite such handicaps, Bacon's rise to eminence was meteoric. As a lawyer he became immediately successful. His knowledge of law and power of pleading became widely known and it was almost at the beginning of his parliamentary career that Jonson wrote, **"No man ever spoke more neatly, more weightily, or suffered less emptiness, less idleness in what he uttered"**

The vastness of Bacon's mind is amazing. His hearers could not cough or look aside from him without loss. He commanded where he spoke; and had his judges angry and pleased at his direction. No man had their affections more in his power. The fear of every man, that heard him, was that he should make an end. He was knighted in 1603, made Solicitor General in 1607, Attorney General I 1613, Lord Keeper in 1617, Lord Chancellor in 1618 and Viscount St. Albans in 1621. This immense and rapid success, in spite of bitter enemies and hostilities, can never be attained without wisdom and brightness. Skemp says, while he was discussing the Bacon's character, **"Bacon stands second in intellectual power only to Shakespeare"**

A man of towering intellect, he could dare to take all knowledge to be his province. It is impossible to regard even the outline of his vast work. He worked endlessly to penetrate the secrets of nature, fathered the inductive system of philosophy, and thus paved the way for emergence of modern science. Many of his principles may sound rudimentary to us, but in Bacon's time they were original and had for reaching consequences. He revolutionized the entire concept of scientific research and ushered in the era of modernism. His head was ever buzzing with huge schemes- the pacification of unhappy Ireland, the simplification of England law, the reform of the church, the study of the nature, and the establishment of a new philosophy. Summarizing his scientific achievements Bush writes, **"He not only summoned men to research, he brought the Cinderella of science out of her partial obscurity and enthroned her as the queen of the world"**

In the field of literature also his attainments are equally brilliant. He is the father of English essay. No doubt he borrowed the term and the thing from French Montaigne, but he filled it with the products of his own brain. His style is marvelous. It is terse and pithy, packed with thought, in an age that used endless circumlocution. He created a new style of writing- the modern style- and may very well be called the father of modern English prose. His observation was minute and accurate and his essays cover a wide variety of subjects suggested by the life of a man around him. Bacon was one of the greatest scholars of his time and he was as well read in classical literature and history, as in science, philosophy and law. He was as well familiar with the intricacies of politics as with those of trade and commerce. There was no sphere of knowledge or of life in which he did not excel. In many aspects, he was certainly the meanest of mankind. Therefore J.F Selby says that, **"He had great brain; not a great soul"**

Though he was raised to the highest position in the land, he could bend to the acceptance of the pettiest sums as bribes. He was fond of an ostentatious style of living, kept a large number of servants and was lavish of in matters of food and dress. The result; he was always in need and adopted highly corrupt questionable means to increase his income. He was profuse and greedy, a born intriguer and tuft-hunter, an extremely cunning, selfish and callous individual. His essays clearly reveal that his philosophy of life was Machiavellian. Hudson also agrees that he sacrificed his character for the sake of wealth and power and for the satisfaction of worldly ambitions. Here Hudson critically remark, **"His morals were of the narrowest expediency and utilitarianism"**

Many of his biographers, including Mr. Spedding, have tried to defend the conduct of Bacon. But the only defense which they have been able to put forth is that his faults were the faults of age, that he was merely the child of his age. It was an age in which the power was concentrated in the hands of a few; intrigue and opportunism were the orders of the days, friendships were violated and sides changed as one's interests demanded, and even the greatest in the land accepted bribes. Living in such an age, Bacon did what he found others doing, and what he realized was necessary to get success. He therefore, sacrificed his ideals, to achieve the aim dear to him. Summarizing his estimate of Bacon's character, Long writes, **"Bacon was apparently one of those double natures that only God is capable to judge, because of strange mixture of intellectual strength and moral weakness that is in them"**

As we read his essays, we come to know that he was an honest man corrupted by the environment in which he lived. We are very well inclined to believe what Bacon said of himself, "He was the brightest, wisest, and meanest of mankind.

Francis Bacon: Worldly Wisdom

Bacon was, definitely, a worldly wise man. He was the wisest and the meanest of mankind. He was truly of Renaissance; the age of accumulating knowledge, wealth and power. Being a true follower of Machiavellian principles, he led his life for worldly success. He was a man of shrewd and sagacious intellect with his eyes fixed on the main

chance. And what he preached in his essays was also the knowledge, needed for worldly success.

There is no doubt that Bacon's essays are a treasure house of worldly wisdom. The term worldly wisdom means a wisdom which is necessary for worldly success. It does not need any deep philosophy or any ideal morality. But Bacon was a man of high wisdom, as he himself pronounced, "I have taken all knowledge to be my province". Bacon also preached morality but his morality is subordinate to worldly success and he never hesitated to sacrifice it for worldly benefit. His essays are rich with the art which a man should employ for achieving success in his life, such as shrewdness, sagacity, tact, foresight, judgment of character and so on.

The subject of Bacon in his essays is the man who needs prosperity in worldly terms. Bacon's essays bring men to 'come home to men's business and bosoms'. He teaches them, how to exercise one's authority and much more. When he condemns cunning, it is not because of a hateful and vile thing, but because it is unwise. That is why the wisdom in his essay is considered a 'cynical' kind of wisdom. He describes his essays as 'Counsels – civil and moral'.

In his essay "Of Truth", Bacon appreciates truth and wishes people to speak the truth. He says: **"A lie faces God and shrinks from man."**

He warns human beings against the punishment for the liar on the doomsday. But at the same time, he considers a lie as an 'alloy' which increases the strength of gold and feels it necessary for the survival on earth. He says**: "A lie doth ever add pleasure."** this is purely a statement of a "worldly wise man".

The essay "Of Great Places" though contains a large number of moral precepts yet in this very same essay he also preaches worldly success. **"It is a strange desire to seek power and to lose liberty; By pains men come to greater pains".** And **"Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown."**

Then Bacon suggests that men in authority should work not only for the betterment of public but also for their own status: **"All rising to great place is by a winding stair; and if there be factions, it is good to side a man's self whilst he is rising and to behave himself when he is placed."**

It is purely a utilitarian advice and it surely holds a compromise between morality and worldly success. Even when Bacon urges a man not to speak ill of his predecessor, it is not because of high morality but because of the fact that the man who does not follow advice would suffer with unpleasant consequences.

Bacon's approach towards studies is also purely utilitarian. In his essay "Of Studies", he does not emphasize on study for its own sake, but for the benefit which it can provide to man to be supplemented by practical experience. **"Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man and writing an exact man."** And then he says: **"Some**

books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested."

Bacon also points out the effects of different branches of studies on a man's mind and thinks it helpful in the cure of different mental ailments and follies.

His essay "Of Suitors" totally reveals Bacon's shrewd insight. Although he suggests that a suitor should not be disloyal towards his petition and should tell him the truth about the chances of winning the suit without leaving him wandering in false hopes. Bacon suggests that a patron should not charge extensive amounts for a small case. But then he dilutes all this by saying if the patron wants to support the non-deserving party, he should make a compromise between both of them, so that the deserving party would bear not great loss. This is a purely utilitarian approach and it shows what Bacon himself had been in his career, for it was his own profession.

In the essay "Of Revenge" Bacon shows a certain high morality by saying that: **"Revenge is a kind of wild justice; One who studieth revenge, keeps his own wounds green."** He feels dignity in forgiving ones enemy. But then he says that even revenge is just in the cases when one can save one's skin from the hands of law.

Bacon showed a certain incapacity for emotions. He took the relation of friendship for its benefit and made a purely worldly approach to the subject which intimately deals between two persons. He gave us the uses and abused of friendship. He says: **"Those that want friends to open themselves unto, are cannibals of their own hearts."**

This essay clearly shows Bacon's cynical wisdom and that his morality is stuffed with purely utilitarian considerations. Bacon considers love as a 'child of folly'. In his essay "Of Love" he says: **"It is impossible to love and to be wise."**

He considers wife and children as hindrance in the way of success and progress. He says: **"He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune."** Afterwards in his essay "Of Marriage and Single Life" he tells the 'benefits' of a wife. "**Wives are young men's mistresses, companion to middle age and old man's nurse."** In his essay "Of Parents and Children" Bacon puts: **"Children sweeten labour, but they make misfortune more bitter."**

All these statements show his essentially mean and benefit seeking attitude, even in the matters of heart. In short, Bacon's essays are a "hand book" of practical wisdom enriched with maxims which are very helpful for worldly wisdom and success.

Francis Bacon: Wisest, Brightest and Meanest

> **"If parts allure these think how Bacon shin'd**
> **The wisest, brightest and meanest of mankind."**

Bacon was the wisest because of his worldly wisdom, he was brightest owing to his powerful intellect and the art of writing terse essays, and he was meanest due to his treacherous character.

The above mentioned remark on Bacon was made by a renowned and marvelous poet, "Alexander Pope". If we observe critically, this statement holds its validity. For Bacon appeared to be a true child of Renaissance. Undoubtedly he was a man of wisdom and powerful intellect. But all at once he was a calculating character, keeping an eye on the main chance. He was a true follower of Machiavelli. He failed to harmonize his mixed motives, complex principles and high aims together. He wanted to strive after the selfless scientific truth but he was conscious that nothing could be done without money and power. So, he strived after material success. Bacon belonged to the age of glory and greatness, surprising meanness and dishonest conduct and he could not avoid these evils.

Bacon was a man of multi-talents. His wisdom was undeniable. The thirst for infinite knowledge and his versatility was truly astonishing. He possessed an intellect of the highest order. He was learned in Greek, French, Latin, English, Science, Philosophy, Classics and many other fields of knowledge. He is regarded as the creator of the modern school of experimental research. He held that "man is the servant and interpreter of nature". He supplied the impulse which broke with the medieval preconceptions and set scientific inquiry on modern lines. He emphasized on experimentation and not to accept things for granted. Bacon was indeed an eloquent prophet of new era and the pioneer of modern sciences.

The essays of Bacon also portray his intellect and practical wisdom. The varied range of subjects too expresses that 'he had taken all knowledge to be his province'. Bacon could utter weighty and pregnant remarks on almost any subject, from "Greatness of Kingdoms" to "Gardens". The essays are loaded with the ripest wisdom of experience and observation conveyed through short, compact and terse sentences. One cannot deny the sagacity and shrewdness of his counsels. Bacon's essays deal with man. He is an able analyst of human nature, and his conduct in public and private affairs. His comments regarding man's behaviour may at times sound cynical but they are undeniable truths. He says: **"A mixture of a lie doth even add pleasure."**

Bacon is true here for most of the people would find life terrible without false hopes and false impressions. His views about friendship, though lacks in feelings and emotions, yet these are undeniably true to human nature. Following are a few examples of his wisdom.

"One who studieth revenge, keeps his own wounds green". And **"Men in great places are thrice servants".** So, like a very wise man he coin ideas and teaches them to make people wise in worldly terms.

Bacons brightness is best illustrated in the way in which he clothes his wisdom into brevity and lends the readers a great pleasure. The compactness of thought and conciseness of expression was a virtue in an age when looseness in thought and

language was the rule. The essays are enriched with maxims and proverbs. He supports his ideas and arguments with innumerable quotations, allusions and analogies which prove his wide knowledge and learning. The aptness of the similes, the witty turn of phrases and the compact expression of weighty thoughts are evidence enough of the brightness of his intellect.

> **"Suspicions among thoughts are like bats among birds."**
> **"Money is like much, except it be spread."**
> **"Virtue is like precious adours --- most fragrant, when they are incensed or crushed."**

Moreover, the precise and authentic turn of sentences and the condensation of thoughts in them have been enhanced by the antithetical presentation. Such as:

> **"A lie faces God and shrinks from man."**
> **"The ways to enrich are many and most of them are foul."**
> **"It is a strange desire to seek power and to lose liberty."**
> **"Through indignation, men rise to dignity."**

Thus with the tool of antithesis, Bacon made his argument many times stronger and influential than a simple sentence. He created so much wit and strength in such precise writings that they are still valid and famous. No man individually did provide such strength and simplicity to the English language than Bacon. Bacon tried to reach the reader's mind by a series of aphoristic attacks. Therefore he is considered as the pioneer of modern prose. There is hardly any equal of him for clear, terse and compact writing.

Now, it appears to be an irony of nature that a man with such a tremendous intellect and wisdom had such a mean character. Bacon was not mean in the sense of being a miser. He was indeed reputed to be a very generous. The manner in which Bacon betrayed his friends, especially Essex, proved him most ungrateful and ignoble man. He made friendship and uprightness subordinate to his success. He always kept his eye on the main chance, worshipping the rising sun and avoiding of the setting one.

His marriage was also a marriage of convenience. He did not hesitate to take part in political intrigues in order to promote his ambition. His letter to the king and queen were also full of flattery that it was hard to believe that they came from the pen of such an intellectual man.

Though he was wise yet he showed certain incapacity of emotions and this trait can also be witnessed in his essays. He took the purely personal and domestic matters of a man – like marriage, friendship, love etc. in terms of pure utility. Such as: **"He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune."** And **"Those that want friends to open themselves unto are cannibals of their own heart."**

In short, Bacon was a man of the world – worldly wisdom and worldly convenience. He had a "great brain" but not a "great soul". His complex and contradictory characters will

continue to be a psychological enigma for the readers to understand. So, he was definitely the wisest, brightest and meanest of mankind.

Francis Bacon: A Moralist

Bacon is not a true moralist. His morality is a saleable morality. He is a moralist-cum-worldly wise man. Bacon appears as a moralist in his essays, for he preaches high moral principles and lays down valuable guidelines for human conduct. Some of his essays show him as a true lover and preacher of high ethical codes and conducts. For instance, in "Of Envy", he puts: **"A man that hath no virtue in himself, ever envieth virtue in others."**

Then, in his essay "Of Goodness and Goodness of Nature" he says:**"But in charity there is no excess; neither can angel or man come in danger by it."** Again, he appears to be a lover of justice in his essay "Of Judicature": **"The principal duty of a judge is to suppress force and fraud."**

In spite of all given examples, one cannot deny the fact that Bacon was a "Man of Renaissance". He had a deep insight in human nature. He knew that man is naturally more prone to evil than good. He was a clear-eyed realist who saw the weakness in human nature and drawbacks of human conduct and also knew that man is not capable of acting according to noble set of 'ideals'. Though Bacon's morality was greater than that of average man's, yet it was not of the highest order. The matter of good and right was important for him but not if it proved too costly in worldly terms. On one hand, he preached high moral principles and on the other hand, he also expressed a mean capacity by compromising upon those morals for the sake of worldly success. For this reason, William Blake, a spiritual poet says about his essays: **"Good advice for Satan's Kingdom."**

Blake considers any utilitarian advice contrary to God's ways, but Bacon does not bother for that. He considers this world more important and striving after the success in this world is equally important. Bacon discusses man as he "appears" and not as he "ought to appear".

In his essay "Of Great Places" Bacon certainly shows a high morality when he condemns or at least dislikes the practice of 'wrongs' on part of high officials. **"In place there is license to do good and evil; where of the latter is a curse."** Afterwards he appreciates the power of doing good. **"But power to do good, is true and lawful end of aspiring."**

But besides these moral approaches, he also supports the idea of adopting certain disloyal means to reach a high position. **"It is good to side a man's self whilst he is in the rising and to balance himself when he is placed".**

Thus, like a moralist, Bacon preaches the noble dimensions of great place, but with this statement his purely utilitarian approach also comes forth with all its power.

In the essay "Of Truth" he appears to be a 'genuine' admirer of truth and seems to install the love of truth in his readers. **"It is heaven upon earth, to have man's mind move in charity, rest in providence and turn upon the poles of truth."**

But he also points out that **"Falsehood is like an 'alloy' in gold and silver, which makes the metal work better even though it reduces, the value of the metal".**

He says: **"A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure."** By putting this he has diluted all the effect of his own words said in the praise of the truth.

One can find the same strange mixture of high ethics and utilitarianism in the essay "Of Revenge". In this essay Bacon condemns revenge by saying: **"Revenge is a kind of wild justice."** And **"One who studieth revenge, keeps his own wounds green."**

He expressed that there is no place of revenge in high society and it is a high quality to forgive an enemy. Hereafter, Bacon spoils the effects by putting that in some cases man is justified in taking revenge, if the avenger can save his skin from the eyes of the law. He says: **"But then let a man take heed the revenge be such as there is now law to punish; else a man's enemy is still forehand".**

In his essay "Of Suitors" Bacon says that a man should refuse to undertake a suit if it is by giving a false hope to the petitioner and that one should not demand undue reward for his services. Those who employ crooked methods to win suits are the worst offenders of society. But he also says that if a patron wants to favour the undeserving party, he should bring both the parties to a compromise for this would be less dangerous for him. So, to Bacon, morality and ethical codes seem inferior to worldly considerations.

"Of Simulation and Dissimilation" is another example of the strange mixture of morality and prudence. **"The best position and temperature is; to have openness in fame and opinion; secrecy in habits; dissimulation in seasonal use; and power to feign, if there be no remedy."**

Bacon's morality has also been described as a cynical kind of wisdom. This impression is confirmed by even those essays which deal with strong private relations between men. "Of Friendship", "Of Parents and Children", "Of Marriage and Single life" and "Of Love", all depict a certain kind of utilitarianism and worldly benefit. Here Bacon expresses a definite failure of emotions, for he takes the pure matters of heart in terms of their uses and abuses.

In short, though Bacon's essays portray morality and high ethical standards, yet he does not appear as an ideal moralist and these are but the "flashes of morality". He is not a true moralist.

Bacon as a Prose Stylist

It has been observed by a critic that, **"The quality of strength in bacon's style is intellectual rather than emotional"**

Indeed the secret of Bacon's strength lies in his conciseness. Hardly any writer, ancient or modern, has succeeded in compressing so much meaning within so short a compass; several of essays- e.g. "those on studies and negotiating"- are marvels of condensation. Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of Bacon's style is that no one can stay indifferent to it. In other words, as a prose writer, he has either ardent admirers or passionate detractors. And, it is interesting to note that both these extreme positions are occasioned by the very same properties of his style. Bacon ushered in the modern era of writing English prose. F.G Selby says that, **"The part of Bacon's influence is of course due to the charm of his style"**

To be sure, there is a marked difference in the style of his earlier essays and that of his later ones. But, the important fact is that the difference is one of approach and not one of technique. In the beginning, Bacon thought the essay to be nothing more than a diary of "dispersed meditations". Therefore, the earlier essays are terse and pithy jottings of his observations on domestic, political, intellectual, moral, religious and social issue. As a result, the discerning reader can see that these essays are mere skeletons of thought grouped around a single theme. "Of Studies" belongs to this category. In this essay, we see how Bacon has a quick, chatty way of writing almost as if he were talking to himself: **"Crafty men contemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them"**

It must be noted that the same aphoristic character of the diction is to be found in his later essays. The difference is that, with the passage of time, Bacon toned the rapier-sharp rhythm of his sentences. This is because he perceived that his rapidly growing reading public was made up of people having varying reading tastes and skills. Let us compare the rhythm of above quoted lines with that of passage taken from 'Of Adversity', which is one of his later essays:

"We see in needle works and embroideries, it is more pleasing to have a lively work upon sad, solemn ground, than to have a dark and melancholy work upon a lightsome ground"

The brilliant rhetoric is the same in both the passages. So it is the pithiness and the terse vigour. Even Bacon's predilection for juxtaposition of thesis and antithesis is seen in both instances. The main difference is that the first passage is so constructed that Dean Church was moved to say that the words" **"…come down like the stroke of hammer…"**

On the contrary, the second passage flows harmoniously more like a melody than like a beat. In his earlier days, Bacon achieved terseness in his style by leaving out superfluous epithets, conjunctions and connectives. Later he aimed more towards crafting balanced sentences which consisted of two parts. The first part would be a statement and second would be an explanatory analogy. For example: **"He that hath wife and child hath**

given hostages to fortune; for they are impediments to great enterprises either of virtue or mischief"

Bacon's sentences are more modern in their structure than those of other Elizabethans prose writers- being more pointed and less involved. Even his more intricate sentences are so carefully constructed and so free from inversions that meaning is not difficult to catch. The essays, in particular, are remarkable for balance and point as might naturally be expected from their aphoristic style. This is really strange when we consider the fact that he also wrote sentences like this: **"A lie faces God and shrinks from man"** Or this **"The ways to enrich are many, and most of them foul"**

It is true that his cavalier attitude towards grammar is clearly visible in the second sentence. But, most people would agree that they have no problem in understanding what the writer has to say. It must be borne in mind that in Bacon's age, little attention was given to the logical division of a subject into paragraphs. One of the most pleasurable aspects in Bacon's style is his use of imagery and analogy. Consider his denunciation of pride in 'Of Vainglory':

"The fly sat upon the axle-tree of the chariot wheel said,
What a dust do I raise?"

The above discussion makes it clear that Bacon did not have two styles of writing. Rather, it can be said that it was the same style which he applied in different ways as and when the situation demanded. Certainly, this is only one of reasons why his admirers claim to be one of the greatest prose stylists in English Language.

Bacon as an Essayist

What is an essay? The literary essay is indefinable as a spring day in the wood, but it does suggest some qualities of an essay like the day itself. The root meaning of the term, essay is an attempt or trial. Dr. Johnson defined an essay as "a loose sally of the mind, an irregular undigested piece, not a regular and orderly composition." The emphasis is on the informality of tone and the fact that an essay in not an exhaustive, argumentative disquisition on a theme. The essay could be objective as well as subjective. In subjective essays, the object is not important, any subject will do.

It is the writer's personality which lends charm to this type of essay. J.J. Lobbans's definition of the essay as, "a short discursive article on any literary, philosophical or social subject, viewed from a personal or historical standpoint" includes all types of essays.

Montaigne and Bacon: The essay as a distinct form was born in the 16th century with French writer, Montaigne's Essays. He frankly confessed that his essays were about himself, in the sense that they portray him in a number of moods and habits. Bacon borrowed this form from Montaigne but suited it to his own purpose. Bacon lived in a time and country where life was both serious and vigorous and he is occupied with

serious matters. One can say that these essays show his egotism in the sense that they show his ideas and thoughts based on his own experience. But in Bacon's essays we don't find the chatty quality found in Montaigne's or Charles Lamb's essays. Emerson is the one modern writer with whom Bacon may be fairly compared, for their method is much the same. But Hugh Walter rightly says, "With Bacon we enter the world of stark realities, rational and grave, having no place for lively humor or conversational ease. But this doesn't detract us from his greatness as an essayist. To him goes the credit of being the first of English essayists, as he remains, for sheer mass and weight of genius, the greatest"

The form and subject of Bacon's purpose: Bacon's essays come home to men's business and bosoms. Bacon's essays group themselves round three great principles: (a) Man in relation to the world and society (b) Man in relation to himself and (c) Man in relation to his Maker. In all of these categories of his essays he has given variety. Man is the subject of Bacon's essays. This human interest is one reason why his essays are popular and have universal appeal because human beings are most interested in themselves. For Bacon's purpose, only this form was the most suitable. He developed this genre with his essayistic qualities.

The subject of his essays is varied and bears a wide range. He writes on a variety of themes such as family life, politics, marriage, friendship, studies, ambition and many others. Bacon thus proved the capacity of the essay form to be all-inclusive. Later essayists too proved it so we have political, historical and biographical essays. Bacon's intent in writing essays was a serious one. He intended them to be "Counsels Civil and Moral". They were not written for amusements or leisure time. They do not have the personal element that make Lamb's essays too charming. In this differs from Montaigne too. Bacon gives opinions and never speaks of himself. He speaks like a statesman or a moralist, not like a street boy. Bacon is concerned in most of his essays with ethical qualities of men and with political matters and thought it clear that he admires moral and intellectual truth, he is practical and rather opportunistic in the advice he offers. He doesn't expect his reader to aspire to a high standard of morality; he simply approaches to him with practical and worldly didacticism.

His essays have historical significance, too, for they were written for a particular group of men to offer them guidance that they must rise in the world and do good to the state. His essays are brief as any essay should be. He is not lightly dealing with important topics. He deals with all essay topics seriously even if they are unimportant. As he writes about gardens, but authoritatively and in a dignified manner, not humorously and subjectively like Lamb or Montaigne. A man who wants to achieve worldly and material success and popularity could easily find very useful principle here in Bacon's essays. The reader's interest is held by the historical and literary allusions tinged with Greek and Latin references.

Style: His essays are also important from stylistic point of view, too. To Bacon must go the credit, not only of introducing a new literary form into England but also that he developed a style which is marked for its pitch and pregnancy in the communication of

thought. It was the first style set in England which later traveled to the age of Addison, Steele and Swift. He discovered the value of brief, crisp and firmly-knitted sentences of a type hitherto unfamiliar in English. He also rejected the elaborate euphuistic style overcrowded with imagery and conceits. The most important characteristic of his style, that which gives the essays the position of a classic in English Language is the terseness of expression and epigrammatic force. He has an unraveled ability of packing his thoughts into the smallest possible space.

The essays may be described as one critic says, "Infinite riches in a little room." (Give sentential examples from his essays). Bacon was a man of the renaissance and in his essays; we find a characteristic of his age: the use of figurative language. Similes and Metaphors and striking comparisons are found in his essays. The scholar's love of learning is evidenced by the frequent use of quotations and allusions in the essays. What is most important regarding his contribution is the terseness and epigrammatic quality of his essays.

Conclusion: Bacon's essays are a proof of his strength of mind, intellect and knowledge. They are packed with remarkable sagacity and insight, shrewd and profound observation. He showed for the first time with (along with Hooker) that English was as capable as Greek or Latin of serving the highest purposes of language. Sercombe and Allen say, "Trite as the subjects are familiar as the treatment of those who know the Essays, the reader is seldom unrewarded by a sensation of novelty, so multitudinous are the face of Bacon's thoughts." John Freeman says, "The intellectual spend-thrift is the true essayist." As one of the world's epoch-making books, Bacon's essays have done much to mould and direct the character of many individuals. The brevity of these essays has been recommendation to readers with limited leisure. They have become a classic of the English Language and they owe this position, not to their subject-matter, but to their style.

Bacon as the Father of English Essay

Neither Nash nor the character writers are the forerunners of essay writing. Bacon is the first great English writer who, in the words of Hugh Walker, is the first English essayist, as he remains for sheer mass and weight of genius, the greatest." His Essays have won him a place apart, and are a source of his fame with the world at large. They introduce a new form of composition into English literature, which was destined to have a varied and fruitful development. They are also in a sense, a record of Bacon's outlook on the world throughout the years of his active life. The slim volume of the essays, published in 1597, grew to thirty-eight in the edition of 1612, and to fifty-eight in the final edition of 1625, and many of the essays were amplified as time went on.

(1) Bacon and Montaigne: Bacon borrowed the general conception of essay from Montaigne's Essais, published in 1580, but he has little in common with them, except that both books consist of notes on human life and human nature by men of the world. In the dedication to Prince Henry, Bacon expounding his conception of essay, writes that they are "certain brief notes, set down rather significantly than curiously, which I have

called Essays. The word is late, but the thing is ancient. For Seneca's Epistles to Lucilius, if one marks them well, are but Essays, that is, dis-persed meditations, though conveyed in the form of Epistles." Bacon's Essays are much more concentrated and concise than Montaigne's Essays. The charm of Montaigne is that of shrewd but inconsequent comments on men and things set out at leisure by a humane and open-eyed observer. Bacon's Essays represent rather the reflections of a politic player of the game of life summed up in short, pregnant sayings that strike the imagination and cling to the memory. The effect of the one is diffused humanity, of the other an insight into human nature, pointed with consummate mastery of single words and phrases.

(2) Impersonal and Objective: As an essayist Bacon is not friendly, confidential, intimate and familiar with the reader. If we try to find in them the history of Bacon's inner life, we are disappointed. His essays "are for the most part detached and impersonal, and there is nothing in them to mark the tragedy of his life." But to say that the essays of Bacon do not bear the stamp of the personality of their author is a gross error. He did not consider life lightly and he was too serious a man to view the problems of life in a chatty, gossipy manner. He dealt with life with its varied problems seriously and tried hard to provide solutions. It was in this mood that these essays were conceived and written. Bacon, never for a moment, stoops down to treat life romantically and playfully.

He, according to Hugh Walker, "is too stately, and his thought is so profound to permit us to speak of the essays as the confidential chat of a great philosopher; but in them he comes as near that as his nature would permit. Bacon's attitude to life, the conditions of his time and the frame of his mind compelled him to conceal rather than reveal his personality in his essays. The age of Elizabeth was one of the most treacherous ages of British history. Bacon could not commit anything to writing that could be considered his own views on religion, politics or morality. He was a politician surrounded on all sides with rivals and enemies who could make capital out of his personal utterances. He did not want to be exploited on that account. Bacon had to keep himself to himself. The conditions of his life and his time always kept his pen in check. He never spoke out, and whenever he spoke, he spoke like a philosopher or a statesman. Bacon writes as "a statesman and politician, as Attorney General or Lord Chancellor, with the robes of his office on."

Bacon, therefore, took the form from Montaigne, but filled it with material drawn from his own mind. Montaigne emerges in his essays as "the spectator of life and its shrewd critic" and Bacon comes out as "the ambitious English lawyer and statesman, with one eye fixed upon the pole-star of philosophic truth, and the other watching the political weather-cock."

(3) Neatness and Ordered Compactness: Bacon found the essay as a suitable form to receive many thoughts of his mind. He was extraordinarily discursive in his interests. He took all knowledge to be his province. He surpassed all his contemporaries in the capacity to utter pregnant thoughts on almost any theme. He was short of time and thrifty of his thoughts and his literary material. He wanted to preserve the treasures of his mind for the benefit of posterity in aphoristic utterances. To Bacon, who was thrifty

both of time and of literary material, the essay was a Godsend. So, there is a neatness and ordered compactness which distinguish his essays which are occasional and discursive, containing detached thoughts, written down as they occur. They are not set compositions but rather jottings of collections of thoughts that have shaped themselves, as if, spontaneously in the epigrammatic phase. This occasional nature of Bacon's essays set the fashion of essay writing in English literature.

(4) Variety of Subjects: The astonishing range of topics of Bacon's essays is his great attraction. He passes from religion and empire to gardens and buildings. In Montaigne and Lamb, the subject is un-important but in Bacon the subject always is important. He may be unsystematic in his treatment of it but he never wanders beyond his bounds.

(5) Language and Style: In his essays Bacon, writes Rickett, "is the pioneer of clear, sententious English that suggests rather than expounds, and blends dignity with familiarity, in that pleased and attractive manner which is the secret of the power of all our great essayists." He was the first English essayist who employed a style that is conspicuous for lucidity, clarity, economy, precision, directness, masculinity and mathematical plainness. He carefully avoided any fineness or affectation of phrases. His images and figures of speech are simple and clearly illustrate the ideas that he wishes to convey. For example:

> **"Revenge is a wild kind of justice, which the more man's nature runs to, the more ought law to weed it out." (Of Revenge)**
>
> **"Men fear death as children fear to go in the dark." (Of Death)**
>
> **"Suspicions among thoughts are like bats among birds—they fly best by twilight." (Of Suspicion)**

In all these quotations the function of the images is not to intensify the meaning, to make it deeper or richer, but simply to make more effective a meaning that was already fully formed before the application of the illustrative device.

Bacon's style is suffused with wit and fun. Of wit, in the sense of the perception of analogy, there are various examples in his essays. He detects similarities and can give apt illustrations, as he can detect endless analogies in nature. But often Bacon's wit is mere play of words, as "through indignities, men rise to dignity", "by pain men come to greater pain." Sometime we come across ingenious combination of incongruous words, as men who have no friends are described as "cannibals of their own heart", "money is like a muck." Bacon's similes and metaphors are full of wit, for example, "riches are the baggage of virtue", "he that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune".

Flexibility is an important characteristic of Bacon's style. The older style was cumbrous; it could rise, but it could not easily sink. The new style of Bacon fitted itself as easily to buildings and gardens, or to suitors or ceremonies, as to truth and death.

Bacon was a distinguished rhetorician. His command of phrase was extraordinary. No one knows better than he either how to leave a single word to produce all its effect by using it in slightly uncommon sense, and setting the wit at work to discern and adjust this, or how to unfold all manner of applications and connotations, to open all inlets of sight, view and perspective. That Bacon dazzles, amuses, half delusively suggests, stimulates, provokes, edifies, instructs, satisfies, is indeed perfectly true. His literary methods are of the orator, not the dialectician. "But in rhetoric quality— in the use, that is to say, of language to dazzle and persuade, not to convince — he has few rivals and no superiors in English."

As a thinker and stylist, Bacon is the pioneer of rational and scientific thinking, and of lucid and clear style which developed in the age of Dryden and Pope. L. C. Knights rightly remarks: "Almost as much as his explicit philosophy, Bacon's prose style is an index of the emergence of modern world."

Two Styles of Bacon: Critics find two styles in Bacon. The qualities of his style vary with his works. George Saintsbury attributes the change of style to the variety of Bacon's subject matter. He wrote varied kinds of prose — philosophical in The Advancement of Learning, speculative in New Atlantis, historical in Henry VII, aphoristic in the Essays. History of Henry VII and New Atlantis have a style of their own, quite distinct from the aphoristic, epigrammatic and objective style of the Essays and different also from the expository and speculative style of the Advancement of Learning.

The "two styles" theory was, first of all, propounded by Macaulay who illustrated it by highlighting the difference between the first edition of Bacon's Essays, and the second and third editions. He attributed this change to the faster growth of judgment and the slow development of fancy in Bacon. Hugh Walker dismisses this proposition and finds it "in a change in Bacon's conception as to the function and possibilities of the essay form." In 1597 when he published the slender volume of ten essays, an essay was to Bacon an "attempt" at a subject, a group of jottings, "dispersed meditations" and something incomplete. So the style in the essays in the first edition is extremely crisp and sententious. The sentences are short with few connectives. Each sentence stands by itself, the concentrated expression of weighty thought. The essay Of Studies is a fine specimen of the style of the first edition; for example:

> **"Read not to contradict and believe nor to believe, but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts, others to be read but curiously, and some few to be read wholly- and with diligence and attention."**

Edward Albert writes about the style of the first edition: "In the first edition the style is crisp, detached, and epigrammatic, conveying the impression that each essay has arisen from some happy thought and phrase, around which other pithy statements are agglomerated."

In the essays of 1612, and still more of 1625, we find that Bacon imparts warmth and colour to the style. Metaphors and similes are frequently used and sometimes they have a poetical quality. He finds room for conjunctions and connective classes. A few examples given here illustrate the change in the style in the essays of the second and third editions: "Suspicions among thoughts are like bats among birds—they fly best by twilight." "Virtue is like precious odours, most fragrant when they are incensed or crushed; for prosperity doth best discover vice, but adversity doth best discover virtue."

Hugh Walker points out that the change of style was caused due to Bacon's changed conception of essay. He remarks: "**Compositions in which such sentences as these occur are obviously a good deal more than mere jottings. Bacon's conception of essay had developed, and therefore he clothed his 'dispersed meditations' in a richer vesture."** Edward Albert also writes: "**In the later editions the ideas are expanded, the expression loses its spiky pointedness, and in them we have an approach to a freer middle style. In choice of subject and approach, they reveal the breadth of intellect, his worldly wisdom, his concern with public life and material advancement. They are impersonal, objective, and orderly in thought, and reflect a cool, scientific detachment, which makes them, in spite of an occasional flash of poetic fire, as in Of Death, rather formal and cold. Yet they are written in the language of ordinary men, and the imagery is that of everyday life. The essays are brief and full of condensed, weighty, antithetical sentences, which have the qualities of proverbial expressions, and are notable for their precision and clarity of expression."**

Bacon, the Representative of the Renaissance

"Bacon," writes Ifor Evans, "is the most complete representative of the Renaissance in England, learned, worldly wise, ambitious, intriguing, enamoured of all the luxury that wealth in his time could supply and while knowing so much, almost completely ignorant about himself." He represents the wickedness and treachery, deceitfulness and hypocrisy, flattery and lust for power of the Renaissance England. He had a fertile, versatile intelligence. He could employ his genius for good or for evil. He found it expedient to resort to treachery in order to make his way in the world, he did not hesitate in betraying his friend and benefactor, Essex.

Bacon bartered his genius meant for philosophical and humanitarian pursuits of extraordinary sorts for the unworthy and petty worldly achievements. Macaulay writes: "Scarcely any man has been better entitled to be called a thorough man of the world. The founding of a new philosophy, the imparting of a new direction to the minds of speculators, this was the amusement of his leisure, the work of hours occasionally stolen from the Woolsack and the Council Board. This consideration, while it increases the admiration, with which we regret his intellect, increases also our regret that such an intellect should so often have been unworthily employed. He well knew the better course, and had, at one time, resolved to pursue it. "I confess," said he in a letter when he was still young, "that I have vast contemplative ends as I have moderate civil ends." Had his civil ends continued to be moderate, he would have been, not only the Moses,

but the Joshua of philosophy." Then, he could have passed his life placidly, honourably, beneficently "in industrious observations, grounded conclusions, and profitable inventions and discoveries".

Bacon's quest for knowledge, truth and power led him to the study of philosophy. He was the first rational thinker who was inspired with the Faustian urge. With the confidence of his genius he could declare, "I am an encyclopedia of learning." The man, who could declare, that he took all knowledge to be his province, was a shrewd observer of facts and men. P. F. and E. F. Matheson point out: "A preacher of research and experiment, full of enthusiasm for discovery, he never succeeds in stating clearly and convincingly the new method which is to revolutionise the world of knowledge. He was significantly out of touch with the actual discoveries of his time. If Bacon did not discover a new method it remains true that by the eloquent and inspiring language in which he laid down the vital importance of experiment and of study of things instead of words, and by the noble conception he made current of what science might accomplish if pursued by enthusiasm and promoted by combined effort, he gave an incalculable stimulus to the progress of thought and experiment in England and in Europe."

In fact, Bacon was "the prophet, if not the founder of modern scientific rationalism." He directed reason towards the understanding and mastery of the material world. He propounded the method of scrupulous examination of how things work and how they influence each other. We call it the scientific method. Bacon defined the aim and the general method. He repeatedly points out that the purpose of knowledge is "the benefit and use of man", "the endowment and benefits of man's life", "the serious use of business and occasions." The method proposed by Bacon is a "laborious and sober inquiry of truth", "ascending from experiments to the invention of causes and descending from causes to the new experiments." The scope of rational investigation is universal. These quotations from The Advancement of Learning sufficiently indicate the main directions of his thought.

In an era of superstitions and ignorance, Bacon believed that the right way was the way of observation and experiment. He said: "Man, the servant and interpreter of Nature, can do and understand so much and so much only as he has observed in fact or in thought of the course of Nature. Beyond them he neither knows anything nor can do anything." First, then, let us collect the data by diligent research and then rearrange it into a well-digested order from which we may formulate axioms. This will serve as stepping stone to new experiments from which we may finally deduce new facts.

The plan that Bacon suggested failed but no one can doubt his sincerity and the value of his ideas. In an age that was infested with superstition, that believed in black magic, that mistook hearsay for science, the value of the new experiments and observations cannot be undervalued. For his ideas he has been the father of modern ideas. His ideas have a forward looking quality. He himself said about his pioneering role in the field of scientific and rational thought: "I only sound the clarion, but I enter not the battle." Dr. Rudolf Metz assigns Bacon an outstanding place as a Renaissance thinker: "For the first time the philosopher meets us not as a sedentary figure closed away from the affairs of

the world, not as a mere onlooker who seeks truth for its own sake, but as a being possessed by a passionate impulse to action, who places his knowledge at the service of practical ends and assigns to it as its greatest task the subjection of nature to the will of man In this Bacon's thoughts and feelings are entirely modern and there is no vestige of medievalism left. The science which is placed at the service of humanity has as its final aim technical mastery, which now supplants artistic culture. This shifting from arts to technics represents, it seems to me, an important difference between early and Renaissance thinking. Thus Bacon is the first to celebrate the coming of the technical age and his doctrine is full of faith in future progress."

If Bacon proved his wisdom in philosophy his knowledge of men and manners showed his genius for practical and realistic approach towards life in society. Were we to sum up Bacon's character in one word, it is "reason". This shrewd observer of human nature was never swayed by emotions in life. Heart, it appears, he did not have. He was wisdom, born of reason incarnate. In his attitude towards life he was Machiavellian. A pragmatic man, a man of action, according to him, must not be merely "like the lark that can mount and sing and please himself and nothing else", but must be "like the hawk, that can soar aloft, and can also descend and can strike upon the prey." Emotions and cheap sentiments must be carefully fenced out from the life of man who must rise.

Thus, Bacon, "the ambitious English lawyer and statesman, with one eye fixed upon the pole star of philosophic truth, and the other watching the political weather-cock" is the true child of the Renaissance.

Worldly Wisdom & the Art of Success in Bacon's Essays

Bacon emerges in his essays as the man of the world, "a citizen of the world". He had a strong sense of the imperfections of humanity, so he impregnated his "dispersed meditations" with worldly wisdom and the art of getting success in life. In his dedication to the Duke of Buckingham, Bacon wrote that the essays "come home to men's bosom and business." Yes, it is to both bosoms and business to which he applies himself,—not of course to the technique of a particular profession, nor the examination of bosom as a physician or theologian would approach it. His approach to the "bosom" itself is a part of the general technique of "business". There is a cold, utilitarian and Machiavellian approach in the pearls of wisdom which are scattered all over his essays. But Bacon never forces his wisdom upon the readers. He never claims finality for the correctness of his wisdom, based on observation and experience. Bacon writes: "These are thoughts which have occurred to me: weigh them well, or take them or leave them."

Honesty is always the best policy. It is good in business; it is, therefore, an ideal virtue. A lie faces God, but shirks from man, yet "the mixture of falsehood is like alloy in coin of gold and silver, which may make the metal work the better", while "clear and round dealing is the honour of man's nature". "Have openness in reputation, use secrecy in habits, dissimulation in seasonable use, and power to feign, if there be no remedy." These are the maxims of a man of business — not of a speculative philosopher or a theorist. These maxims and reflections, if practiced, can lead to the success of man.

Bacon's wisdom is not for the hermit or the anchorite or the speculative philosopher or the theologian, but for the man of the business or of the world. The man, who believes in action, will always find inspiration in his essays. He formulated in his Essays a system for getting on into the world—how to rise and how to prevent a fall. Bacon was one of the earliest high priests of the Goddess of Getting On and he chanted forth the hymns and laid down the rituals of this religion for the use of private men, and particularly for the princes and politicians. Bacon propounded a new technique and a new morality for men at the helm of public affairs, who must rise in the world and yet beware of the incompleteness of Wisdom for a man's self. He advises in the essay on Wisdom for a Man's Self: " ..... divide with reason between self-love and society" for pure self-love is after all "the wisdom of rats that will leave a house before it falls" or "the wisdom of crocodiles that shed tears when they devour". Men in the service of the state should strike a golden mean between self-1ove and love of the public. Kings should be careful about choosing ministers as "are more sensible of duty than of rising...." (Of Ambition). Believing that the interests of the public weal more or less coincide with the interests of the king, Bacon examines the utility of all sorts of things from the point of view of their advantage to the king. Maxims are given for the guidance of the king in the Essay of Empire. What the king must do in the case of his wife and children, in the case of his favourites, in the case of his councillors, in the case of the nobility, in the case of churchmen grown powerful, in the case of ambitious generals and statesmen, this is the burden of song of practically all of Bacon's essays dealing with kings and princes. While nearly half of these essays are thus written for the advice of the king than for the good of men in street — essays full of the teachings of Machiavelli, breathing a gospel of territorial aggrandisement, expansion of colonies, increase of revenue by commerce, manufacture and navigation, and unblushing militarism, there are, of course, a few essays in which the ethics of private life are dealt.

Bacon’s essays are imbued with practical wisdom. The lines: "He that hath wife and children bath given hostages to fortune", "wife and children are a kind of discipline of humanity", "clear and round dealing is the honour of man's nature", "unmarried men are the best friends, best masters and best servants", appeal to all times and countries.

Bacon does not believe in conventional morality. His morality is prudential. His essays seem to be the work of an opportunist. Hugh Walker writes: "On the whole Bacon gives impression of singular aloofness from moral considerations. His maxims are prudential. He appears to be looking down with absolute dispassionateness from a height, and determining what course of conduct pays best. He condemns cunning, not as a thing loathsome and vile, but as a thing unwise. Occasionally he even lays down the rules for immoral conduct without a word of overt disapproval."

Francis Bacon is a moral and utilitarian philosopher

Answer: Francis Bacon, the father of English essays, is an Elizabethan essayist, moralist and thinker whose essays are loaded with ripest wisdom of experience. Nobody can deny the wisdom of his understanding of the affairs of the world. He shows an extraordinary insight regarding the problems that men face in life. Even within the utilitarian code that

Bacon puts forward, there is a certain code of conduct – a morality that is perhaps as high as is easily practicable in the world as we know it. In addition to that, his essays teach us morality with the practical use of it.

Bacon starts the essay titled "Of Great Place" with the idea that men in great place are three times servants. They are the servants of sovereign or state, fame and business. He calls it a strange desire to seek power and to lose liberty. Then he shows us that in a great place there is freedom to do good and evil but he suggests us not to follow the evil one. **"For in evil the best condition is not to will"**

Then he tells us that the vices of authority are chiefly four, such as – delays, corruption, roughness and facility. He suggests us how to avoid them, such as, working according to a schedule and being easy of access will help to avoid delays. Regarding corruption, one should not only refuge to accept bribes, but he must be able to stop a person from offering bribes. Again he makes us aware of the fact that any change without clear cause raises suspicion of corruption. So a man should clearly explain his intentions and reasons for the change. And for roughness should be avoided as far as possible.

He finishes the essay with practical teaching that a man should unbend from official rigour when away from the office so that people may say that he is a different man when discharging his official duties.

In his other essay "Of Love" Bacon explicates the disadvantages of the mad degree of love. He arrests our attention saying that it is love which does much mischief in our life like a siren and sometimes like a fury. He keeps on telling us about love's harmful effects one by one that firstly, among all the great and worthy hearts, there is hardly anyone who has been tempted to the folly. Secondly, the passion of love is so strong that it can enter a well-fortified heart if watch be not well kept. Thirdly, to make his argument more convincing, he comments that it is impossible to love and to be wise at the same time. Here he alludes to Helen to impart a practical thought that love can deter us from gaining both riches and wisdom. Fourthly, love brings in trouble in men's life and makes them that they can no way be true of their own ends. Despite those negative aspects of love, Bacon finishes his essay with a moral teaching that reads as:

> **"Nuptial love maketh mankind; friendly love perfecteth it"**
> **On the other hand, it is the wonton-love that corrupts and degrades mankind.**

"Of Revenge" is his other spectacular essay that opens with a definition of revenge as it is the wild justice. Soon after that he suggests us to avoid it if possible. This reminds us of his utilitarian philosophy.

> **"He is superior, for it is prince part to pardon."**

He also urges us not to recall the worthless past action because wise men never waste time brooding over it rather they are busier with the present and the future. He bewares us of the fact that revenge can be taken but in such a case, however, a man would be

watchful that his act of revenge does not bring him to trouble with the law, otherwise, his enemy will benefit from it. The above idea bears the testimony that he is a utilitarian person.

Towards the end of the essay Bacon highlights the moral side of revenge that public revenge is far better than private revenge. He stresses the fact alluding to the death of Caesar, Pertinaxa, and Henry the Third of France.

"Public revenges are the most part fortunate."

The essay "Of Marriage and Single Life" deals with both the advantages and the disadvantages of the married and the unmarried life. The man who has a family to maintain cannot undertake big tasks. He wishes to lead a life of security. At the same time a family is a financial liability. Marriage also imposes certain restraints on a man's freedom. And yet a man who has a wife and children is affectionate and less cruel than a man who is single. On the other hand, an unmarred man is in a position to confer great benefits upon the public. Moreover, he is a good friend, employer and servant although he may not be a good citizen.

Bacon tells us who to marry who needs not. Now he suggests that a clergyman should remain single for the interest of his parishioners.

"A single life doth well with churchmen;"

If he has a family, more of his attention and affection will go it and he cannot be expected to give undivided attention to his parishioner. So a clergyman will do well to remain single while a soldier will fight better when he thinks of the wife and children he has left behind at home.

It is to be said in conclusion that Bacon's essays show his great awareness of values that ennoble human life. His essays suggest us not to seek morality only by leaving practical idea. There is nothing wrong with the mixture of morality and the practical idea together. Just as no ornament is possible with pure gold, some crude metal should be added with it so only morality without practical concept of a thing cannot do. So as Renaissance man to the core, he advocates a compromise between absolute morality and opportunism.

Aphoristic style of Bacon

Introduction: Bacon's fame as a writer depends most of all on the fact that he is the father of modern English prose. He evolved a prose style that proved for the first time that English could also be used to express the subtleties of thought, in clear and uninvolved sentences.

The critics have noticed that there is a marked difference between Bacon's earlier and later essays. Macaulay, contrasting extracts from of Studies (1597) and Of Adversity (1625) illustrates what he calls the two styles of Bacon.

It is true that there is a vast difference between the styles of Bacon. But it is rather questionable whether this difference could be attributed to the fact that Bacon had gained a maturity of mind and intellect. Bacon wrote in more than one style. The stately movement of The Advancement of Learning and Of Adversity has been achieved in 1605 itself. Does that mean that Bacon had achieved maturity of mind and imagination in eight years? This is not convincing. The explanation lies in the fact that Bacon's very conception of the essay underwent a change. Bacon described his essays as "Dispersed Meditations". The first collection of essays is fully illustrative of Bacon's definition of the essay as dispersed meditations set down significantly rather than curiously. The original idea was to make the essays into a sort of diary in which significant observations on various topics of practical importance. His essays were jotted down in a terse and pithy and concise language. His first essays were a mere skeleton of thought, grouped around central themes with suitable titles. There was no attempt polishing the style or clothing the statements with literary beauty or imaginative grace. When, however, Bacon saw that his essays had gained an unexpected popularity, he thought that it was worthwhile polishing them and making them richer. These essays are very brief in length. The ideas have not been developed. The sentences are all crisp, short and sententious. Each sentence stands by itself. There is so much of condensation that each sentence can easily be expanded into a paragraph. That is to say that one single sentence does the job of a paragraph.

Essays not quite dispersed meditations: It would, however, be a mistake to call all the essays of Bacon "Dispersed Meditations". There are some which have received at his hand, a rather detailed treatment and which cannot be termed as "Sketchy". In these essays, Bacon finds room for conjunctions and connective clauses. Ideas are not left underdeveloped and transitions from one thought to another are not so abrupt. In Of Friendship, there is a logical approach in the enumeration of the principle fruits of friendship. Each advantage is properly handled and ideas are developed smoothly. There is not that abrupt transition of thought that characterized some of Bacon's other essays. Of Empire can be said to contain almost exhaustive treatment of the dangers that beset a king in those days. In Of Seditions and Troubles, there is a quite closely reasoned and connected account of the causes and remedies of discontentment and agitation that may fester and burst out into trouble for the country. Aphoristic sentences are found in these essays too, but attention has been given to other factors as well.

Aphoristic style of Bacon: An aphoristic style means a compact, condensed and epigrammatic style of writing. Bacon's writing has been admired for various reasons. Some have admired them for dazzling rhetoric, others his grace. In Bacon we find a style which is distinct and at the same time characteristic of his age. His style includes various qualities. Firstly, he remains the best aphoristic, so he stands the most quotable writer. There is terseness of expression and epigrammatic brevity, in the essays of Bacon. His sentences are brief and rapid, but they are also forceful. As Dean Church says, "They come down like the strokes of a hammer." The force of aphoristic style depends on other stylistic qualities which supplement it. He weighs the pros and cons of a statement and immediately counter-balances it. (Give examples from the above the extracts).

A Rhetorician: Bacon's style is definitely rhetorical. In this connection, Saintsbury has remarked that no one, "knows better than (Bacon) how to leave a single word to produce all its effects by using it in some slightly uncommon sense. He has great powers of attracting and persuading his readers even though he may not convince them. In prose rhetoric, in the use, that is to say, of language to dazzle and persuade, not to convince. He has few rivals and no superiors in English." There is a constant use of imagery and analogy in Bacon's essays. The apt and extensive use of metaphors, images, similitudes and analogies is in keeping with the view of the rhetoricians of the ancient as well as of the Renaissance. Bacon draws his imagery from the familiar objects or nature, or from the facts of everyday life.

His Allusions and Quotations: The essay bear witness to Bacon's learned mind in the extensive use of quotations and allusions drawn from various sources, classical fables, the Bible, History, the ancient Greek and the Roman writers. Of Truth includes Pilate, Lucian and Montaigne, In Of Great Place; we have Tacitus, Galba and Vespacian, and Of Friendship includes reference to Aristotle. Thus Bacon employs allusions to and quotations in order to explain his point. They serve to make his style more scholarly and enrich it while lending to his ideas. Though, his style is heavy with learning, yet it is more flexible than any of his predecessors and contemporaries. His sentences are short and with this shortness comes lucidity of expression. Thus he shows mastery of the principles of prose. There almost no humor in Bacon's essays, but his essays are packed with astounding wit.

Conclusion: The style of Bacon is not the personal and chatty style of the subjective essayist like Montaigne and Lamb. It is dignified and aphoristic style. He w

Bacon's Essays – a blend of philosophizing, moralizing and worldly wisdom

Introduction: "I have taken all knowledge for my province" says Bacon and "Beyond any other book of the same size in any literature they are loaded with ripest wisdom of experience." Says Hudson regarding Bacon's essays. Nobody can deny the wisdom of Bacon of his understanding of the affairs of the world.

He shows an extraordinary insight regarding the problems that men face in life. But his wisdom is only practical and not moral. Alexander Pope has given the following remarks about Bacon in his epic:

> **If parts allure these think how Bacon shin'd**
> **The wisest, brightest and meanest of mankind**

There is some basic truth in this contention. One cannot deny his wisdom, his observation, intellect and genius. Bacon was a very complex and enigmatic character. The dichotomy of moral values what one finds in his essays was to be found in his character, too. Compton-Rickett says, "He had a great brain, not a great soul." He wanted to serve humanity with through the expansion of usable knowledge. He was

aware that no headway could be made in this world without adopting certain mean ways. He was a product of the Renaissance with composite qualities such as wisdom, meanness and brightness. Bacon was a man of the Renaissance and that was an age which tried to explore to the full, the opportunities of mind and body afforded to man. The term, Renaissance means Re-birth or more generally the Revival of Learning. It was a series of events by which Europe passed from Medieval to a Modern Civilization. In this age, there was a new spirit of inquiry, of criticism and of passionate scientific inventions. Literature of that age was chiefly marked by this spirit and Bacon's essays have several features that show the spirit of Renaissance.

A very important writer of the Italian Renaissance was Machiavelli whose opportunistic philosophy sacrificed high ethical ideals in the interest of achieving material progress. Man is an individual and an end in himself and this sense of individualism gave rise to the feeling that he must know how to get on in this world. The revival of classical learning and the study of ancient Greek and Roman Literature and history was a hallmark of the Renaissance. The spirit of learning is very much in the essays of Bacon. There are many allusions to ancient history and the references to classical mythology are all evidence of the typical Renaissance culture. Latin writers such as Seneca and Virgil and Lucian have frequently been drawn. His love of learning is portrayed in his essay Of Studies and he substantiates his arguments in his essay, Of Friendship with instances from history.

Blake on reading the essays of Bacon is supposed to have remarked that they were good advice for Satan's Kingdom. Now, a Satan's Kingdom naturally implies a state of affairs in which morality has no place or in which actions are governed by a complete lack of principles. To some extent, it is indeed undeniable that Bacon's advice incorporates a certain cool disregard for high moral ideals. The actual fact is that in Bacon's essays, one find dichotomy of values, the essays present a strange complexity and contradiction of wisdom and values. In order to understand the real meaning of his essays, it is imperative to understand the underlying purpose of his writing. Man was the subject of most literature and man is the subject of Bacon's essays too. Thus the wisdom that Bacon shows in his essays is regulated by the practical consideration. It is frankly utilitarian. This does not mean that the essays don't contain ethical or philosophical values, they do, but the overall hallmark of his essays is practical use.

Wisdom, Meanness and Brightness: To a religious-minded man like Blake, advice such as what Bacon offers in his essays must indeed have been shocking. Blake would regard any utilitarian advice as opposite to God's ways, but Bacon was not so particular, for he is a man of the Renaissance. It is easy to assume that Bacon's wisdom was cynical because many of his advice calmly ignores ethical standards and seems to imply that nothing succeeds like success. Bacon is utilitarian, but he is so because he realized that the vast majority of the people in the world are guided by this attitude and success for them has only one meaning – the material success. His essays reflect the profound wisdom of his mind, his brightness is ascertained by his vast knowledge and literary and classical allusions made in his works, his meanness does not deal with his money. He

was reputed to be a very generous man. He was mean because he showed a surprising lack of principle in promoting his selfish interests.

Philosopher – cum – moralist: At least two of his essays present him as entertaining deep regard for high sentiments and the sanctity of truth. Of Truth speaks of truth, love and fair dealings in high terms. Here he is a philosopher who advocates the pursuit of truth. He is also a moralist when he says that "man's mind should turn upon the "poles of truth." Falsehood debases man despite his material gains and success. Bacon advocates man to follow a path of truth and truthfulness. Similarly, his essay Of Goodness and Goodness of Nature is on a purely moral plane. He counsels goodness, charity and benevolence and there is a clear condemnation of evil.

There are some essays in which he puts a number of moral precepts, not ignoring prudential aspects. When we come to Bacon's essays dealing with subjects such as love, marriage, family life and parents and children, we are struck by the cold and unemotional treatment of topics what could easily admit an emotional approach. Prudence governs marriage, love and friendship. Love is an emotion, not fit for life according to Bacon. As a philosopher, he takes a balanced view of everything, weighs the pros and cons of every issue, presents different aspects of the picture and counsels moderation. This is a rationalist's approach and it preludes emotion and feeling. The essays are a handbook of practical wisdom. Each essay is a collection of suggestion and guideline for a man of action. His essays lack coherence and logical sequence, otherwise a quality in a standard essay. But his essays are unity of ideas.

Conclusion: But it has to be pointed out that Bacon is not a moral idealist. He does not preach morality, but not ideal morality. The kind of morality he teaches is tinged with what is called worldliness. We might even say that the guiding principle is expediency. Yet one cannot say that Bacon is amoral or immoral in his advice. In every issue, he balances the advantage and disadvantage. Even within the utilitarian code, there is a code of conduct – a morality that is perhaps as high as is easily practicable in the world as we know it. His essays embody the wisdom and philosophy and morality of a clear-eyed realist who knows quite well that men should be and but also knew what they actually were. Bacon is undoubtedly a man whose morality is greater than the average man's, but it is not of the highest order. The pursuit of good and right are important but not if it proves too costly in worldly terms. His advice is neither for Satan's Kingdom nor for God's, but for the Kingdom of man.

An Epigrammatic and Aphoristic Style of Bacon in His Essays

The vast contribution of Francis Bacon (1561-1626) to the development of English prose can hardly be overlooked or denied. He was the first scientific philosopher to write English in a definite, lucid and terse style. Though he borrowed the compose of the essay from Montaigne, he adapted it to suit his maintain purpose and to his natural ability of writing. His essays are considered a whiff of a new air in the heavy and pompous essays written in Elizabethan age.

Bacon's Essays appreciate a big charm and appeal for readers thanks to their many merits or qualities such as wisdom, superior diction, inviting style of writing, grand variety of subjects, pragmatic reach, sensuousness, wealth of metaphor and analogy and the dispersed meditations of Bacon, whose arresting wit, worldly wisdom and practical advance towards things made his essays unsurpassable and masterpieces of English literature. What makes Bacon's Essays a fresh is compact and epigrammatic style of writing. Bacon was unsurpassable in bringing his mountainous thoughts in nutshell. He had a gigantic and impressive mastery over the art of saying maximum in minimum words.

An aphorism is a short, pithy and a concise statement of a principle and truth while an epigram is a terse, narrative, or witty often a paradoxical saying. Bacon has aptly and effectively demonstrated his singular ability to announce himself aphoristically and epigrammatically in his writings. His essays are replete with aphorisms. Many sentences in his essays are like proverbs, which can be quoted to give weight to the arguments. Almost every sentence in his essays is pregnant with meaning. His utterances are thoughtful, insightful, keen, witty and meaningful to the core. Only a person of high caliber like Bacon can manufacture a considerable style of terseness and condensation. Following are some of the sentences from his essays, which depict vociferously his unbelievable epigrammatic style of writing:

"Wives are young men's mistresses, companions for middle age and extinct men's nurses." (Of Marriage and Single Life) .

"The rising unto spot is laborious, and by worry men arrive to greater grief."(Of ample area)

"Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested." (Of Studies) .

"Studies abet for delight, for ornament, and for ability." (Of Studies)

"Crafty men condemn studies; simple men cherish them; and wise men utilize them." (Of Studies)

"Reading maketh a chunky man; conference a ready man; and writing an staunch man." (Of Studies)

"Revenge is a kind of wild justice." (Of Revenge)

"Men horror death as children apprehension to go in the black." (Of awe)

"Virtue is like precious odours, most fragrant when they are incensed or crushed; for prosperity doth best survey vice, but adversity doth best perceive virtue." (Of adversity) .

These sentences from his essays are but a few glaring examples of Bacon's terse, pithy and epigrammatic style of writing, which lisp volumes of his expansive talent and wisdom. A reader feels inexpressible delight in reading his essays and feels wiser and more enlightened after reading the pearls of wisdom in the essays of Bacon. His essays, beyond doubt, are tremendous literary work in English literature.

In fact, the secret of Bacon's style strength lies in its brevity. Virtually no writer, ancient or modern, has managed to compress so much in so little meaning compass, various tests, such as "studies and negotiations" – are marvels of condensation Perhaps the most. Bacon's style is fascinating that no one can remain indifferent. In other words, as a prose writer is passionate admirers or detractors. It is interesting to note that these two extremes are caused by the same style properties. Bacon, inaugurated the modern era of English prose. FG Selby says,

"Part of the influence of Bacon is obviously the charm of his style. The quality of the force in the style of bacon is intellectual rather than emotional"

Of parents and children

The joys, sorrow and the fears of the parents with regard to their children are personal and private, not to be shared with others.

Pros and Cons of having Children

Children make it easy to bear hard work because the parents labour will benefit the children. But they find it harder to bear misfortunes because of the thought that these misfortunes will affect the children's well-being. Anxiety is increased by children but this is compensated by the thought that their memories will be perpetuated through their children and this makes the thought of death easier to bear.

Every species perpetuates its elder through reproduction, but it is man alone who possesses the intellectual achievements and memory. Childless men do more noble deeds than those who have children. Such men have no image of themselves to leave behind, thus they seek to express and perpetuate themselves through their noble deeds which benefit mankind.

Faults of Parents towards their Children

a) Unequal favouritism: Parents, often discriminate in their love for their children. This is not desirable.

In a large family the eldest child gets some attention and the youngest is often spoilt. The ones in the middle are ignored but often prove themselves to be the best of the lot.

b) Liberality: Parents should not be miserly in giving their children pocket allowance. This is harmful as it will lead them into crooked and dishonest ways and open to over indulgence if they come into plenty in later life. Authority should be exercised but there should be liberality in pocket allowance.

c) Encourage a spirit of rivalry: Another bad practice is to encourage a spirit of competition among children. This develops into disharmony in the family when they are older.

Nephews and own Children

The Italians make no distinction between their own children and those of near relations. This is justified because a nephew sometimes bears a greater resemblance to a person than his own child.

Profession for a Child

Parents should choose a suitable profession for their child. The choice should be made early when the child is yet pliable. Any initial aversion felt by child for the profession will

be overcome by custom. if, however, the child's inclination is markedly opposed to the profession of parental choice, then he may be allowed to make his own choice.

Younger brothers generally come to good as they have a strong incentive to hard work. This incentive is withdrawn if the elder brother is disinherited and the younger child hopes to be the beneficiary of a lot of wealth.

Critical Remarks

This essay belongs to the category in which Bacon views man in relation to the world and society. The subject is of the common and widespread interest. The essay contains some indisputably sound advice regarding the bringing up of children. This speaks for the keen insight Bacon possessed. Though the subject could easily involve sentimentality, Bacon considers it in the clear light of unsentimentality. He prepares, as usual, a balance-sheet of advantages and disadvantages which are the lot of parents. Apparently Bacon did not consider people with children an asset to society.

Of Great Place

The essay Of Great Place written by Francis Bacon, a famous English philosopher and scientist whose aphorism Sciencia Potentia est is known to everyone in the world, represents a lot of interesting philosophical ideas. These ideas can be easily related to the present day principles and concepts. The philosophy of Francis Bacon is concluded in the fact that the major goal of scientific knowledge lies in providing benefit to the humanity. (Anderson, 1992, p.124)

My goal in this essay in to give a critical analysis of Francis Bacon's philosophical work Of the Great Place.

The main idea of the essay is to show the readers the position of men in great places. Francis Bacon discusses the life, duties and behavior of those people who occupy high position in the society. He writes that all the people who live in great places are "thrice servants". They are servants of the sovereign or state, fame and business. Moreover, they have no freedom although they enjoy power. It is a very interesting idea that powerful people have no liberty. But its true. They have power over other people who occupy a lower position in the society but they "lose power" over themselves.

Francis Bacon argues that it is very difficult "to raise into place". People should be strong and self-confident to take a high position in the society. He writes that "by indignities men come to dignities". Moreover, they can easily lose their position that is why they should be uncompromising in their goals and desires. Even in the old age great men should not change their manners.

As Francis Bacon is a great philosopher who not only knows a lot about human nature but also tries to teach others, to share his knowledge with people around him. In his essay Of the Great Place, Bacon touches upon the problem of other people's opinion

concerning "great men". He writes that great persons should "borrow other men's opinion" because they can get a lot of interesting and important things for them. The great men cannot judge themselves. They should learn what other people think of them in order to remain on the top of the ladder. (Bacon, 2006, p.4)

Bacon expresses a very interesting thought when he writes that the great men are "the first to find their own griefs, though they be the last to find their own faults". He is sure that it is very difficult for those people who have money and power to find their own faults. They do not see their faults. It seems to them that they have no faults while they have a lot of them. Only other people can show them their faults. That is why the great men are interested in learning other people's opinion. When Bacon says that the great people are the first to find their griefs, he means that they love themselves so much that cannot stand any trouble or misfortune. They have power and money and they do not want to have any griefs in their life. (Gaukroger, 2001, p.56)

Francis Bacon calls these people "strangers to themselves". The great men are fully involved in their business that they "have no time to tend their health", their body and their mind. The only things they are thinking about are power and money. Sometimes they simply forget about their health. And only when they get problems with health they come down to earth and realize that they are merely human beings.

The great philosopher also touches upon the theme of good and evil in his essay. He argues that "in place, there is a license to do good and evil". Evil is curse. Only those people who do good will be able to have rest. Good thoughts are better than good dreams because the men have an opportunity to bring their good thought to life. Bacon writes that "merit and good works is the end of man's motion". Any men should learn to do good in his life in order to get award from God at the end of "the motion". Any man can be "a partaker of God's theater" but he should deserve it. (Bacon, 2006, p.5)

The author of the essay tries to explain the readers that any man has an opportunity to analyze not only his own actions but also the actions of other people in order to understand what is good and what is bad. They should "neglect the examples of those that have carried themselves ill". They should follow only good examples. Moreover, the great people should be role models to other people. They should learn good lessons from their past life and take care of their future. Bacon writes: "Seek to make thy course regular, that men may know beforehand what to expect". (Bacon, 2006, p.6)

The great philosopher also touches upon the theme of law. It is a very important question for him because the law in the society is a vital thing. He teaches "to preserve the right of thy place, but stir no questions of jurisdiction". He also wants everyone to preserve the rights of other places.

Bacon argues that there are four major vices of authority. They are corruption, delays, roughness and facility. In order to overcome delay, the great people should be punctual. Bacon writes: "give easy access, keep time appointed". (Bacon, 2006)

Special attention is paid to corruption. Bacon writes that the great people should be sincere to avoid corruption. In order to avoid roughness, it is necessary to be kinder. The facility is worse than bribery. It is necessary to be more careful.

Francis Bacon argues that the great men should respect other people even if they are no so powerful as they are. He writes: "If you have colleagues, respect them". (Bacon, 2006, p.8)

The author of the essay wants those people who became great to have a change in their nature. He wants them to become another men. (Gaukroger, 2001, p.201)

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is necessary to say that such a wise man as Francis Bacon could not only show the strengths and the weaknesses of the great men of the society but also he could give them some recommendations concerning their way of life, their behavior and their principles. He was interested in investigation of the human nature. His natural philosophy was greatly appreciated because he represented absolutely new philosophical ideas concerning the essence of life. Francis Bacon's essay Of Great Place is one of his bold philosophical works.

"Of Studies"

"People often say that this or that person has not yet found himself. But the self is not something one finds, it is something one creates," said Thomas Szasz. The saying tells that self is not sticking by nature, or what one is from the time of its birth; but it is something nurtured, or developed through time. Such quotation can be realized from one of the best essays of all time, which is "Of Studies" by Francis Bacon. As the essay generally implies the purposes of written records such as of history and literature, it can also be entailed from such how a person can search deeper in himself. And through examination deeper of one's life, he can find the purpose in life. Hence, "Of Studies", in some point of view, serves reading of books as a tool in finding his reason for living.

"Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man" is the most impressive statement a reader can find in Bacon's essay. Reading, in such statement, mainly points out the importance of knowledge in one's life. Making a full man indicates the importance of a person's memory in living his life. Conventions, facts, cultures theories, principles, and ideologies shape a man's behavior and perspectives towards attaining happiness. Conferencing a ready man shows the man's ability to express through declarations of what he knows and arguments of what he believes is true. Here, reading makes a man a good conversationalist; as such, one is able to find meaning in life with upright communication in relationships with people. Writing an exact man signifies efficiency of his daily activities in life. In search of his meaning, the use of logic helps him surpass any kind of natural or human-related obstacle. Moreover, the quotation extends that "And, therefore, if a man writes little, he had needed have a great memory; if he confers little, he had need of a ready wit; and if he read little, he

had need of much cunning to seem to know that he knoweth not." Such statement illustrates the absence of books; that without them, man would only stick to what he already has. Here, Bacon can also make his readers realize, in some perspective, that man needs to grow and develop through time not only to survive but also to enjoy life. In search for one's purpose, he should have a tendency of adapting to new ways of thought and living that are influenced by literature and history. To internalize the above statements, as an illustration, a college student dreams of becoming a lawyer someday. The only to attain the skills of becoming a lawyer is through reading. Reading does not only enable the student to know the laws of the land, become a good debater, and win cases. It also makes him understand the rationale of the law in helping people, standing up to his moral principles, and win cases that benefit the public. The former statement entails the becoming of a lawyer in search for wealth, while the latter in search for the meaning of life. Hence, a person reading can either be influenced by what a society dictates him to be, or he can be dictated by what his heart tells him to be. And only through following one's heart can he achieve happiness.

The statement of Bacon "Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider" is also an effective one. Open-mindedness is the topic of such statement. First, it tells the primary aim of reading is not to fill an empty mind, but to open a closed one. Not only to provided information for the memory, reading enables a person to consider all factors that would contribute to his happiness. In other terms, reading does not really create doubts, but rather it carries people away from depression as it offers much more things to think about. Second, it extends the senses of people due to their physical limitation. Reading cuts the boundaries as sources of information are passed from one place to another. In such case, a person cannot be limited to an existing knowledge in his area and that such is not the only reason for happiness. In short, a person cannot be pressured by a certain culture if he couldn't comply with such because there is a wide variety of ways in order to attain happiness. Reflecting on Bacon's statement, for example, a Business Management major student is unhappy with what his doing because he was only forced by his business-inclined parents as he really wants to be a famous musician and excels indubitably in that field. Considering that he was pressured by the fact that a Filipino should be able to get a stable and high-profit job through being in the field of business rather than of hobby-related careers, reading inspirational books taught such student to be rebellious to his parents. In such case, the books taught him that a person loving what he is doing is more important than being rich and unhappy. And as such, reading books open minds to escape from oppressive thinking.

Lastly, Bacon's statement "Crafty men contemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them, and above them, won by observation" also brings a reader to a deep realization in life. It is a matter of skill versus theories that comes into the dispute between reading and not reading. Bacon argues that the one who reads is better than one who clings to what he already knows and master on his skills. Such provides that in order to improve in a certain skill, reading is necessary. It does not only teach the fundamentals, but also flourishes such abilities due to extensive studies and research. In relation to attaining

one’s purpose in life, contentment can be achieved is curiosity is continuously satisfied. In explaining this, as an illustration, a regular basketball player wants to become a star player or a primary contributor to a team. Not only through daily practice, in order to be a powerful athlete, has he also studies past plays of legendary NBA players and reading books in improving his game. Thus, in contrary to other athletes’ regular way of improving their game only by practice, theories play an important role in mental conditioning and witty plays overcoming the opponent.

Francis Bacon’s “Of Studies” serves reading of books as a means in finding man’s purpose in life. It emphasizes the importance of knowledge, open-mindedness, and theory empowering skill. Without books, there would not be any needed improvement for man hence no other means of satisfying his curiosity. A man’s purpose in life is not limited to appreciating on what he has for, in some perspective, man has insatiable desires and needs. Hence, being alive means wanting to know more. The main point of all of it is that there will always be new discoveries; always a reason to obliterate existing knowledge with a new one. As said by Gelett Burgess, “If in the last few years you haven’t discarded a major opinion or acquired a new one, check your pulse. You may be dead.”

"Of Friendship"

As a pragmatic and as an empirical thinker Bacon followed two fundamental Renaissance principles—Sepantia or search for knowledge and Eloquent, the art of rhetoric. This explains, to some extent, the impassioned presentation of his ideas and views and the aphoristic style of his writing. But the essay Of Friendship is stylistically somewhat different in that it contains passionate and flattering statements along with profuse analogies and examples to support or explain his arguments perhaps because this essay was occasioned by the request of his friend Toby Matthew.

Bacon begins the essay by invoking the classical authorities on basic human nature. First, he refers to Aristotle’s view in Politics: Whosoever is delighted in solitude is either a wild beast or a god. According to Aristotle, a man by nature and behaviour may be degraded to such an extent that he may be called unfit for society. Again, he may be so self-sufficient that he may not need society. In the first case, he resembles a wild beast and in the second, he resembles gods. Here it should be pointed out that Bacon is not ruling out the value of solitude; in fact, he is reserving solitude for higher kind of life, which is possible for a few great men like Epimenides, Numa, Empedocles, Apollonius and some Christian saints. Here too Bacon is following Aristotelian view on solitude as expressed in Ethics, where Aristotle prefers a contemplative life to an active life:

“It is the highest kind of life, it can be enjoyed uninterruptedly for the greatest length of time...”

Bacon’s logic is that those who live in society should enjoy the bliss of friendship for more than one reason. First of all, friendship is necessary for maintaining good mental health by controlling and regulating the passions of the mind. In other words, Bacon

here speaks of the therapeutic use of friendship though which one can lighten the heart by revealing the pent-up feelings and emotions: sorrows, joys, fears, hopes, suspicions, advice and the like.

Then in order to justify the value of friendship, Bacon points out the practice of friendship on the highest social level. He informs us that the kings and princes, in order to make friends, would raise some persons who would be fit for friendship. Then Bacon tries to glorify friendship by translating the Roman term for friendship, Participes curarum, which means 'sharers of their cares'. He gives instances of raising of men as friends from the Roman history: Sylla and Pompey the Great, Julius Caesar and Antonius, Augustus and Agrippa, Tiberius Caesar and Sejanus, Septimius Severus and Plautianus. Bacon also refers to what Comineus wrote of Duke Charles the Hardy's deterioration of his mental faculty just because of his reserve and loneliness and extends his judgement to the case of Comineus' second master, Louis XI. The point which Bacon strongly wants to assert is that friendship functions for a man in a double yet paradoxically contrary manner: "...it redoubleth joys, and cutteth griefs in halfs".

The second fruit of friendship, according to Bacon, is beneficial for the clarity of understanding. If a man has got a faithful friend, he can be consulted to clarify the confusions of the mind. He calls the counsel of a friend, citing Heraclitus, "drier and purer" than that a man gives himself out of self love, which clouds his judgement. Bacon then counsel of this sort into two kinds: "the one concerning manners and the other concerning business." A friend's constructive criticism of the other friend's behaviour helps him more than a book of morality. In the matter of conducting practical business, Bacon thinks, a true friend's advice can also be helpful in undertaking a venture or averting a danger.

Finally, Bacon speaks of the last fruit of friendship, which is manifold in the sense that there are so many things in life, which can be fulfilled only with the help of a friend. In fact, at a rare moment Bacon gets emotional and quotes classical maxim that "a friend is another self". His point is that a man may have many a desire, which may not be realized in his life-time, but if he has got a true friend, his unfulfilled desire will be taken care of by his friend. Not only this, a friend, unlike the near and dear ones and enemies, can talk to him on equal terms whenever situation demands. Keeping all these things, Bacon concludes that if a man does not have a friend, he may well leave this world. That is to say, he is not fit for the human society to live in.

Of Truth

"Of Truth" is the indicative of the greatness of Bacon's mind and art. Having philosophic and pragmatic bias of mind, Bacon shares with us the astonishing aspects of truth. In this essay, Bacon has presented the objective truth in various manifestations. Similarly, Bacon shares with us the subjective truth, operative in social life. "OF TRUTH", reveals Bacon in different light because he shows his moralistic leaning than his prudential attitude. However, the tone of this essay is Bacon's usual tone, authoritative.

"Of Truth" is Bacon's masterpiece that shows his keen observation of human beings with special regard to truth. In the beginning of the essay, Bacon rightly observes that generally people do not care for truth as Pilate, the governor of the Roman Empire, while conducting the trial of Jesus Christ, cares little for truth:

"What is truth? Said jesting Pilate; and would not stay for an answer."

Advancing his essay, Bacon explores the reasons why the people do not like truth. First, truth is acquired through hard work and man is ever reluctant to work hard. Secondly, truth curtails man's freedom. More than that the real reason of man's disliking to truth is that man is attached to lies which Bacon says "a natural though corrupt love of the lie itself." Man loves falsehood because, Bacon says, truth is as if the bright light of the day and would show what men, in actual, are. They look attractive and colourful in the dim light of lies. In this respect, Bacon rightly observes:

"A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure."

It is a fact that man prefers to cherish illusions, which make his life more interesting. With a profound observation of man's psychology, Bacon states that if deprived of false pride and vanities, the human mind would contract like a deflated balloon and these human beings would become poor, sad and ill. However, poetic untruth is not gone unnoticed by Bacon's piercing intellect. He says though poetic untruth is a wine of the Devil in priest's eyes, yet it is not as harmful as the other lies are. Bacon being a literary artist illustrates this concept with an apt imagery that the poetic untruth is but the shadow of a lie.

Proving himself highly moralistic person, Bacon deems the inquiry of truth as the highest good of human nature as he observes:

".... the inquiry of truth, which is the lovemaking or wooing of it, knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it and the belief of truth, which is the enjoying of it, is the sovereign good of human nature."

The enquiry of truth, knowledge of truth and belief of truth are compared with the enjoyment of love. Such a comparison lends the literary charm to this essay.

Bacon further says in "OF TRUTH" that the last act of creation was to create rational faculty, which helps in finding truth, is the finished product of God's blessing as he says:

"... The last was the light of reason...is the illumination of his spirit."

Bacon's moral idealism is obvious when he advancing his argument in favour of truth asserts that the earth can be made paradise only with the help of truth. Man should ever stick to truth in every matter, do the act of charity and have faith in every matter, do the act of charity and have faith in God. Bacon's strong belief in truth and Divinity is stated thus:

"Certainly, it is heaven upon earth, to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in Providence, and turn upon the poles of truth."

From the objective truth, Bacon passes judgment, to the subjective truth, which he calls "the truth of civil business". It is the compelling quality of truth, Bacon observes, that the persons who do not practice truth, acknowledge it. Bacon's idealistic moral attitude is obvious in these lines when he says: "..... that clear and round dealing is the honour of man's nature; and that mixture of falsehood is like alloy in coin of gold and silver, which may make the metal work better, but it embaseth it."Bacon further asserts that the liars are like a snake that goes basely upon the belly and not upon the feet. Imagery comprising comparison is apt and convincing. Moreover, Bacon refers to Montaigne who is of the view that "a lie faces God and shrinks from man". Bacon adds that falsehood is the height of wickedness and as such will invite the Judgment of God upon all human beings on Doom's day. Therefore, Bacon concludes his essay with didacticism with a tinge of Christian morality.

In the essay, "OF TRUTH", there is no digression. All the arguments in the essay pertain to the single main idea, truth. Bacon's wide learning is clearly observed when he refers to Pilate (history), Lucian (Greek literature), Creation, Montaigne (a French essayist). "OF TRUTH" is enriched with striking similes and analogies, such as he equates liars as a snake moving basely on its belly, mixture of falsehood is like an alloy of gold and silver and many more.

The essay "OF TRUTH" is not ornamental as was the practice of the Elizabethan prose writers. Bacon is simple, natural and straightforward in his essay though Elizabethan colour is also found in "OF TRUTH" because there is a moderate use of Latinism in the essay. Economy of words is found in the essay not alone, but syntactic brevity is also obvious in this essay. We find conversational ease in this essay, which is the outstanding feature of Bacon's style. There is a peculiar feature of Bacon i.e. aphorism. We find many short, crispy, memorable and witty sayings in this essay.

Therefore, Bacon's essay "OF TRUTH" is rich in matter and manner. This is really a council 'civil and moral'. This essay has to be read slowly and thoughtfully because it is extremely condensed and it is a model of succinct and lucid prose.

Of Ambition — By Francis Bacon

In medieval times, it was believed that the body has four bodily fluids– blood, phlegm, choler or yellow bile, melancholy or black bile. It was then thought to determine emotional and physical disposition. Choler or yellow bile makes people restless, irritable, and itching for action.

A person bubbling with ambitions can hardly lead an un-hurried, contented, and a relaxed life. Since he sets his eyes high, he will continuously think to do something newer, better, and harder. He will knowingly accept challenges, and strive to solve them. The more he succeeds, the more he will drive himself to do things which others don't

dare to do. Such a person will be a go-getter, a perfectionist, and a workaholic. He will be continuously restless with ideas and energy. Naturally, he will find people around him indolent, mediocre, sulking and un-worthy.

Explanation …. If such an ambitious man is restrained, and not allowed to pursue his goal, he will feel stifled, angry and rebellious. Finally, all his creative energy and dynamism will be numbed and wasted. Due to his frustration, he will develop a negative mindset and hostility to other people.

If a person, with ambition burning within him, gets a conducive environment to pursue his goal with little hindrance, he will be totally lost in his work. No ill-feeling will enter his mind. He will not harm anyone. On the other hand, if the same person is held back and not allowed to work towards his vision, he will seethe in frustration and anger. Driven by his internal discontent, he will begin to dislike others and perceive everyone as wicked and hideous. When something bad happens to his boss, the organization, society, or the government, he will derive some wicked pleasure out of the misfortune of others. Employees developing such negative mindset are a liability to the government, and the society, at large.

It is, therefore, imperative that ambitious people be given sufficient freedom to let their creativity blossom. If this is made possible, the individuals will be an asset. They will not be hostile and angry. If it is not possible to afford or grant such freedom to an ambitious person, it will be a good idea not to employ them at all and invite problem later.

If these ambitious employees continue to remain disgruntled, they might bring disgrace and downfall to their employers.

It is now realized that there is an inherent risk in employing ambitious men, so, unless essential, they should not be employed. But, this is not a rule written on stone (meaning 'rigid'). There are situations where ambitious people should be the preferred choice for engagement.

While selecting the right person for positions of key commanders for the battlefield, existence of ambition in the commander-designate cannot be a disqualification. After all, for a man in arms, a contented, laid-back temperament is a huge negative trait. Such a soldier can never fight. Shirking his responsibility, he will run away from the battlefield at the slightest sign of defeat. Only a brave ambitious and egoistic commander can confront the enemy boldly and vanquish it.

Ambitious men are also essential where safeguarding the personal safety of the king or government's senior-most functionaries are concerned. Ambitious men make reliable and astute body guards. For such responsibilities, the guard may have to shed his own life for saving the life of his employer. This calls for a spirit of extreme sacrifice on the call of duty. For the person employed as body guard, nothing is more sacrosanct than the life of the person he has to protect. Such single-minded dedication to duty is akin to the blind-folded dove (a small, robust bird) soaring higher and higher into the sky without

bothering to worry about the distance and its limited energy. At one stage, it gets too exhausted to fly and comes crashing on to the ground. An ambitious guard can make similar sacrifice.

Sejanus was a gallant and ambitious warrior who was officiating as the emperor in Rome. Sejanus discharged royal duties in the absence of the real emperor Tiberious, who lived in a distant island. At one stage, receiving credible intelligence inputs, Tiberious began to suspect that Sejanus was contemplating to usurp power by dethroning and destroying him. He did not venture to challenge Sejanus frontally. Instead, he resorted to crafty intrigues to create confusion in the minds of the Senate members. He managed this subterrfuge by sending letters to them with ambiguous messages. Sometimes, he praised Sejanus in his letter, while deriding him in the next letter.

In Rome, Sejanus had created enough enemies by his boastful and brash manners. He was a brute too. Teberious plotted with the valiant and ambitious Marco to kill Sejanous. Teberious returned to Rome and summoned Sejanus early in the dawn ostensibly to decorate him. Marco seized this opportunity to take control of the mounted guards functioning under Sejanus's command till then. After this, he attacked Sejanus and killed him and threw his body unceremoniously to the river.

Had an ambitious man like Marco not been there, Teberious could not have neutralized Sejanus. Hence, kings, generals and senior government leaders need ambitious people around them.

Having thus pleaded in favour of engaging ambitious men, Bacon gives an advice of caution. He suggests that such people in the payroll must be kept under a leash either covertly or overtly. If this is not done, the danger of these men turning against their benefactors and employers is a real possibility.

If these ambitious men offering security to the heads of state or king are from the lower sections of the society, they pose lesser danger than those who are from the aristocratic class. If the security personnel are ill-mannered and boorish, they pose less danger to their employers than those who are suave and popular. Similarly, newer recruits are less dangerous than those bloated ones who have been around for a long time. Since they are privy to the affairs of the palace and the court, they might feel tempted to misuse their knowledge to harm their masters.

In all ages, kings, heads of states and men of importance have preferred to employ their known and trusted people to form the security around them and to give them counsel during crises. Some say, this is an unsound and imprudent policy that smacks of nepotism. As per Bacon, this is a wise policy as it helps to keep unduly pretentious and scheming people reasonably satisfied with the cl;out they enjoy because of their proximity to the emperor. Some disgruntled ambitious people can upstage their superiors and employers whom they are duty-bound to serve. So, keeping them in good humour is a prudent policy.

In course of his duty, the favoured person, chosen by the king to do the duty, may either endear himself or antagonize his master because of his proximity to him. This may not be detrimental to the interests of the state or the king (employer), because the man will not possibly harm his master. On the other hand, an unknown ambitious person, despite his quality and talent does not fit well to this responsibility. He may have hidden hostility which might tempt him to rebel against his master.

If at all such ambitious persons are employed, it is essential to preempt any over-zealous tendency in him by employing another person of equivalent talent in a parallel position.

Bacon says, even this is not enough. What if the two persons collude to plot against the king? They may also fall out with each other creating disharmony and undesirable hostility around the master. To prevent such a situation from happening, a few counselors or high-level officials or ministers may be appointed to bring stability and coherence to the set-up.

The prince / king / employer / head of state may prop up and bring in a person of somewhat lesser upbringing and inferior attributes to the inner circle. Although these persons may appear misfits and, even, disagreeable to be in the inner circle, they offer a counterweight to the overly ambitious and crafty employee.

Bacon exhibits his keen sense of observation and judgment here. If the potential candidate for the post of security-in-charge and advisor (similar to a minister's job) has an awesome exterior, repulsive persona and an unpleasant aura around him, he may well be the right candidate for the job of the body-guard cum protector. In contrast, if the person is robustly-built with a daring nature, his appointment may invite disaster.

If suspicion arises about the integrity and loyalty of the aides, and they are perceived to be potential usurpers, it would be advisable to ease them out cleverly. No rash action against them should be taken against them, lest they explode and do something nasty. In order not to upset them with the impression that they are facing dismissal, the ruler may confuse them through deception. He may reward them today, reprimand them tomorrow. Such ambiguous signals from the ruler will leave them wondering as to where they stand. Such confusion in their minds will unwittingly freeze their evil thoughts and put their unwanted ambitions in cold storage.

Bacon proceeds to argue that 'ambition', per se, is not bad. For example, a budding author wanting to write well to outshine his contemporaries is a good thing. A musician trying to blaze a new trail through his creative music is a great gift to society. A doctor trying to rise to world eminence by his medical skill is a boon to humanity. But, such burning ambition and zeal should be restricted to the area they excel in. It should not spill over to other domains like administration, military and other state's affairs. In such case, an overly ambitious person is a potential hazard. He carries the seed of destruction of the state.

So, it is welcome when ambitious people excel in their areas through single-minded effort. But it is fraught to have ambitious people in key administrative positions. The ruler depends on these functionaries to run the day-to-day administrations. Ambitious people may play havoc when they realize that the ruler leans on them to run the administration.

Pursuit of excellence, fame and adulation by gifted individuals can never be bad for the mankind. These people should be nurtured and rewarded.

However, if a person wants to tower over others and sway ordinary people to his control, we can conclude that his rise is ominous for the state. If not nipped in the bud early, he will destroy his own state and his generation. Honor, as understood generally, brings the following benefits to an individual.

a. Reaching an exalted position in society,

b. The access to the king and the upper echelons of power, and

c. Affluence, prosperity and well-being.

An ambitious man who limits his aspirations to the above three goals is the right man to be engaged, encouraged and rewarded. The prince who correctly reads these attributes in an aspiring person and decides to take him on board is the wise ruler worthy of appreciation.

In conclusion, Bacon dons the garb of the modern HR manager for the princes, rulers and people in the highest authority of power. He wants a. People with their mind rigidly anchored to their duty to be nominated. b. People, who have propensity to use their position to further their own ambitions, should be shunned. c. People, who are driven by their conscience rather than by their bravery to discharge their duty, are to be chosen. d. People who love to remain engrossed in their work are to be given preference over those who exhibit obedience and servility.

Gulliver's Travels

AUGUSTAN AGE; 1700-1750

The reign of Queen Anne in early 18th-century England covering The age of Pope (dated from about the death of Dryden in 1700 to Pope's death in 1744) is called the Augustan Age or the Neoclassical age. The real Augustan Age refers to the era of Augustus, ruler of Rome from 27 BC to AD 14 and it was noted for a number of classical writers, including Horace, Ovid, and Virgil, and it is considered the Golden Age of Latin literature. The Augustan age of English literature employed the same Roman forms, such as the ode, and emphasized common sense, moderation, reason over emotion and elegance over brevity, hence derived the name. It was relatively a stable and peaceful age in its social and political aspects. The Wars of Spanish Succession (1701-1713) was successful under Duke Marlborough, a Tory Politician the Tories in the reign of Queen Anne (1702-1714), superseded the Whigs. Another political event was that of English succession. All of Queen Anne’s children died before her so, in 1701, the Act of settlement was passed, by which the succession was settled upon the House of Hanover. It was a victory for the Whig’s. One Queen Anne’s death George I of Hanover ascended the throne. The Tories tried to reborn the Stuarts, but failed. In 1745, in the reign of George II (1727-69), the Tories made a more serious effort, but again failed. Under the Hanover Monarch, the first half of the 18th century was a period of stability and stead growing wealth and prosperity.

During this period, the power of middle classes rose. Never the less political power was concentrated in the hands of the nobility whether Whig or Tory. The period was remarkable for rapid social development in England people learnt the art of living together, while still holding different opinion. To bring about reforms, votes were necessary. So, the people were to be approached with ideas, facts and information. Newspaper was born literature in the form of newspaper, pamphlets; magazines became the chief instrument of the nation’s progress. The political and with pen rather than with sword, Coffee houses and clubs became centre of social life. The men in these places sat for hours, together and discussed the news of the day and other matters. In London, alone more than two thousand coffee houses spring up and the no of private clubs was quite as astonishing. The typical Londoner of the time was still corrupt, rude and vulgar in taste. But the aristocrats were improving themselves materially and intellectually. They sought excellence in out word from, of dress and manners rather than morals. Their culture was artificial. The literature of the period is highly critical of the shallow and artificial behavior of fashionable men and women.

In the age of Alexander Pope, the classical spirit in English literature reached its highest point, and at the same time other forces became manifest. Dryden's poetry had achieved grandeur, amplitude, and sublimity within a particular definition of good taste and good sense and under the tutelage of the Roman and Greek classics. To the poetry of Pope

this characterization applies even more stringently. More than any other English poet, he submitted himself to the requirement that the expressive force of poetic genius should issue forth only in a formulation as reasonable, lucid, balanced, compressed, final, and perfect as the power of human reason can make it. Pope did not have Dryden's majesty. Perhaps, given his predilection for correctness of detail, he could not have had it. Also, the readers of succeeding times have concluded that the dictates of reason do not all converge on only one poetic formula, just as the heroic couplet, which Pope brought to final perfection, is not necessarily the most generally suitable of English poetic forms. Nevertheless, the ease, harmony, and grace of Pope's poetic line are still impressive, and his quality of precise but never labored expression of thought remains unequaled.

Nearly every writer of the age wrote on the contemporary religious and political events but with moderation and reason. They use delicate satire. Great literary figures like Addison, Steele, Johnson and Goldsmith educated and civilized the general public by means their writing. It was the poet Goldsmith who first of all designated the early 18th century, the Augustan Age. The literature of the time has the same quality that distinguished the Latin literature of the day of August. These qualities are simple regularity, proportion and finish. According to Hudson, "in both cases men of letters were largely depended upon powerful patterns. In both cases a critical spirit prevails. In both cases, the literature produced by thoroughly artificial society was a literature not of free creative effort and inspiration, but of self-conscious and deliberate art."

JONATHAN SWIFT; 1667-1745

Jonathan Swift, son of the English lawyer Jonathan Swift the elder, was born in Dublin, Ireland, on November 30, 1667. He grew up there in the care of his uncle before attending Trinity College at the age of fourteen, where he stayed for seven years, graduating in 1688. In that year, he became the secretary of Sir William Temple, an English politician and member of the Whig party. In 1694, he took religious orders in the Church of Ireland and then spent a year as a country parson. He then spent further time in the service of Temple before returning to Ireland to become the chaplain of the earl of Berkeley. Meanwhile, he had begun to write satires on the political and religious corruption surrounding him, working on A Tale of a Tub, which supports the position of the Anglican Church against its critics on the left and the right, and The Battle of the Books, which argues for the supremacy of the classics against modern thought and literature. He also wrote a number of political pamphlets in favor of the Whig party. In 1709 he went to London to campaign for the Irish church but was unsuccessful. After some conflicts with the Whig party, mostly because of Swift’s strong allegiance to the church, he became a member of the more conservative Tory party in 1710.

Unfortunately for Swift, the Tory government fell out of power in 1714 and Swift, despite his fame for his writings, fell out of favor. Swift, who had been hoping to be assigned a position in the Church of England, instead returned to Dublin, where he became the dean of St. Patrick’s. During his brief time in England, Swift had become friends with writers such as Alexander Pope, and during a meeting of their literary club, the Martinus Scriblerus Club, they decided to write satires of modern learning. The third voyage of

Gulliver's Travels is assembled from the work Swift did during this time. However, the final work was not completed until 1726, and the narrative of the third voyage was actually the last one completed. After his return to Ireland, Swift became a staunch supporter of the Irish against English attempts to weaken their economy and political power, writing pamphlets such as the satirical A Modest Proposal, in which he suggests that the Irish problems of famine and overpopulation could be easily solved by having the babies of poor Irish subjects sold as delicacies to feed the rich.

Gulliver's Travels was a controversial work when it was first published in 1726. In fact, it was not until almost ten years after its first printing that the book appeared with the entire text that Swift had originally intended it to have. Ever since, editors have excised many of the passages, particularly the more caustic ones dealing with bodily functions. Even without those passages, however, Gulliver's Travels serves as a biting satire, and Swift ensures that it is both humorous and critical, constantly attacking British and European society through its descriptions of imaginary countries.

Late in life, Swift seemed for many observers to become even more caustic and bitter than he had been. Three years before his death, he was declared unable to care for himself, and guardians were appointed. Based on these facts and on a comparison between Swift's fate and that of his character Gulliver, some people have concluded that he gradually became insane and that his insanity was a natural outgrowth of his indignation and outrage against humankind. However, the truth seems to be that Swift was suddenly incapacitated by a paralytic stroke late in life, and that prior to this incident his mental capacities were unimpaired.

Gulliver's Travels is about a specific set of political conflicts, but if it were nothing more than that it would long ago have been forgotten. The staying power of the work comes from its depiction of the human condition and its often despairing, but occasionally hopeful, sketch of the possibilities for humanity to rein in its baser instincts.

Gulliver's Travels : Plot Overview

Gulliver's Travels recounts the story of Lemuel Gulliver, a practical-minded Englishman trained as a surgeon who takes to the seas when his business fails. In a deadpan first-person narrative that rarely shows any signs of self-reflection or deep emotional response, Gulliver narrates the adventures that befall him on these travels.

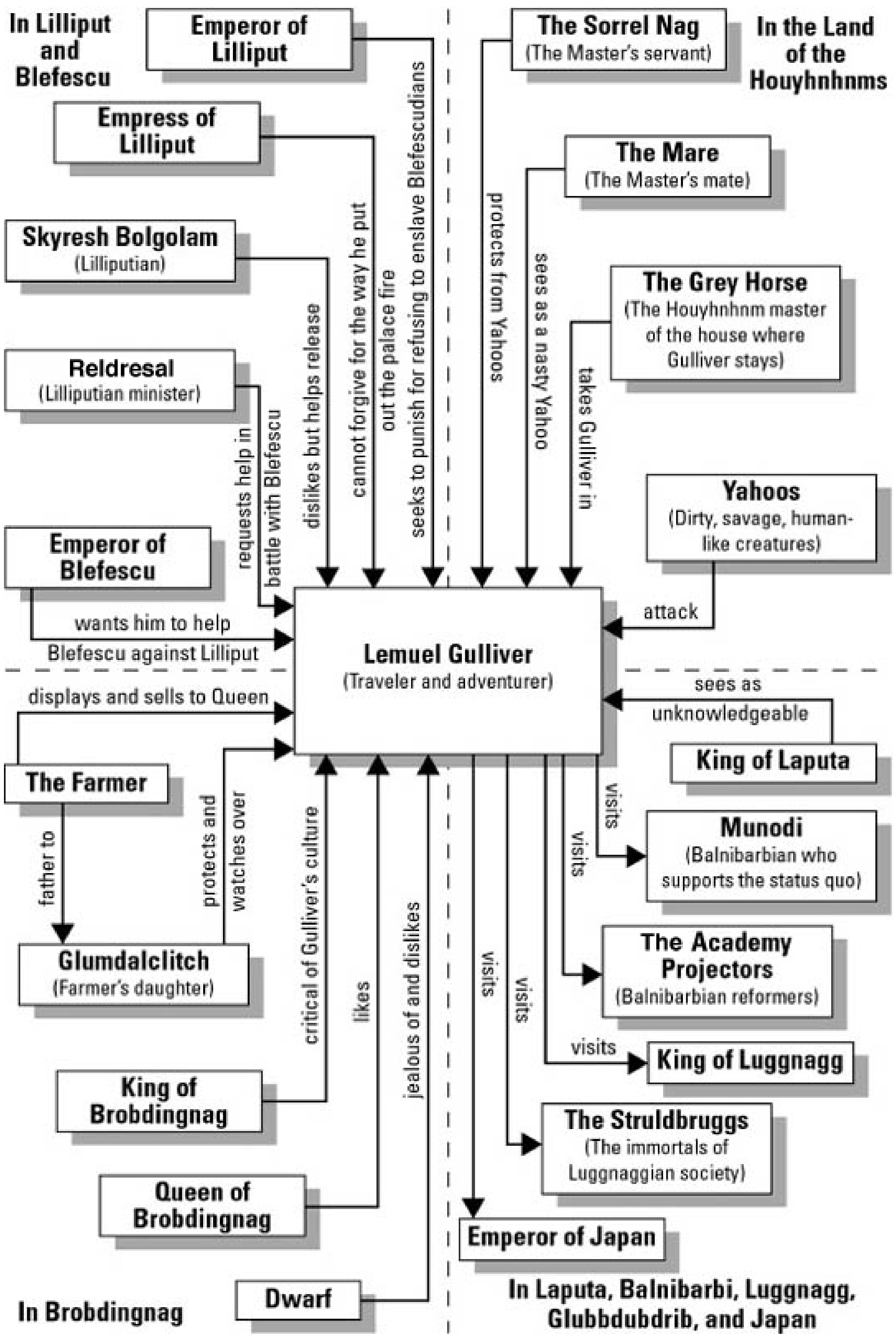
Gulliver's adventure in Lilliput begins when he wakes after his shipwreck to find himself bound by innumerable tiny threads and addressed by tiny captors who are in awe of him but fiercely protective of their kingdom. They are not afraid to use violence against Gulliver, though their arrows are little more than pinpricks. But overall, they are hospitable, risking famine in their land by feeding Gulliver, who consumes more food than a thousand Lilliputians combined could. Gulliver is taken into the capital city by a vast wagon the Lilliputians have specially built. He is presented to the emperor, who is entertained by Gulliver, just as Gulliver is flattered by the attention of royalty. Eventually Gulliver becomes a national resource, used by the army in its war against the people of

Blefuscu, whom the Lilliputians hate for doctrinal differences concerning the proper way to crack eggs. But things change when Gulliver is convicted of treason for putting out a fire in the royal palace with his urine and is condemned to be shot in the eyes and starved to death. Gulliver escapes to Blefuscu, where he is able to repair a boat he finds and set sail for England.

After staying in England with his wife and family for two months, Gulliver undertakes his next sea voyage, which takes him to a land of giants called Brobdingnag. Here, a field worker discovers him. The farmer initially treats him as little more than an animal, keeping him for amusement. The farmer eventually sells Gulliver to the queen, who makes him a courtly diversion and is entertained by his musical talents. Social life is easy for Gulliver after his discovery by the court, but not particularly enjoyable. Gulliver is often repulsed by the physicality of the Brobdingnagians, whose ordinary flaws are many times magnified by their huge size. Thus, when a couple of courtly ladies let him play on their naked bodies, he is not attracted to them but rather disgusted by their enormous skin pores and the sound of their torrential urination. He is generally startled by the ignorance of the people here—even the king knows nothing about politics. More unsettling findings in Brobdingnag come in the form of various animals of the realm that endanger his life. Even Brobdingnagian insects leave slimy trails on his food that make eating difficult. On a trip to the frontier, accompanying the royal couple, Gulliver leaves Brobdingnag when his cage is plucked up by an eagle and dropped into the sea.

Next, Gulliver sets sail again and, after an attack by pirates, ends up in Laputa, where a floating island inhabited by theoreticians and academics oppresses the land below, called Balnibarbi. The scientific research undertaken in Laputa and in Balnibarbi seems totally inane and impractical, and its residents too appear wholly out of touch with reality. Taking a short side trip to Glubbdubdrib, Gulliver is able to witness the conjuring up of figures from history, such as Julius Caesar and other military leaders, whom he finds much less impressive than in books. After visiting the Luggnaggians and the Struldbrugs, the latter of which are senile immortals who prove that age does not bring wisdom, he is able to sail to Japan and from there back to England.

Finally, on his fourth journey, Gulliver sets out as captain of a ship, but after the mutiny of his crew and a long confinement in his cabin, he arrives in an unknown land. This land is populated by Houyhnhnms, rational-thinking horses who rule, and by Yahoos, brutish humanlike creatures who serve the Houyhnhnms. Gulliver sets about learning their language, and when he can speak he narrates his voyages to them and explains the constitution of England. He is treated with great courtesy and kindness by the horses and is enlightened by his many conversations with them and by his exposure to their noble culture. He wants to stay with the Houyhnhnms, but his bared body reveals to the horses that he is very much like a Yahoo, and he is banished. Gulliver is grief-stricken but agrees to leave. He fashions a canoe and makes his way to a nearby island, where he is picked up by a Portuguese ship captain who treats him well, though Gulliver cannot help now seeing the captain—and all humans—as shamefully Yahoolike. Gulliver then concludes his narrative with a claim that the lands he has visited belong by rights to England, as her colonies, even though he questions the whole idea of colonialism.


In Lilliput and Blefescu
Emperor of Lilliput
Empress of Lilliput
Skyresh Bolgolam (Lilliputian)
Reldresal (Lilliputian minister)
Emperor of Blefescu
requests help in battle with Blefescu
dislikes but helps release
cannot forgive for the way he put out the palace fire
seeks to punish for refusing to enslave Blefescudians
wants him to help Blefescu against Lilliput
The Sorrel Nag (The Master's servant)
In the Land of the Houyhnhnms
The Mare (The Master's mate)
The Grey Horse (The Houyhnhnm master of the house where Gulliver stays)
Yahoos (Dirty, savage, human-like creatures)
protects from Yahoos
sees as a nasty Yahoo
takes Gulliver in
attack
Lemuel Gulliver (Traveler and adventurer)
displays and sells to Queen
The Farmer
father to
protects and watches over
Glumdalclitch (Farmer's daughter)
critical of Gulliver's culture
likes
jealous of and dislikes
King of Brobdingnag
Queen of Brobdingnag
Dwarf
In Brobdingnag
sees as unknowledgeable
King of Laputa
visits
Munodi (Balnibarbian who supports the status quo)
The Academy Projectors (Balnibarbian reformers)
King of Luggnagg
The Struldbruggs (The immortals of Luggnaggian society)
Emperor of Japan
In Laputa, Balnibarbi, Luggnagg, Glubbdubdrib, and Japan

Critical Analysis of Gulliver's Travels

Jonathan Swift wrote Gulliver's Travels in 1762 with the intent of entertaining many people. Entertainment through satire is what Swift had in mind. To fully understand Gulliver's Travels, one must first reflect upon the following: the plot, character, setting, theme, point of view, conflict, climax, resolution, symbolism, and figurative language. These ideas will help the reader comprehend some of the ideas portrayed throughout the novel, as well as why Swift wrote them.

The setting plays an important role in all novels, but in Gulliver's Travels, one must take into consideration that the four different parts of the book have different settings. The first setting is more or less on an island called Lilliput, on November 5, 1699. Gulliver ended up on this island due to a ship wreck. The setting to the second part of the novel happens to be upon his arrival to another island that Gulliver wishes to inspect for water. This was on the 16th of June, 1703. The third part of the book has many different little scenes. The first of which takes place on Laputa an island of deformed creatures. The fourth and final part of the book takes place in the country of Houyhnhnms, in 1711.

The main character, Gulliver, is a well-educated sailor. He has been recommended to be a surgeon. Traveling around the world, exploring new places, Gulliver meets many new cultures and civilizations. Gulliver wears clothes not uncommon to the 1700's. He has long hair, which sometimes restricts him from turning his head. Gulliver is a round character. This can be seen when he refers to past experiences during an adventure. This means that he can compare the two situations, thus learning from it. There are many minor characters. Easier referred to by the names of their people. Them being: the small Lilliputians, the giant Brobdingnags, the creatures at Lugnagg and Balnibarbi, with the islands of Laputa and Blubdrubdrib. And finally, the Yahoos and Houyhnhnms. Gulliver's stories are told in the first person by himself.

Some very important symbols are used throughout the novel to depict some very important ideas. One of these symbols would be when Gulliver relieves himself on the Lilliputians royal castle to put out a fire. It seems, as though how silly something may seem, it just might be an answer to an important problem. A second symbol clearly seen is the relationship to the Yahoos and the Houyhnhnms. This is easily perceived as a representation of the relationship to horses and humans. The superiority of the horses in the novel shows how, although different, they may just be as smart, if not smarter than the owner.

Some very important themes that the reader may have picked up on can be very helpful. One of these themes is that no matter how small something is, it is not inferior. Gulliver stayed with the Lilliputians for a very long time. The fact that they were only six inches tall did not mean that he could do anything he wanted around or to them. Another theme that the reader should have got is that no matter how large something is, it still has to have a small amount of brains. The giants in the second part were very tall, but nowhere did the book say that they were very smart.

There are many different conflicts throughout the novel as well. Some of these being internal, and others being external. One of the internal conflicts can be seen when Gulliver is tied down by the Lilliputians. Gulliver has a chance to snatch up many of the little creatures, but knows that they will most likely shoot him with needle-like arrows. An external conflict is between Gulliver's crew against nature. Many times Gulliver gets blown off course by a storm or has his boat overturned by waves. This is an example of human against nature.

Some of the literary devices that Swift uses in Gulliver's Travels are satire and irony. Swift wrote the novel as a parody of travel books and an indictment of mankind; it is revered as a charming children's story. The ironies Swift intended to be recognized-the small-mindedness of the tiny Lilliputians, the physical and moral abnormality of the giant Brobdingnagians, and the perfect animalizing of the filthy manlike Yahoos (far inferior to the placid horses they work for)-are often ignored or dismissed.

After considering all of this, the reader should have a better understanding of the novel. Being able to pay a greater attention to the details of a novel always helps one understand the greater, broader ideas following them. Jonathan Swift was a magnificent author. Without his Gulliver's Travels, there would be a great gap in the art of Literature.

Philosophical & Political Background of Gulliver's Travels

Swift has at least two aims in Gulliver's Travels besides merely telling a good adventure story. Behind the disguise of his narrative, he is satirizing the pettiness of human nature in general and attacking the Whigs in particular. By emphasizing the six-inch height of the Lilliputians, he graphically diminishes the stature of politicians and indeed the stature of all human nature. And in using the fire in the Queen's chambers, the rope dancers, the bill of particulars drawn against Gulliver, and the inventory of Gulliver's pockets, he presents a series of allusions that were identifiable to his contemporaries as critical of Whig politics.

Why, one might ask, did Swift have such a consuming contempt for the Whigs? This hatred began when Swift entered politics as the representative of the Irish church. Representing the Irish bishops, Swift tried to get Queen Anne and the Whigs to grant some financial aid to the Irish church. They refused, and Swift turned against them even though he had considered them his friends and had helped them while he worked for Sir William Temple. Swift turned to the Tories for political allegiance and devoted his propaganda talents to their services. Using certain political events of 1714-18, he described in Gulliver's Travels many things that would remind his readers that Lilliputian folly was also English folly — and, particularly, Whig folly. The method, for example, which Gulliver must use to swear his allegiance to the Lilliputian emperor parallels the absurd difficulty that the Whigs created concerning the credentials of the Tory ambassadors who signed the Treaty of Utrecht.

Swift's craftiness was successful. His book was popular because it was a compelling adventure tale and also a puzzle. His readers were eager to identify the various

characters and discuss their discoveries, and, as a result, many of them saw politics and politicians from a new perspective.

Within the broad scheme of Gulliver's Travels, Gulliver seems to be an average man in eighteenth-century England. He is concerned with family and with his job, yet he is confronted by the pigmies that politics and political theorizing make of people. Gulliver is utterly incapable of the stupidity of the Lilliputian politicians, and, therefore, he and the Lilliputians are ever-present contrasts for us. We are always aware of the difference between the imperfect (but normal) moral life of Gulliver, and the petty and stupid political life of emperors, prime ministers, and informers.

In the second book of the Travels, Swift reverses the size relationship that he used in Book I. In Lilliput, Gulliver was a giant; in Brobdingnag, Gulliver is a midget. Swift uses this difference to express a difference in morality. Gulliver was an ordinary man compared to the amoral political midgets in Lilliput. Now, Gulliver remains an ordinary man, but the Brobdingnagians are moral men. They are not perfect, but they are consistently moral. Only children and the deformed are intentionally evil.

Set against a moral background, Gulliver's "ordinariness" exposes many of its faults. Gulliver is revealed to be a very proud man and one who accepts the madness and malice of European politics, parties, and society as natural. What's more, he even lies to conceal what is despicable about them. The Brobdingnagian king, however, is not fooled by Gulliver. The English, he says, are "odious vermin."

Swift praises the Brobdingnagians, but he does not intend for us to think that they are perfect humans. They are superhumans, bound to us by flesh and blood, just bigger morally than we are. Their virtues are not impossible for us to attain, but because it takes so much maturing to reach the stature of a moral giant, few humans achieve it.

Brobdingnag is a practical, moral utopia. Among the Brobdingnagians, there is goodwill and calm virtue. Their laws encourage charity. Yet they are, underneath, just men who labor under every disadvantage to which man is heir. They are physically ugly when magnified, but they are morally beautiful. We cannot reject them simply because Gulliver describes them as physically gross. If we reject them, we become even more conscious of an ordinary person's verminous morality.

In Books I and II, Swift directs his satire more toward individual targets than firing broadside at abstract concepts. In Book I, he is primarily concerned with Whig politics and politicians rather than with the abstract politician; in Book II, he elects to reprove immoral Englishmen rather than abstract immorality. In Book III, Swift's target is somewhat abstract — pride in reason — but he also singles out and censures a group of his contemporaries whom he believed to be particularly depraved in their exaltation of reason. He attacks his old enemies, the Moderns, and their satellites, the Deists and rationalists. In opposition to their credos, Swift believed that people were capable of reasoning, but that they were far from being fully rational. For the record, it should probably be mentioned that Swift was not alone in denouncing this clique of people. The

objects of Swift's indignation had also aroused the rage of Pope, Arbuthnot, Dryden, and most of the orthodox theologians of the Augustan Age.

This love of reason that Swift criticizes derived from the rationalism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. John Locke's theories of natural religion were popularly read, as were Descartes' theories about the use of reason. Then a loosely connected group summarized these opinions, plus others, and a cult was born: They called themselves the Deists.

In general, the Deists believed that people could reason, observe the universe accurately, and perceive axioms intuitively. With these faculties, people could then arrive at religious truth; they did not need biblical revelation. Orthodox theology has always made reason dependent on God and morality, but the Deists refuted this notion. They attacked revealed religion, saying that if reason can support the God described by the Bible, it may also conclude that God is quite different from the biblical God. The answer depends upon which observations and axioms the reasoner chooses to use.

Even before he wrote the Travels, Swift opposed excessive pride in reason. In his ironical Argument Against Abolishing Christianity, he makes plain what he considers to be the consequences of depending on reason, rather than upon faith and revelation. Disbelief, he said, is the consequence of presumptuous pride in reasoning, and immorality is the consequence of disbelief. Swift believed that religion holds moral society together. A person who does not believe in God by faith and revelation is in danger of disbelieving in morality.

To Swift, rationalism leads to Deism, Deism to atheism, and atheism to immorality. Where people worship reason, they abandon tradition and common sense. Both tradition and common sense tell humankind that murder, whoring, and drunkenness, for example, are immoral. Yet, if one depends on reason for morality, that person can find no proof that one should not drink, whore, or murder. Thus, reasonably, is one not free to do these things? Swift believed that will, rather than reason, was far too often the master.

Alexander Pope agreed with the position that Swift took. In his Essay on Man, he states that people cannot perceive accurately. Our axioms are usually contradictory, and our rational systems of living in a society are meaninglessly abstract. People, he insists, are thoroughly filled with self-love and pride; they are incapable of being rational — that is, objective. Swift would certainly concur.

In Book III, Laputan systematizing is exaggerated, but Swift's point is clear and concrete: Such systematizing is a manifestation of proud rationalism. The Laputans think so abstractly that they have lost their hold on common sense. They are so absorbed in their abstractions that they serve food in geometric and musical shapes. Everything is relegated to abstract thought, and the result is mass delusion and chaos. The Laputans do not produce anything useful; their clothes do not fit, and their houses are not constructed correctly. These people think — but only for abstract thinking's sake; they do not consider ends.

In a similar fashion, Swift shows that philology and scholarship betray the best interests of the Luggnaggians; pragmatic scientism fails in Balnibarbi; and accumulated experience does not make the Struldbruggs either happy or wise. In his topical political references, Swift demonstrates the viciousness and cruelty, as well as the folly, that arise from abstract political theory imposed by selfish politicians. The common people, Swift says, suffer. He also cites the folly of Laputan theorists and the Laputan king by referring to the immediate political blunders of the Georges.

The Travels is structured very much like a variation on the question, "Why are people so often vicious and cruel?" and the answer, "Because they succumb to the worst elements in themselves." Man is an infinitely complex animal; he is many, many mixtures of intellect and reason, charity and emotion. Yet reason and intellect are not synonymous — even if they might profitably be; nor are emotion and charity necessarily akin to one another. But few people see Man as the grey mixture of varying qualities that he is. Man oversimplifies, and, in the last book of the Travels, Swift shows us the folly of people who advance such theories. In his time, it was a popular notion that a Reasonable Man was a Complete Man. Here, Swift shows us Reason exalted. We must judge whether it is possible or desirable for Man.

The Houyhnhnms are super-reasonable. They have all the virtues that the stoics and Deists advocated. They speak clearly, they act justly, and they have simple laws. They do not quarrel or argue since each knows what is true and right. They do not suffer from the uncertainties of reasoning that afflict Man. But they are so reasonable that they have no emotions. They are untroubled by greed, politics, or lust. They act from undifferentiated benevolence. They would never prefer the welfare of one of their own children to the welfare of another Houyhnhnm simply on the basis of kinship.

Very simply, the Houyhnhnms are horses; they are not humans. And this physical difference parallels the abstract difference. They are fully rational, innocent, and undepraved. Man is capable of reason, but never wholly or continuously, and he is — but never wholly or continuously — passionate, proud, and depraved.

In contrast to the Houyhnhnms, Swift presents their precise opposite: the Yahoos, creatures who exhibit the essence of sensual human sinfulness. The Yahoos are not merely animals; they are animals who are naturally vicious. Swift describes them in deliberately filthy and disgusting terms, often using metaphors drawn from dung. The Yahoos plainly represent Mankind depraved. Swift, in fact, describes the Yahoos in such disgusting terms that early critics assumed that he hated Man to the point of madness. Swift, however, takes his descriptions from the sermons and theological tracts of his predecessors and contemporaries. If Swift hated Man, one would also have to say that St. Francis and St. Augustine did, too. Swift's descriptions of depraved Man are, if anything, milder than they might be. One sermon writer described Man as a saccus stercorum, a sack filled with dung. The descriptions of the Yahoos do not document Swift's supposed misanthropy. Rather, the creatures exhibit physically the moral flaws and natural depravity that theologians say plague the offspring of Adam.

Midway between the poles of the Houyhnhnms and the Yahoos, Swift places Gulliver. Gulliver is an average man, except that he has become irrational in his regard for reason. Gulliver is so disgusted with the Yahoos and so admires the Houyhnhnms that he tries to become a horse.

This aspiration to become a horse exposes Gulliver's grave weakness. Gullible and proud, he becomes such a devotee of reason that he cannot accept his fellow humans who are less than totally reasonable. He cannot recognize virtue and charity when they exist. Captain Pedro de Mendez rescues Gulliver and takes him back to Europe, but Gulliver despises him because Mendez doesn't look like a horse. Likewise, when he reaches home, Gulliver hates his family because they look and smell like Yahoos. He is still capable of seeing objects and surfaces accurately, but he is incapable of grasping true depths of meaning.

Swift discriminates between people as they are idealized, people as they are damned, people as they possibly could be, and others as they are. The Houyhnhnms embody the ideal of the rationalists and stoics; the Yahoos illustrate the damning abstraction of sinful and depraved Man; and Pedro de Mendez represents virtue possible to Man. Gulliver, usually quite sane, is misled when we leave him, but he is like most people. Even dullards, occasionally, become obsessed by something or other for a while before lapsing back into their quiet, workaday selves. Eventually, we can imagine that Gulliver will recover and be his former unexciting, gullible self.

Swift uses the technique of making abstractions concrete to show us that super-reasonable horses are impossible and useless models for humans. They have never fallen and therefore have never been redeemed. They are incapable of the Christian virtues that unite passion and reason: Neither they nor the Yahoos are touched by grace or charity. In contrast, the Christian virtues of Pedro de Mendez and the Brobdingnagians (the "least corrupted" of mankind) are possible to humans. These virtues are the result of grace and redemption. Swift does not press this theological point, however. He is, after all, writing a satire, not a religious tract.

“Gulliver’s Travels” – An allegorical satire

“Swift was a wild beast who worried and baited all mankind….” said Compton and Rickett in the book” The History of English Literature”. Pramod K. Nayak marks, “Swift’s novel Gulliver’s Travels is a mocking account of such journeys to different parts of the earth.” Gulliver’s Travels shows Swift’s gust with man. The novel deals with directly human nature at every moment in the life. There is a great happiness after reading seriousness behind the instruction of each and every place and time in Gulliver’s Travels.

What do we think after reading the novel? Can we put the novel among the great books of satire or childish as well as adventure story? The novel has lots of images that we can say the novel of satire and moral tale, a fanciful account of strange and wonderful lands, and therein lie its real charm, one of the most delightful of children’s books, an attractive fiction with a utopian concept, or a neurotic phantacy, ‘a pseudo-realistic narrative and a

playfulness of fancy' says Compton and Rickett, or at last a short story of numerous endeavors of common human being named Gulliver.

But one should also focus on the other side of the novel. Not only a medium of ultimate delight but it is also the novel of great sarcastic remark of whole human being, mordant attack men, great hatred towards human weakness misanthropy toward the whole human kind, irony on human frailty and mockery on human beings' existence and so many other things. There is one striking example of misanthropy in the voyage of Lilliput that Gulliver earns the trust of the midgets of tiny land but he does not wins the trust of pigmies because he is under the benevolence of them otherwise he is misanthropist of tiny inhabitants. These all points are the butts of Swift himself to satirize people and especially people of England who are in the field of Politics. Because of these so many tokens of names given to the novel, Swift has possessed a very gigantic satirist among the novelists and master of irony and satire.

Gulliver's Travels is all about Lemuel Gulliver's various adventures in several unknown lands from where he comes out as complete common human being. These prime four lands like Lilliput, Brobdignag, Laputa and Houyhnhnms in which Swift has enunciated various human weakness and pride of the people, praised rational animals like horses and made a mordant irony upon Yahoos. He has indicated almost all bad habits of the people. For that task, he has used three main 'Modern judgments', Norman A. Jeffers has written about Gulliver's Travels, "It is at once a delightful, fantastic story of adventures foe children, a political allegory, and a serious satire on human nature, on contemporary politics, social institutions, and on the manners and the morals of the age."

The book is written in travelogue. The narrator Gulliver himself becomes a reporter, messenger and inter-mediator like person between readers and the book itself. Our main concern about this book is that Gulliver's travels is basically an allegorical satire on contemporary leaders, Swift's foes like Walpole, Anne, Charles II, etc. before discussing the subject matter let's have a look on the term like allegory, satire and iron.

Generally speaking, an allegory means a curtain or a wall that people have on their faces. If this curtain is removed, we can know what is the reality and fact of life. Indirectly to speak or write or explain is called Allegory. To put it into practice, the novelist always uses an object like animals, any infinite thing or sometimes human being also. M.H.Abrams observes, "An allegory is a narrative, whether in prose or verse, in which the agents and actions, and sometimes the setting as well, are contrived by the author to make coherent sense on the 'literal' or primary, level of significant…."

The third book of Jonathan Swift's Gulliver's Travels, the voyage to Laputa and Lagado is an allegorical satire directed mainly against philosophical and scientific pedantry.

In Gulliver's Travels midgets in initial voyage, giant people Brobdignag, animals like human being, old temple, etc. are treated like allegory. This is deep and rooted meaning or logic among these things. Sometime animals are allegorized but to play a role of any

particular character, novelists take the instances of human being. By the behavior of them we recognize what the matter is. Lilliput is also full of so many satires and ironies, characterization of the emperor of the land, Flimnap, the treasurer, queen are suitable paragons. They represent probably P.M.Walpol, Lord Carteret, Anne, etc. and their behaviors. They are very particular in their behavior. Here, by allegory, Swift makes satire on intrigues and schemes against other political parties, human pride and pretension, evils of taboos in Lilliput are main target of satire.

The nondescript picture of baggers who are physically ill represents the baggers of Dublin. The novelist puts all these things in veiled manners.

The very interesting matter about the conflict between big-endian and little-endian, high-heels and low-heels denotes the collision between two major parties in England, the quarrels twixt the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant. Gulliver reduces the mistress of the emperor by extinguishing a fire in her apartment indicates Queen Anne's annoyance with Swift for having written "A Tale of a Tub". First two lands in which bidgets and giants are living, suggest that there are the people who are so much narrow-minded as well as frankly that always lead him towards great annihilation. Their lifestyle, way of speaking, clothes, daily affairs and so many other things are deeply allegorized. Even he also ironically remarked of all most all professionals and second class work like bagging, farming, etc according to upper-class people. Swift says,

"I have ever hated all nations, professions, and communities but principally I hate and detest that animals called man…Upon this great foundation of misanthropy the whole building of my 'Travels' is created."

The tone behind satirizing people sounds like misanthropy. He hates whole human kind and reason behind that may be that human being are not really wholesome or truly moral men. They are faulty and followers of evils.

The striking feature of adventure novel is that human beings always do something new from coming out of the box and made worldly affairs. The moral lesson behind their allegorical satire is that people always do work if they are compelled to do that various serious and bad circumstances make man evil as well as mould his character. Why did Swift opt travels for satirizing people? The answer is, by traveling people come across several other new people and their nature, their moral frailty. Good professionals like philosopher, theologist, etc. are also corrupted. Sometime there is a tone of irony in characters' dialogues that speak something and insinuate something and Swift has chosen negative side of irony.

Each and every place, things, costumes, communication, expressions and feelings of four voyages are very much satiric and allegorical. We find that Swift might have taken out from real life and put them in his novel. One can say that Gulliver's Travels is not simple one but a very lampoon satire on boasted people and pungent satire on hypocritic, is conveyed by Gulliver. He is mouthpiece of the novelist. The readers feel that Gulliver himself is Swift himself who shoots the words towards the people of all four and

secondary voyages of the world by making them ridiculous and trivial. For example the hideous behaviour of yahoos, their sudden attack on Gulliver, their style of eating animal flesh shows that Swift is totally against of human nature that indicates he is a misanthropist. He has depicted moral frailty of the people. The sycophancy of the politicians in their efforts to win king's side by the king of Lilliput is more pin pointed. Whoever shows the most dexerity wins one of the ribbons. Flimnap and other characters, narrow-minded communication of the people of the first voyage, etc. all these things deliberately and allegorically satirized. People have not time to make love to their wives because they are only idealists, philosophers and theorists but nothing more than that. They don't know what is practicality? The academy of projectors in Lagado is a satire on the kind of useless work which was being done by the royal society in those days. The human longing for immortality is ironically represented. Such all ideas are mentioned by Gulliver and last voyage perhaps very dangerous and horrible for splendid human race because animals are like moral and wholesome and human being like yahoos are animals. The several images is depicted. Throughout the three voyages Gulliver was admirer of people while here he is in favour of Houyhnhnms that are very ideal as well as morally oriented race. This makes disgusting and boring for Gulliver towards his own England.

Swift is come out as a misanthropist and has conveyed a cynical view of mankind. On another side we can quote M.H.Abrams by saying that Gulliver's Travels is 'a satyre against Mankind'. Gulliver's Travels can be described as the weapon of diminishing or derogating a subject (four voyages) by making them much ridiculous and evoking it attitude of amusement that is portrayed in Lilliput. The six-inches in height pigmy people, the game of walking on the rope and creping under a string in king's palace, clown or dwarf in Brobdignag and his trivial mentality, laziness of king of Laputa and very ridiculous behaviour of Yahoos their appetite for food and clothes, contempt, scorn and indignation. Sometime it sounds like comic satire in prose that evokes laughter. Then readers can accept the statement like,

"It is a great satiric masterpiece."

Swift's limitless ambition to mock people is accomplished in Brobdignag, in the palace of the emperor while on another side he hates human being like Yahoos that he is a contradictory character. But a man of principles and ideas like king reminds him that he (Gulliver) is an 'impotent and groveling insect' and considers gunpowder as a bloodthirsty and inhuman proposal. He visualizes real image of England by giving mordant and pungent remark, "….heap of conspiracies, murders, massacre, revolutions, banishments, the very worst effects that avarice fiction, hypocrisy, perfidiousness, cruelty, rage madness, hatred, envy, lust, malice, or ambition could produce….the most pernicious race of odious little vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth."

Such a great satirical remark on Gulliver shows that Swift himself ironically demerits England have also little in their ideas, thought and ambition. Gulliver is a gullible who is easily humiliated by any person and looks like innocent child before faithful, noble,

benevolent people of Brobdignag. Swift according to Maynard Mack, "Swift is able to deliver the most powerful indictment of man's Inhumanity ever written in prose and at the same time to distinguish his own realistic view of man's nature from the misanthropy of which he has sometimes been accused."

The novelist has utilized all most all ornaments of furious anger to satirizing human nature. The vices of Lilliputian, weakness of the Brobdignagians, foibles and follies of Laputa and Lagado and central fault of human being that is Gulibalism in Yahoos are truthfully manifested in "Gulliver's Travels". Swift uses satire as a vehicle to point to the depraved state of human kind. The jealousy of dwarf towards Gulliver, disturbance and torment of monkey and couple of rates, interference by eagle bird and Yahoo's shameful behaviour with Gulliver are described in a sordid and gloomy light.

To satirize and criticize whole human society Swift has made people somewhere six inches of height, somewhere like gigantic figures, somewhere more moral and benevolent people and at last in fourth voyage more lecherous and treacherous mentality of Yahoos. These all things sound like diminutive creature living in wild jungle.

Extracting seeds from cucumber is like digesting iron nuts. The people do not believe in practicality and utilization of various theories and abstractions. Such a grave fault does not make people happy but make them gloomy and exhausted.

Gulliver's Travels' is not sole allegorical satire but also a political allegory like 'Animal Farm' by George Orwell that represents imbalance among upper class and lower class people that believe that some animals are more equal than others. This kind of mentality indicates that leaders should be given more facilities and luxuries because they have serious responsibility not so simple one. The novel 'Animal Farm' is great debate of Marxist concept that should be equality, simplicity and fraternity among common people. At the same time 'Gulliver's Travels' is considered as a manifestation of 'Das Capital'. The bitter condition of baggers and their troublesome predicament of life are more highlighted than royal class families. There are several allegorical references about wearing highly prepared costumes, make up and all such aristocratic lives and on other hand great lamentation and doomed lives of physically ill people are portrayed very bitterly.

The flippancy and hollowness of court life, meaningless time pass on Laputa and Lagado, faulty behavior of pernicious Yahoos and their irrational lives and day-to-day picture, horses' strong control over absurd animals (Yahoos) denotes that people are more dragged toward animal instinct and animals are gradually transferred into Europe, religious clashes between Protestant church and Catholic, European civilization, propensity for destruction, particularly in the parallels that one can draw between Lilliputians' desires to enslave an already defeated Blefescu and the strained relationship between England and France.

Swift, indeed, indirectly criticizes the arrogance of European imperialists who civilize the people through brutality and oppression while masking their chief motifs which was

greedy. It looks like; Swift has extracted England from the glob and fitted in his book that represents the mass, milieu and moment of the land.

Sometime 'Gulliver's Travels' is reckoned as an utopian or dystopian novel same like Thomas Moor's "Utopia", 'Brave New World' by Aldus Huxley where ideal state is visualized where no one can get delight and joy from any place. Such a dystopian novel is an imaginative reality and allegorical satire. The dystopian novel is a seething attack on wretchedness and hypocrisy of the royal class people. The novel is a tongue-in-check presentation of factual pertinent to the narrative.

Gulliver's boringness suggests that he is now no more but such adventure like sea voyage makes him feisty and powerful. People are not happy in their own society because of evils of social dogmas and taboos. Such a great affliction leads him toward his social leads him toward great traveling of danger and terror of the life. There is a deep significance and meaningfulness in the storm and the shipwreck that is ironically and satirically manifested. One can say that 'Gulliver's Travels' is an allegorical satire on various kinds of the people.

Is swift a misanthrope?

Swift is not a misanthrope rather he is a philanthrope. It is the misconception of those who think Swift as a misanthrope. Swift only wants to reform mankind out of their follies and stupidities. He says that the chief end of all his labour is: "to vex the world rather than divert it".

Secondly, he declares that: "I have ever hated all nations, professions, and communities and all his love is towards individuals."

Thirdly, though Swift does not believe that: "Man is a rational animal". Yet he believes that: "Man is capable of becoming rational if he makes the necessary efforts."

But we see that Swift is notorious for being misanthrope. He was subjected to this allegation during his lifetime because the critics, identifying Gulliver with Swift, attributed Gulliver's blunders to Swift. That Gulliver, in the last voyage, becomes a misanthrope is undeniable and indisputable. Prima facie, it appears that by developing a negative view of mankind, he starts preferring horses to men, but a solid reason of Swift underlies this act of Gulliver.

We observe that in the fourth voyage, Gulliver reaches a country of animals, ruled by animals. There are two categories of animals living there in: ugly and repulsive brutes – Yahoos: "Yahoos who are unteachable brutes, cunning, gluttonous and disposed to great mischief". And comparatively better and nice-looking animals – Houyhnhnms.

The moment he enters the country he is confronted with Yahoos and they give him such a nasty and obnoxious treatment that he develops a disliking for them in his heart, which is later converted into hatred owing to their disgusting physical appearance and

their filthy and mischievous way of life. But his first meeting with Houyhnhnms, on the other hand, proves a nice experience. And this: "First impression proves the last impression".

They secure him against Yahoos, behave properly and gracefully escort him to their abode. "The behaviour of horses shows him to be animals with an extraordinary power of understanding." Naturally, this kind of treatment creates a sort of fondness in Gulliver's heart for Houyhnhnms and their way of life. Up to this time, nothing is objectionable, but his fault begin when he became so enamored of Houyhnhnms that he starts hating man or equating Yahoos with men, he begins to abhor Man. He develops a general hatred against all men. All the subsequent incidents – his hatred against the Captain, against his family, etc. – reflect his misanthropy.

The blunder which Gulliver committed is that, he over-idealizes them because Gulliver is a man who is fed up with Man's corruption. Therefore, he cannot see corruption in Man. He finds Yahoos in a detestable and abhorrent condition on account of their being a slave of emotions, sensuality and sentimentality. He says: "Yet I confess I never saw any sensitive being so detestable on all accounts; and the more I came near them, the more hateful they grew, while I stayed in that country."

Houyhnhnms, in a comparatively better condition, lack that type of corruption that Yahoos have, for Houyhnhnms have no emotion. "Houyhnhnms are free from lust and greed."

Naturally, he attributes whole of Man's corruption to emotions, passions and sentimentality. As a remedy, he starts hating emotions, passion and he falls a victim to pure intellect. "Here was neither physician to destroy my body, nor lawyer to ruin my fortune, here were no gibers, …, backbiters, …, bawds, …, ravishers, murderers or … poxes."

So, he mis-idealizes Houyhnhnms, due to their pure intellect, somehow establishes a subjective ideal before him i.e. to be a man is to have pure intellect. He thinks: "The only remedy for doing away with Man's corruption and pollution is to get rid of all kinds of emotions".

In the country of Houyhnhnms, when Gulliver has a choice, he adopts for the Houyhnhnms way of life, completely rejecting Yahoos' path. But when he is compelled to leave the country and to break away from his beloved way of life, and to come to another way of life which he dislikes, it is but natural for him to hate it. In fact, his this ideal is perfectly erroneous. Swift says: "Idealism leads towards destruction."

So, it is wrong to detest Man, equating him with Yahoos and it is again inappropriate to set up the ideal of perfect man on the basis of Houyhnhnms' pure intellect because neither a Houyhnhnms nor a Yahoo is a man, instead, man is a juxtaposition of both intellect and emotions. "The best code of conduct is Golden Mean which is 'balance'."

So he misdefines Man. However, the fact of the matter remains whether Swift becomes a misanthrope or not, but can we impute Gulliver's misanthropy to Swift? If we virtually succeed to establish, some identity between Swift and Gulliver, Swift, too, will become a misanthrope.

But according to Swift a man is he who strikes a balance between rationality and sensuality and this balance is not gifted by birth. It has to be acquired. That's why even Gulliver is subjected to Swift's satire, for he loses the said balance.

That is the reason we don't identify Gulliver with Swift and, in spite of Gulliver's misanthropy, we call Swift a great philanthropist. As he, himself, says: "I write for the noblest end, to inform and instruct mankind."

Swift's "Gulliver's Travels": A social satire

"Gulliver's Travels" is a great work of social satire. Swift's age was an age of smug complacency. Corruption was rampant and the people were still satisfied. Thus, Jonathan Swift tears the veil of smug complacency off which had blinded the people to realities. In "Gulliver's Travels", there is a satire on politics, human physiognomy, intellect, manners and morality.

In the first voyage to Lilliput, Swift satirizes on politics and political tactics practiced in England through Lilliputians, the dwarfs of six inches height. He satirizes the manner in which political offices were awarded by English King in his time. Flimnap, the Treasurer, represents Sir Robert Walpole who was the Prime Minister of England. Dancing on tight ropes symbolizes Walpole's skill in parliamentary tactics and political intrigues. The ancient temple, in which Gulliver is housed in Lilliput, refers to Westminster Hall in which Charles I was condemned to death. The three fine silk threads awarded as prizes to the winners refer to the various distinctions conferred by English King to his favourites. The Lilliputians were highly superstitious:

"They bury their dead with their head directly downwards because they hold an opinion that after eleven thousand moons they are all to rise again."

Gulliver's account of the annoyance of the Empress of Lilliput on extinguishing fire in her apartment is Swift's satirical way of describing Queen Anne's annoyance with him on writing "A Tale of a Tub". Swift's satire becomes amusing when Gulliver speaks of the conflict between the Big Endians and the Little Endians. In this account Swift is ridiculing the conflicts between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants. High Heel and Low Heel represent Whig and Tory – two political parties in England.

In the second voyage to Brobdingnag, there is a general satire on human body, human talents and human limitations. Gulliver gives us his reaction to the coarseness and ugliness of human body. When Gulliver gives an account, to the King of Brobdingnag, of the life in his own country, the trade, the wars, the conflicts in religion, the political parties, the king remarks that the history of Gulliver's country seems to be a series of

conspiracies, rebellions, murders, revolutions and banishments etc. Kind condemns the fatal use of gunpowder and the books written on the act of governing. King mocks at the human race of which Gulliver is the agent.

“The most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth.”

Swift here ridicules human pride and pretension. The sight is, indeed, horrible and disgusting. Among the beggars is a woman with a cancer in her breast.

“It stood prominent six feet, and could not be less than sixteen in circumference … spots and pimples that nothing could appear more nauseous.”

There is a man with a huge tumor in his neck; another beggar has wooden legs. But the most hateful sight is that of the lice crawling on their clothes. This description reinforces Swift views of the ugliness and foulness of the human body.

In the third voyage to Laputa, there is a satire on human intellect, human mind and on science, philosophy and mathematics. However, his satire is not very bitter. We are greatly amused by the useless experiments and researches, which are going on at the academy of Projectors in Lugado. Here scientists wants to extract sunbeams out of cucumbers, to convert human excrement into its original food, to build house from the roof downward to the foundation, to obtain silk from cobwebs and to produce books on various subjects by the use of machine without having to exert one’s brain.

“Their heads were inclined either to the right or to the left, one of their eyes turned inward, and the other directly up to Zenith.”

Swift amuses us by making a fun of the people whose sole interests are music and geometry.

“They made a lot of theories but practically nill.” Swift here ridicules scientists, academics, planers, intellectual, in fact, all people who proceed, only according to theory which are useless when they come to actual practice. He satirizes historian and literary critics though Gulliver’s interviews with the ghosts of famous dead. The point f satire is that historian often distorts facts and literary critics often misinterpret great authors like Homer and Aristotle.

In the fourth voyage to Houyhnhnms, there is a bitter poignant satire on human moral shortcomings. Voyage contains some of the most corrosive and offensive satire on mankind. The description of the Yahoos given to us by Gulliver is regrettable. “Yet I confess I never say any sensitive being so detestable on all accounts; and the more I came near them, the more hateful they grew.”

By contrast, the Houyhnhnms are noble and benevolent horses who are governed by reason and lead an ordered life. It is, indeed, a bitter criticism on the human race to be compared by the Houyhnhnms. The satire deepens when Gulliver gives an account, to

the master Houyhnhnms, of the events in his country. He tells him that war in European countries was sometimes due to the ambition of kings and sometimes due to the corruption of the ministers. He speaks of the numerous deadly weapons, employed by European nations for destructive purposes. Many people in his country ruin themselves by drinking, gambling and debauchery and many are guilty of murders, theft, robbery, forgery and rape. The master speaks of the Yahoo's love of shinning stones, their gluttony and their weakness for liquor. The master also speaks of the lascivious behaviour of the female Yahoos. By contrast, the Houyhnhnms are excellent beings.

"Here was neither physician to destroy my body not lawyer to ruin my fortune; no informer to watch my words and actions … here were no … backbiters, pickpockets, highwaymen, house-breakers … politicians, wits … murderers, robbers … no cheating shop-keeper or mechanics, no pride, vanity or affectation."

They hold meetings at which the difficulties of their population are discussed and solved. They regulate their population and do not indulge in sexual intercourse merely for pleasure. "Everything is calculated as the Plato's Utopian land 'The Republican'."

Swift's purpose here is to attribute to horses certain qualities which would normally be expected in human beings but which are actually lacking in them. Gulliver's reaction o Houyhnhnms fills him so much admiration for them and with so much hatred and disgust for human beings that he has no desire even to return to his family.

Thus we see that "Gulliver's Travels" is a great piece of art containing social satire in it. Every satirist is at heart a reformist. Swift, also, wants to reform the society by pinpointing the vices and shortcoming in it. And he very successfully satirizes on political tactics, physical awkwardness, intellectual fallacies and moral shortcomings.

Jonathon Swift's Prose Style

It has rightly and honestly been said that Swift was the **greatest prose satirist** of England. He dominated the first half of the eighteenth century as Dr. Johnson did the second: and as an intellectual, he was far superior to Johnson. Some of his satires are obscene, misanthropic, and cynical, but none can question his moral integrity and the unflinching earnestness with which he removes the externals of things to bring out the corruption which lies at their heart. Swift's satire is all embracing. Its rapier-like thrust's spare neither a fraudulent almanac-maker, nor a misguided zealot, nor an airy philosopher, nor a glib politician, nor a conceited fop, nor a pretentious scientist. Indeed, the extensiveness of his satire is remarkable. This greatest of satirists once satirised even satire! The platry Partridge (an almanac-maker) and the great Walpole (The Prime Minister of England) alike winced under his terrible "whip of scorpions".

Swift depicts **razor-edged satire**. His sensitiveness to the corruption, the numerous frustrations which punctuated the entire span of his life, and the egregious folly, corruption, and self-seeking which he found marring the prospect of "the age of reason and good sense", prompted him to take up his lash. The age deserved satire, and his

personal disposition and disappointments made him keen enough to give it. Swift' is perfectly right when he says in The Death of Dean Swift:

Perhaps I may allow the Dean
Had too much satire in his vein,
And seem'd determined not to starve it,
Because no age could more deserve it.

The greatness of Swift's satire is, in the last analysis, a **triumph of technique**. His arsenal as a satirist is chockful of weapons of all descriptions. Wit, raillery, sarcasm, irony, allegory, banter, and so many more weapons are used to perfection by him in his crusade against folly, injustice, and unreason. Whichever weapon may he be employing for attack, his satire is usually darker and more telling than that of most writers. He may sometimes touch lightly, but very often he pierced deep to the very heart of life. In any case, his satire is very disturbing as it presents things in a fairly unconventional perspective eminently calculated to shatter the complacency of the reader. When Swift points out the acquired follies, he is quite constructive; but when he saves the very nature of man, he is nothing but destructive.

Of all the satiric techniques, the one most effectively used by Swift is **irony**. With Swift, irony is often much more than just a figure of speech, it is extended so that the entire range of thoughts and feelings presented in a satiric work seem to be coming not from Swift himself but from a fictive character created for the purpose. The irony lies in the difference between the views expressed by the persona and tile common sense views.

Swift wrote a very large **number of prose pieces** of which the most important are **The Battle of the Books**, **A Tale of a Tub**, and **Gulliver's Travel**. The first is just a feitid' esprit, and was meant to lampoon in mock-heroic terms the opponents of his patron Sir William Temple — particularly Richard Bentley and William Wotton, both of disputed the view of Temple granting supremacy to ancients over moderns. A Tale of a Tub was meant to be a satire -"on the numerous and gross corruptions in religion and learning," It represented the Church of England as the best of all Churches in ""doctrine and discipline," and also lashed the shallow writers and critics of the age. Gulliver's Travels is the most famous of Swift's works. In it he savagely indicted "that animal" called man." Though it 'has the externals of a travel romance, yet in reality it is a terrible but well-calculated satire on all the activities of human life and all the attributes of human nature, not' sparing even the human body. However, its irony is so deep that it has been a favourite gift book for children. Kipling once said that Swift "ignited a volcano to light a child to bed." In fact, the book is enjoyed by all children from nine to ninety.

Credit must be given to Swift for the clarity, precision, and "**conciseness", of his prose style**. Swift despises all unnecessary ornament. His imagery, however, is prolific and concrete, at any rate, he gives us the impression of an easy mastery of the language. Halliday in the introduction to his Section on Swift observes: "…the various phases of scorn and satire of appraisement and direct denunciation, the various moods and tempers of the writer are expressed with wonderful and subtle skill. The secret of his

power over his readers is to be sought for here. He makes you responsive to every emotion and draws you with the magic of his pipe into whatever region desires." No doubt, swift had a mastery over the use of his prose technique.

Gulliver's Travels as an Allegory

"Gulliver's travels" was the culmination of swift's literary achievement- his magnum opus. It was begun in 1720 and finally published in 1726. It is at once a delightful, fantastic story of adventure for children a political allegory and a serious satire on human nature, on contemporary political, social institution, religious controversies and on the manners and morals of the stage. This book is written in the form of travelogue. The hero and narrator and the protagonist character of the story is "Lemuel Gulliver", an English physician who opts to travel as a ship's surgeon when he is unable to take care of his family on his meager income. Gulliver is endowed with a keen, almost journalistic sense of reportage, and a desire to travel. The book is made up of four parts, each dealing with the person's experiences in a different fantasy land. Before we see more about Gulliver's Travels, let's see first of all about allegory and satire.

What is an allegory? An allegory is a literary genre which is structured in such a way that its meaning could be read on two levels, and a secondary and more complex level. An allegory is defined as a narrative in which the characters, plot, setting and occasion, while making sense in themselves also signify a second layer of meaning where they point at another set of people, events and setting either from the writer's mass, milieu or recent historical events. It is a figurative mode of representation where ideas are conveyed through symbolism and metaphor.

In "Gulliver's Travels", Swift uses satire on highlight the allegorical elements in his tale. He has used allegory as a vehicle in an excellent way.

What is a satire? Satire is a literary genre in which human vices, weaknesses, foibles and follies are held up to ridicule. Wit and humor are commonly used as instrument of satire.

In "Gulliver's Travels", Swift uses satire as a vehicle to point out to the depraved state of human kind. Some critics have observed that Swift is a misanthropist because the paints human nature as a whole in a sordid and gloom light, almost as if there are no redeeming features to humanity. Swift seems to be holding up a mirror to society so that in viewing the gross magnification of its vices, humanity has a hope for the future. The allegory and satire, in a sense, are interwoven inextricably and deftly.

A Voyage to Lilliput: - This deals with Gulliver's experiences in the land of the little people, who are no more than six-inches tall. It is on one level an absorbing tale of the adventures of the giant Gulliver among the midgets of Lilliput and on another level rich in England. It is above all a scathing satire on the moral pettiness of human as seem in the behaviour of the Lilliputians. Human beings are filled with and importance and

cannot view themselves and objectivity. Their pride and boastfulness are revealed as ridiculous when perceived from Gulliver's great height.

As we saw that the people of Lilliput are more than six-inches tall. All their acts and motives are on the same dwarfish, petty quarrels of these dwarfs, we are supposed to see the littleness and humanity. The statesmen who obtain place and favour by cutting monkey capers the tight rope before their sovereign and the two great parties, the little-endians and big-endians, who plugs the country into civil-war over the momentous question of whether an egg should be broken on its big or on politics of Swift's own days and generations.

In society, also, we see that type of people who shows littleness in their nature and also shows the narrow mind. All their actions and aims in life are at low level. They never try to come out from it. Their narrow and they live their life.

They are always busy in petty things because they can't think they can't think to go ahead in life. This shows in trivial matters.

A Voyage to Brobdingnag: - In this voyage, the situation is reversed. Gulliver is now marooned and dwarfed in the land of giants who are over forty feet tall. He now becomes the midget he had laughed at in Lilliput, observed through the microscopic eyes of Gulliver, the Brobdingnagians are hideous in size and stature and Gulliver realizes that he must have been just as hideous to the little people in Lilliput. Here, Swift satirizes the physical grossness of the human and the grotesque ugliness of the human body. Gulliver is little more than an insect in Brobdingnag and at his best, an amusing toy.

When Gulliver tells about his own people, their ambitions and comes and conquests, the giants can only wonder that such great venom could exist in such little insects. Here, in the second part, Gulliver is alone among the giants. He is showed as insects among the Brobdingnagians because they think this way.

Here, Swift satirizes on the Brobdignagian's unpleasant and unattractively large body. In a way, there are lots of people in society who are huge at status but their thinking shows their narrowness.

Also he satirizes on the ugliness of the Brobdignagians. It shows that the thinking of that time of people who has very ugly motif in their life to fulfil their wishes.

We can see this, Brobdignagians, type of people around us and also both we can see the physical grossness and ugliness in people. By this, we can know their aims of life. They just boast on their endeavor, conquest.

This type of people believes that others are nothing before them. They show others inferior but in reality, their unattractivity and ugliness becomes them inferior.

A Voyage to Laputa, Balnibarbi, Language, Glubdubdrib, and Japan: - In this voyage, Swift satires on the Scientist and Philosophers of the age. The people of Laputa

have extraordinary physical features- head turned at angle, one eye turned upward and the other inward. Through the people of Laputa, Swift ridicules the experiments of the royal society and allied institution of the time.

The frightening emptiness and sterility of a purely scientific society is evident from this book. The philosophers who worked eight years to extract sunshine from cucumbers are typical of Swift's satire treatment of all scientific problems. It is in this voyage hear of the struldbrugs, a ghastly race of the men who are doomed to live up on the earth after losing hope and the desire for life.

The picture is all the more terrible in view of the last years of Swift's own life in which he was compelled to live on a burden to himself and his friends.

In this third good, Gulliver's journeys go through different people, culture, custom and rules. The strange thing of the people of Laputa regarding the physical structure of the body shows types of people at that time. Also Swift's disliked the society of his time that's why he satires on it.

Here, cucumber is the typical of Swift's satiric treatment of all scientific problems. This shows the ridiculous thing of scientific problems show that time of things. There are different types of people who show different types of culture of swift's time.

A voyage to the country of the Houyhnhnms: - In this voyage, Gulliver narrates his experiences of his journey to the land of the Houyhnhnms and the yahoos. The horses are creatures governed by solely by reason, free from any emotions and passions, while the yahoos who physically resemble human beings are ruled purely by animal's instincts.

Swift seems to indicate to us that the nature of the human is complex and defies definition unlike that of the yahoos and the Houyhnhnms. The book for all its harsh satire and anger, instructs human to see themselves with humility and honesty and it condemns pride ego and myopic self-esteem. It urges every person to use reason to be a good Christian. Swift here tries to say that we have to live our life in a way in which we can show the humanity.

Swift emphasized on the yahoos that despite of human being, they are unspeakable persons who show the brutality of that time. Also by the female yahoos Swift shows the lust in their nature this also a picture of his time.

We have to live like a good Christian and try to avoid that all things which damages humanity.

Conclusion:- By these four voyages, Gulliver's journey goes through different types of people, culture, customs, beliefs etc. they show the society of swift's time. Like, how they cure narrow minded also interested in petty things and unattractive appearances and ugliness of humanity etc. All these, proof of that time of people's way of thinking and living.

The Use of Irony in Gulliver's Travels

Irony is one of the most important weapons of satire. It arises from a contrast, a contrast between appearance and reality, between what a character or the author says and what he really means to convey, between what a character thinks himself to be and what he really is, between what a character believes and what the reader knows to be actually the case, between what a character thinks what he will do or achieve and what he really in the long run does or achieves, and so on. It may also be pointed out that, apart from irony in words, irony may exist in a situation.

A situation is ironical when the reader knows all the facts of the case while the characters, either all of them or some of them, are ignorant of some of the facts of the case. Furthermore, irony may produce a comic effect or a tragic effect, depending upon the circumstances of the case. This means that the use of irony by an author may amuse the reader or may sadden him all the more.

Swift is a comic and satirical writer and therefore his use of irony in his writings adds to the comic effect at which he aims. In Gulliver's Travels we find a plentiful use of irony. Gulliver's Travels throws the light of a superior and destructive irony upon the smallness of the means, the vanity of the motives, the illusions of the catchwords, through which kings retained thrones and magistrates their offices in those days. To serve the needs of his allegory, Swift carries us from the country of the dwarfs to that of the giants, and in the end to the country of the Yahoos and the noble horses. Irony and allegory are fused in one.

Situational Irony

The irony of situation is to be found in all the four divisions of Gulliver's Travels. In Lilliput, Gulliver finds himself in the midst of people who are not more than six inches in height. In Brobdingnag, Gulliver finds himself in the midst of people of a giant size by comparison with whom he himself is a pigmy. In Laputa and in Balnibarbi he finds himself among people who are queer in one way or another. Finally, he finds himself in the midst of the Yahoos and the Houyhnhnms, the former bearing a close physical resemblance to human beings and the latter being horses in their physical shape and appearance but having an intelligence much superior to that of human beings. In all these cases, Gulliver thinks himself to be literally among pigmies, giants, or horses as the case may be; but we realize that in each case Swift is giving us a portrayal of human beings themselves though the description of the various kinds of inhabitants of the different countries as determined by the requirements of the satirical intentions of the author. In the Lilliputians we recognize ourselves reduced to a small size. In the Brobdingnagians we recognize ourselves as seen through a magnifying glass. In the Yahoos we again recognize ourselves, with the good qualities of human beings completely left out. In the Houyhnhnms we recognize ourselves though here our good qualities are idealized and carried to perfection, while our vicious side is completely omitted.

Verbal Irony

There is a plenty of verbal irony which arises largely from the contrast between what is said and what is really intended. In **Voyage to Lilliput**, we have an example of this kind of irony when Swift describes the Emperor of Lilliput. As the Emperor is taller by the breadth of Gulliver's nail than any member of his court, his appearance is enough to strike an awe into the beholders. The Emperor's features are strong and masculine with an Austrian lip and arched nose, his countenance erect, his body and limbs well proportioned, all his motions graceful, and his deportment majestic. Now this description of the Emperor is clearly ironical because a person, who is just six inches or a little more than that in height, cannot be regarded as awful; and yet, as judged by the Lilliputian standards, the Emperor certainly strikes fear among his people by his greater height. The description is ironical in another sense also. In thus portraying the Emperor, Swift is having a laugh at the actual English monarch of the time, namely George I who could not be described as being graceful and majestic in his appearance. There is irony also in the remark which Gulliver subsequently makes when he describes the Emperor as a "most magnanimous prince". Gulliver of course, means what he says, but Swift intends this remark as having just the opposite meaning. The diversions of the Emperor are also ironically described. These diversions consist in the candidates for his favour dancing on a rope or creeping under a stick or leaping over it. The rewards for the winners in these contests are silken threads of different colours. This whole account is an ironical reference to the sycophancy of the English courtiers of the time and the manner in which the Emperor rewarded them by an arbitrary conferment of titles and distinctions on them.

The **customs of the people of Lilliput are also ironically described**. Gulliver remarks that the laws and customs in this empire were very peculiar and directly contrary to those of his own dear country, England. Gulliver then proceeds to describe those laws and customs as if they were indeed "peculiar" or even crazy; but actually many of these laws and customs are wholesome. All crimes against the State are severely punished in this country; but if a person, who has been accused can prove his innocence, the accuser is immediately put to death. These people look upon fraud as a greater crime than theft, and therefore seldom fail to punish it with death. In short, many of the laws and customs do credit to the Lilliputians, but they are described by Gulliver as if there were something wrong with them. We have another example of irony when we are told that the Emperor, wanting to give a lenient punishment to Gulliver, decided to have him blinded instead of ordering his death. Blinding the culprit is regarded by the Emperor as a lenient punishment though actually it is even more cruel than the penalty of death.

In the account of the **voyage to Brobdingnag** we have striking examples of the use of verbal irony. When Gulliver describes the features of the national life of England to the King of Brobdingnag, the King makes certain adverse comments upon Gulliver's country. Gulliver feels offended with the King because Gulliver thinks his country to be "the mistress of arts and arms, the scourge of France, the arbitress of Europe, the seat of virtue, piety, honour, and truth, the pride and envy of the world". He genuinely believes

his country as possessing these qualities, but Swift means this description to be ironical, because Swift had just the opposite view of England. Subsequently Gulliver gives to the King of Brobdingnag a detailed description of the English parliament, the Courts of Justice, etc. The King finds fault with all these English institutions. Gulliver thereupon attributes the King's condemnation to the King's narrow-mindedness. Gulliver describes the members of the House of Lords to be champions always ready for the defence of their prince and their country by their valour, conduct, and fidelity. Gulliver describes them as the ornament and bulwark of the kingdom. Gulliver also gives high praise to the Lords spiritual. As for the members of the House of Commons, Gulliver says that they are selected by the people for their great abilities and love of their country to represent the wisdom of the whole nation. Now Gulliver may mean all that he says here. But we can clearly see that Swift intends this praise to be ironical, and Swift uses the King of Brobdingnag to deflate Gulliver's pride in this context.

There is **verbal irony in Gulliver's view of the narrow-mindedness of the Brobdingnagian King**. On hearing the criticism and the condemnation of England and English people by the King of Brobdingnag, Gulliver says to himself (and to us) that great allowances should be made in the case of the King who lived a wholly secluded life from the rest of the world and was therefore completely unacquainted with the manners and customs prevailing in other nations. The lack of knowledge, says Gulliver, had produced many prejudices in the King, and a certain narrowness of thinking in him. Now all this is ironically intended by Swift because we know that the King's criticism was perfectly sound and justified. Swift continues this irony when Gulliver attributes the King's adverse reaction to his description of the destructive power of gunpowder to the miserable effects of the King's confined or limited education. Gulliver's comment on the King's horror on hearing about the gunpowder is: "a strange effect of narrow principles and short views!" According to Gulliver, the King suffers from "a nice unnecessary scruple". All this shows the irony of Swift because the King of Brobdingnag expresses a perfectly sound view which Gulliver attributes to narrowness and lack of adequate knowledge. The same kind of irony continues when Gulliver cannot understand the King's view that there is no need for books on the art of government and that a government should be run in accordance with the principles of common sense, reason, justice, and lenity.

The use of irony by Swift may also be illustrated from the **third voyage of Gulliver**. In the school of political projectors in Lagado, professors are working upon schemes for persuading monarchs to choose favourites upon the basis of their wisdom, capacity, and virtue; for teaching ministers to consult the public good; for rewarding merit, great abilities, and eminent services; for choosing for employments persons qualified to work efficiently; and so on. The irony here lies in the fact that, while all these schemes are perfectly sound and wholesome, Gulliver describes them as wild, impossible chimeras or impractical and fanciful notions. These schemes are being equated with the really absurd projects such as the one for extracting sunbeams out of cucumbers. The irony here arises from the contrast between the apparent meaning and the underlying intention of the author. There is irony also in the description of the method used by the King of Luggnagg to put to death those courtiers with whom he was offended. Gulliver here tells

us that this King was really kind-hearted in so far as he got the floor of his apartment properly wiped and cleaned after a particular courtier had been killed by means of the poisonous powder which had been scattered on the floor. On one occasion the floor was not properly cleaned and an innocent courtier died of the poison that had unintentionally been allowed to remain on the floor. But the King did not take any action against the servant who had failed to clean the floor. The whole passage in this context is ironical and brings out, by the use of irony, the fact that to a King the life of a courtier had little meaning. Then there is irony in Gulliver's dream of immortality and the advantages which he thinks can result to a man if he is made immortal. This passage becomes ironical in the light of the subsequent description of the wretchedness and misery of the Struldbrugs who are a group of immortal persons.

Gulliver, a Victim of Irony in Part IV of the Book

It is believed by some that in Part IV of the book Swift's portrayal of the Houyhnhnms is also ironical and that Swift did not really mean to hold up the Houyhnhnms as representing a utopian ideal. This, however, is a debatable point. But about Swift's use of irony in describing Gulliver's mentality and outlook in the two or three closing chapters, we can have no doubt. Swift certainly does not approve of the complete and absolute misanthropy which Gulliver has developed by the end of his final voyage. Swift therefore gives us an ironic description of Gulliver's whole behaviour at this stage. In other words, Gulliver himself now becomes a target of Swift's irony and satire.

Character Sketch of Lemuel Gulliver

Gulliver, a Detached and Impartial Character: - Lemuel Gulliver is a fictitious character invented by Swift to serve his satirical purposes in the book Gulliver's Travels. The book was not intended as a personal memoir. Swift's object in writing it was to express his ideas about mankind in general and about England and English political and religious institutions of the time, in particular.

One method of doing so would have been to write the book in the first person pronoun using '1'. But that method would have made the book look like an autobiography and we would have been inclined to question the validity of the story which is largely improbable and incredible. The account of the various voyages given by a fictitious character called Gulliver carries a certain plausibility because we feel inclined to look upon Gulliver as a detached and impartial person and we easily fall under his spell'.

Gulliver's Four-fold Role in the Book: - Gulliver is primarily an observer and a narrator. He has extraordinary powers of observation, and he narrates all that he has observed and experienced in such a skilful manner as to hold our attention throughout. But, in addition to being an observer and a narrator, he is also a commentator and a medium through whom Swift conveys to us his criticism of mankind and his reactions to English institutions and English politicians of his own time. Thus Gulliver has a four-fold role or function in the book.

Gulliver, Swift's Mouthpiece, but Not to Be Fully Identified with Swift: - Nor can it be doubted that at most points in the course of the story Gulliver serves as a mouthpiece or spokesman of Swift. Of course, we are not to identify Gulliver completely with Swift; the two personalities are to be kept apart. But the fact remains that it is through Gulliver that Swift himself speaks and communicates his views to us. Wherever Gulliver draws any conclusions from his experiences, wherever he offers his comments on what he sees, wherever he moralizes, wherever he characterizes or condemns human beings directly or in a veiled manner, it is Swift himself who is speaking. If Swift had spoken directly to us in his own person, he might not have been able to carry conviction and we might have felt biased against him. At the same time, we should not identify Gulliver with Swift at all stages of the story. In the closing chapters of the book particularly, Gulliver is not Swift and Gulliver's misanthropy is not to be attributed to Swift. Gulliver may there be regarded as an objective, dramatic character, not to be identified with Swift just as Shylock in The Merchant of Venice is not to be identified with Shakespeare.

The General Traits of Gulliver's Character: - Gulliver is the narrator and the principal actor in the book. We look at things through his eyes; we feel his feelings; and we share his thoughts. We remain in his company from beginning till end. In the very beginning he gives us many insignificant biographical details in order to produce a realistic effect about his being an authentic person. We find that in all respects he is an average good man. He has received some university education both at Cambridge and at Leyden where he studied medicine. He is a married man with children. He is keenly observant, reasonably intelligent, thoroughly capable in an emergency, brave, and hopeful. He is simple and direct in his narration. He retains his benevolence throughout the first three voyages, though towards the end of the fourth voyage he becomes morbid and almost crazy.

Gulliver as an Observer in Lilliput: - Gulliver's powers of observation are made manifest to us in his accounts of all the four voyages. For instance, when he finds himself in Lilliput, he observes that the people there are most excellent mathematicians and have arrived to a great perfection in mechanics. He then goes on to describe' in detail the method by which he is transported to the metropolis. When he arrives at the royal palace, the Emperor surveys him with great admiration and orders his cooks and butlers to give him food and drink, while the Empress, attended by many ladies, sits at a distance in her chair to watch him. When he is released from his chains, Gulliver goes round the metropolis and gives us a detailed description of the city as well as the palace. He also devotes a whole chapter to a description of the style of living, the laws and customs, the habits and beliefs of the people of this country whom he has closely watched. As the height of the natives here is only six inches, so there is an exact proportion in all other animals as well as plants and trees, Gulliver informs us.

Gulliver as an Observer in Brobdingnag and in Laputa: - In Brobdingnag Gulliver again observes everything with great care and minuteness. Here again he gives us a detailed description of the country and its metropolis which is called Lorbrulgrud and which stands in almost equal parts on each side of the river that passes through it. The

King's palace is no regular edifice, but a heap of buildings about seven miles round. In one striking passage Gulliver gives us his impressions of the beggars whom he sees outside a shop: a woman with a cancer in her breast, a man with a tumour in his neck, another with a pair of wooden legs, and so on. The people of Laputa are also described in detail: "Their heads were all reclined either to the right or the left; one of their eyes turned inward, and the other directly up to the zenith". The minds of these people are so engaged in intense speculations that they can neither speak nor attend to the talk of others without being roused by some external stimulus. In short, Gulliver gives evidence of his enormous powers of observation throughout the book. Indeed, the book would not have been possible without this capacity for observation.

Gulliver's Skill as a Narrator: - Gulliver also shows a good deal of skill as a narrator. This skill enables him to maintain our interest in the story throughout, and to whet our curiosity again and again. He sometimes arouses our interest by dramatic incidents and sometimes by humorous episodes. Indeed, the first three parts of the book are very amusing and entertaining because of their comic quality. However, even in these three parts there are several dramatic and exciting moments. In Part I, Gulliver wakes up from his sound slumber to find himself in chains. Then there are dramatic and exciting incidents such as the threat of an invasion of Lilliput, Gulliver's seizing the bulk of the enemy fleet, Gulliver's extinguishing a fire in the palace by urinating on it (though this is more of an amusing incident than an exciting one), the threat of an impeachment against Gulliver, and the manner of Gulliver's departure from this country. Among the amusing incidents here are the rope-dancing and the creeping under a string (both of which, of course, have a satirical purpose behind them). In Part II, we are greatly excited to learn of the giant size of the inhabitants. It is almost awful to read the account of how a huge woman suckles her child. Gulliver tells us that no object ever disgusted him so l11uch as the sight of her monstrous breast: "It stood prominent six foot, and could not be less than sixteen in circumference. The nipple was about half the bigness of my head." The description of the hugeness of various animals such as cats, dogs, rats, flies, wasps, monkeys and such objects as apples and hailstones, and Gulliver's adventures among them, or with them, are both amusing and frightening. The manner in which Gulliver is tormented by the court dwarf (who is thirty feet high) is also one of the highlights of this part. Then there are the maids of honour who play all kinds of games with Gulliver. The handsomest among these maids of honour sometimes puts Gulliver astride upon one of her nipples and plays many other tricks upon him. Part III is rather discursive and lacks the unity of action of the other parts of the book, but even here our interest is maintained. The flying island of Laputa is in itself a miracle. The experiments which are going on at the Academy of Projectors in Lagado are also very interesting. Part IV contains an exciting and intriguing account of strange creatures like the Yahoos and the Houyhnhnms. We now find ourselves in a country where the horses can talk and can teach their language to a human being. Gulliver has many conversations with his equine master* who enlightens Gulliver on the way the Houyhnhnms run their country. In short, Gulliver's Travels contains a gripping narrative, and the credit for lending so much interest to the story goes to Gulliver.

Gulliver as a Commentator and a Moral Judge: - Gulliver is also a commentator and a moral judge. He is not only a man of action but also one who is endowed with a capacity for thought and reflection. He can ponder over what he sees and he can draw conclusions from his experiences. At one point in Part I, Gulliver reflects thus: "Of so little weight are the greatest services to princes when put into the balance with a refusal to gratify their passions". In Part II, he thus meditates upon one of the situations: "This made me reflect how vain an attempt it is for a man to endeavour doing himself honour among those who are out of all degree of equality or comparison with him". After having witnessed the sad plight of the immortals, in Part III, Gulliver draws the following moral: "They were the most mortifying sight I ever beheld, and the women more horrible than the men. The reader will easily believe that my keen appetite for perpetuity of life was much abated." In Part IV, this is one of his conclusions about the Houyhnhnms and human beings: "But I must freely confess that the many virtues of those excellent quadrupeds, placed in opposite view to human corruptions, had so far opened mine eyes and enlarged my understanding that I began to view the actions and passions of man in a very different light."

Gulliver, as the Medium of Satire: - Finally, Gulliver is the medium through whom Swift communicates his satirical points and purposes to us. When Gulliver dwells upon the conflict between the Big-Endians and the Little-Endians or between the High-Heels and the Low-Heels we can see that Swift is giving us a satirical account of the conflicts between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants, and of the party strife of his time. When Gulliver describes the rope-dancing and the creeping under a string, we know that Swift is here satirizing the sycophancy of the politicians in their efforts to win royal favour. The comments of the King of Brobdingnag upon the presumption of diminutive insects like Gulliver to mimick grandeur is also satirical in intention as is the same King's description of the human race as "the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth". In the account of the third voyage, we have a satire on people who remain engrossed in their meditations and cogitations to such an extent that they do not have the time even to make love to their wives; There is also a satirical reference here to Wood's half-pence, the coin which was rejected by Ireland as a result of Drapier's Letters which were written by Swift. The account of the researches going on at the Academy of Projectors in Lagado is a satire on the kind of useless work which was being done by the Royal Society in those days. In addition to that, we have a satire on the human longing for immortality. In Part IV, the satire on mankind becomes very fierce and takes the form of what is known as "invective". We have here a denunciation of war and the destruction caused by the weapons of war; and a denunciation of lawyers, judges, doctors, and government ministers. The horses or the Houyhnhnms impress Gulliver so much that he becomes a great admirer of those beings and a hater of his own species. Thus, it is through Gulliver that Swift here conveys to us his misanthropic and cynical view of mankind, though Gulliver's final attitude of a complete abhorrence and detestation of the human race at the end of the book cannot be attributed to Swift himself.

An Unfair Criticism: - According to one critic, Gulliver by his technique of narration does not create a sense of reality about himself. Gulliver is not a character in the sense

in which Tom Jones, for example, is a character, says this critic. Gulliver has the most minimal subjective life and the scantiness of his inner life cannot be doubted. He is, in fact, an abstraction, manipulated in the service of satire. However, this is a view which we cannot accept. Gulliver strikes us as a real, living personality. His inner thoughts and feelings at different stages in the narration have adequately been revealed to us. There was no need for Swift to subject Gulliver to any kind of psycho-analysis.

Gulliver's Travels: Meaning and Significance

Gulliver's Travels is a story of adventure and that it has several elements in it of a fairy tale. Both adventure and fairy-elements in a story appeal greatly to the young mind. They have some charm even for the adult mind. But it would be an incorrect view to regard Gulliver's Travels as merely an adventure story or a fairy tale intended for the entertainment and diversion of young people. Gulliver's tale is an allegorical satire. In other words, there lies below the surface a deeper meaning. Swift's real purpose was to expose the follies, absurdities, and evils of mankind in general. However, this book has established itself not only as a satire on mankind but also as a classic for the young readers.

Let us, then, take a look at Gulliver's Travels as a **tale of adventure** which it doubtless is and as a fanciful account of strange and wonderful lands. The book tells us the story of the various voyages of a man called Lemuel Gulliver. Every voyage is an adventure in itself. There is, first of all, the voyage to a country called Lilliput. Gulliver, in the course of his first principal voyage, gets ship-wrecked, and has to swim to the shore to save his life. On the sea-shore he falls into a sound slumber and, when he wakes up, he finds himself a prisoner in chains. In the course of his second voyage, Gulliver's ship is overtaken by a fierce storm which threatens to wreck the ship and engulf the sailors including Gulliver. However, when, after the storm, the ship casts anchor, and a few sailors including Gulliver himself, are sent to the shore, Gulliver finds himself a captive in the hands of a giant. In the course of his third voyage Gulliver's ship is overtaken by pirates. The pirates treat Gulliver roughly and, after depriving him of all his belongings, put him on a small boat and set him adrift. Five days later, the boat touches a rocky island where Gulliver gets down, very low in spirits and feeling tired and desolate. In the course of his fourth voyage, Gulliver is attacked by the members of the crew of his own ship and is bound hand and foot. Most of the members of this crew had previously been pirates, and now they threaten to throw Gulliver into the sea if he puts up any resistance. After a few days, the ruffians put Gulliver down on the sea-coast and sail away, leaving him alone to fend for himself. Gulliver finds himself in a new country about which he knows nothing at all.

The above brief account of the various voyages of Gulliver shows the difficulties and dangers that Gulliver faced in the course of his wanderings**. Adventure always implies a risk of life or a danger to life**. The man who has the spirit of adventure in him is always ready to face risks and dangers. Gulliver sets out nom a comfortable life at home in order to explore unknown countries, knowing full well that he will face many difficulties and hazards. But every time he goes on a fresh voyage willingly and

experiences not only difficulties and hardships but also serious dangers to his life. It is a miracle that each time he returns home safely. Such a story is bound to fascinate the young mind because dangers and difficulties never fail to appeal to young people.

Then there are the **strange experiences of Gulliver in various lands**. Every land which Gulliver visits is a wonderful land, and Gulliver's experiences in every land are strange or exciting, or amusing. In **Lilliput the people are diminutives or dwarfs**, hardly six inches in height. The very idea that there are human beings so small is funny. But more amusing than that is the manner in which Gulliver is fed. Several ladders are applied by the Lilliputians to his sides, and about a hundred of them climb up those ladders in order to carry baskets full of meat and drink and put them close to his mouth. Similarly, it has taken nine hundred Lilliputians three hours to raise Gulliver to the level of a huge carriage by which he is carried to the royal court. In the metropolis, Gulliver becomes an object of curiosity, and people come nom far and near to look at him. He is given the name "man-mountain". Gulliver here lends his support to the King and the government of Lilliput against the island of Blefuscu which has been hostile to Lilliput, and he cripples the enemy fleet, thus winning the appreciation and admiration of the Lilliputian king. One of the most amusing incidents in this part of the book is Gulliver's extinguishing a fire in the Empress's apartment by urinating on it. The Empress feels greatly annoyed with this action of Gulliver and moves nom that apartment to a different location. Some of the customs of the Lilliputians are also a source of amusement. For instance, they bury their dead with the heads of the corpses directly downwards because they hold a belief that after eleven thousand moons the dead would rise from their graves and that during this period the earth would turn upside down so that the dead would, on coming back to life, find themselves standing on their feet. Another comic absurdity of the Lilliputians is their manner of writing which is very peculiar, being neither nom the left to the right, like that of the Europeans; nor from the right to the left like that of the Arabians; nor from up to down like that of the Chinese; nor from down to up like that of the Cascagians; but aslant from one comer of the paper to the other "like the ladies in England". Gulliver has to go through an ordeal when, on being informed that he will be shortly impeached on several charges, he finds it necessary to make good his escape from this country.

In Part II of the book we find ourselves with Gulliver in another strange and wonderful land. This land is called **Brobdingnag**. This land is inhabited by **monstrous-looking giants** who are twelve times the height of Gulliver. By contrast with these huge-looking men, Gulliver thinks himself to be as small as the Lilliputians were by contrast with him. Here too Gulliver becomes an object of curiosity for the inhabitants, though for the opposite reason. When Gulliver is first shown by his captor to his wife (who is as huge in size and proportions as her husband), she screams and runs away as a woman in England might do at the sight of a toad or a spider. In other words, Gulliver looks like an insect to the people here. The youngest son in the family of Gulliver's captor lifts Gulliver by the legs and holds him so high in the air that Gulliver begins to tremble with fear. Then Gulliver sees a cat which is three times larger than an ox in England, and he feels greatly alarmed by its fierceness. When the lady of the house begins to suckle her child, Gulliver feels thoroughly disgusted on seeing the huge, monstrous breasts of the

woman, with their nipples about half of the bigness of Gulliver's head. When Gulliver wakes up from his sleep, he is attacked by a couple of rats which are of the size of a big dog. When Gulliver is afterwards bought by the Queen, he becomes a favourite with her. As a consequence, the royal dwarf begins to feel jealous of Gulliver and plays much mischief with him. On one occasion, the dwarf makes Gulliver fall into a large bowl of cream. On another occasion, he thrusts Gulliver's whole body into a bone from which the marrow has been taken out. Gulliver also feels uneasy for another reason. There are too many flies in Brobdingnag. The flies here are very large, like all other creatures, and Gulliver feels much troubled by them as they hum and buzz about his ears. He is also much tormented by the wasps, which are as large as the patridges in England. Referring to the royal kitchen Gulliver says that, if he were to describe the size of the kitchen-grate and the size of the pots and kettles, the reader would perhaps not believe him and think that Gulliver is guilty of exaggeration. There are several mishaps during Gulliver's stay in Brobdingnag. Once an apple, falling from a tree, hits Gulliver on his back and knocks him down flat on his face, because the apples here are also very large. On another occasion, when Gulliver is standing on a grassy plot, there is a sudden shower of hailstones which are nearly eighteen hundred times as large as those in Europe. Gulliver is badly injured by these hailstones. The royal maids of honour often play with Gulliver as if Gulliver were a toy. On one occasion Gulliver is carried off by a monkey which is also very huge, and he is rescued with great difficulty. Eventually Gulliver is carried off by a huge eagle which drops him into the sea from where he is picked up by a passing ship. This is Gulliver's last adventure on his second voyage.

Laputa, the voyage to which is described in Part III of the book, is another wonderful land. Laputa is an island which keeps flying at a height of about two miles from the earth over the continent of Balnibarbi. This in itself is a miracle. The people of Laputa have **strange shapes and faces**. Their heads are all reclined either to the right or to the left, one of their eyes being turned inward and the other directly up to the zenith. Many of the Laputans are followed by flappers who carry in their hands blown bladders fastened to the ends of short sticks. The function of these flappers is to draw the attention of their masters to anything that might need their attention, because the minds of their masters are so occupied with intense speculations that they can neither speak nor listen to others without being roused by some external action. Another strange feature of life on Laputa is that mutton, beef, pudding, and other eatables are given geometrical shapes or the shapes of musical instruments. When these people want to praise the beauty of a woman or any other animal they do so in geometrical or musical terms. The men on this island are so busy in their cogitations that their wives feel compelled to make love to strangers instead of to their husbands. When Gulliver goes to **Lagado**, he witnesses the many experiments which are in **progress at the Academy of Projectors**. There is a project for extracting sunbeams from cucumbers, a project for restoring human excrement to its original food, a new method for building houses by beginning at the roof and working downwards to the foundation, and so on. There are several schemes being developed at the school of political projects also. These are all very amusing and impractical schemes. Gulliver's visit to the island of **Glubbdubdrib** is also very interesting because Gulliver here finds himself in a place where **ghosts and spirits** are in attendance upon the governor and where Gulliver is enabled to hold conversations

with the spirits of such great men of the past as Alexander, Hannibal, Aristotle, Homer, and Brutus. Gulliver also sees a group of immortal people in this place. These immortals are feeling wretched and miserable because they long for death which does not come to them.

The appeal of all the first three voyages for the young reader is manifest from the above summary. There is plenty of **fun and mirth in the accounts of these three voyages**. Indeed, some of the episodes are bound to give rise to boisterous laughter among the readers. In other words, the description of some of the incidents is really hilarious. No wonder that one of the early commentators called Gulliver's Travels a merry work. It is evident, too, that improbability is the keynote of most of the incidents. The grown-up readers, for instance, will not even believe in the existence of Lilliputians and Brobdingnagians. But the young readers are bound to feel excited by descriptions of these strange people and their doings, and will not doubt the existence of pigmies and giants. For them the accounts of these people's life will have a charm of their own.

The **country of the Yahoos** and the Houyhnhnms, described in Part IV, is also a **wonderland**. This is a country in which human beings are no better than beasts, while the horses show themselves to be superior to human beings. The horses or the Houyhnhnms are the noblest conceivable animals. They are wholly governed by reason; they have a language of their own which they are able even to teach to a human being like Gulliver; they have their own excellent customs and methods of government; they are guided mainly by the principles of benevolence and kindness. These strange or marvellous beings are free from all kinds of evil, so much so that there is no word in their language for lying or falsehood. They hold a periodical assembly to discuss their affairs and to take necessary action to rectify things which have gone wrong; they have their methods to control their population; and they do not marry for love or for the pleasures of sex but only to reproduce and yet to keep their members under check. The Yahoos, who symbolize human beings, are on the contrary despicable creatures who arouse our disgust and abhorrence. This part of the story is not likely to appeal to the young mind very much because it is replete with symbolism, the understanding of which is essential for the appreciation of the entire part. In this part, Swift's message is more important than the adventurous elements or the element of wonder and enchantment.

Finally, it must be pointed out that it is **not enough to describe Gulliver's Travels merely as an adventure story or a tale of wonder**. We must recognize that in it Swift has lashed human institutions and human passions. It is a satiric masterpiece in which Swift exposes human follies and absurdities, and the consequences of human irrationality.

The Enlightenment in Gulliver's Travels

Jonathan Swift's novel, Gulliver's Travels outlines a very odd sequence of events that are experienced by a sailor named Lemuel Gulliver. Throughout these adventures, Gulliver finds himself, on four different occasions, accidently coming across different races of peoples and creatures. These races teach him new languages, customs, lessons, and

general knowledge of their own individual societies. These descriptions are many times believed to be Jonathan Swift's way of critiquing The Enlightenment that occurred during the eighteenth-century all over the world. This critique brings a satirical look at religion, morality, equality, and the ability to adapt to other societies.

In Gulliver's first adventure, he comes across the land of Lilliput. In this land, there are two groups of people, the Lilliputans and the Belfescuans. These two groups of people used to be one society until there was a disagreement over how the people were to crack their eggs. The disagreement was whether they should crack their eggs from the large end or the small end of the egg. Because of this disagreement, there was a war and many people died and the Belfescuans decided to move to the other side of the island and start their own society. This disagreement of cracking eggs is a comparison to the religious differences occurring in Europe just before the Enlightenment. Although the Lilliputan's disagreement over cracking eggs is a much more minuscule and quite elementary disagreement than those of religions during the Reformation, there are still some comparisons. The religious reformations began when Martin Luther decided that there were several things about the Catholic Church that he disagreed with. When Martin Luther went to the church to complain about these issues, such as the ability to "buy" indulgences from priests, the church ignored these ideas. Therefore, after posting the 95 Theses on his thoughts for change and spreading his ideas, Luther decided it was time to branch away from the Church. Although Luther was one of the beginning revolutionists to go against Catholicism, there was hundreds of others who followed in his footsteps to create societies that would act in ways that they thought were just. Similarly, the Belfescuans were formed when the then-emperor cut his hand breaking an egg large-end first and decided eggs should in fact be broken small-end first. After this declaration, there was a split among the society and the two societies were formed to break eggs as they pleased.

On Gulliver's second accidental journey, he comes upon a land of giants in Brobdingnag who are a very simple people, it seems. Unaware of the invention of gunpowder, Gulliver demonstrates the purpose of gunpowder to the king of Brobdingnag. The king becomes very frightened and decides that he does not want to have anything to do with the gunpowder, thinking of what kind of physical and moral destruction this could cause to his empire (Swift, 94). This is similar to the ideas of many Enlightenment thinkers, like Cesare Beccaria, who believed that humans should begin taking a more moral and rational approach at punishing criminals. With the absence of gunpowder, Brobdingnag has been able to keep crime rates low and overall morality high, it seems. Swift alludes that the introduction of such a weapon could lead to inhumane practices, such as the unfair punishments that were handed out before the Enlightenment. These unfair punishments however were criticized by many philosophers of the Enlightenment, which sparked more humane practices for punishing criminals.

Slavery is also a big issue during Gulliver's travels. Whether it be when Gulliver was first captured outside of Lilliput, or whether it was during the time he was captured in Brobdingnag. Swift compares Gulliver to a slave during the Enlightenment. Many Enlightenment thinkers were too afraid to abolish slavery in fear of any revolts that

might arise. "Slavery corrupted its victims, destroyed their natural virtue, and crushed their natural love of liberty. Enslaved people, by this logic, were not ready for freedom" . This is how the Lilliputans felt with Gulliver. They were afraid that if they let Gulliver be free all together, that he would be furious and destroy their buildings and kill their citizens. This is why they only allowed Gulliver small freedoms over long periods of time, so they could make sure that he was not a threat to society. With this gradual sense of freedom, Gulliver proved to have adapted to the Lilliputan's society and turned out to be very useful in the community. The Enlightenment thinkers also believed that giving slaves small amounts of freedom would make for an easier transition into society.

In addition to the equality of slaves, another main theme throughout Swift's novel is the idea of equality for all persons. During The Enlightenment, there were social, economic, sexual and many other inequalities among different types of people. Swift incorporates this thought when Gulliver is in the land of the Houyhnhnms. In this land, there are Houyhnhnms, who are in essence a group of intelligent horses. Also, there are Yahoos who are a strange animals that are comparable to a human. The Houyhnhms are much more superior and intellectually advanced than the Yahoos. Although it seems ironical that horses are superior to a human-like being, this is a way of showing how, for example, some thought that men were superior to women. Jean-Jacques Rousseau fought for many rights for people and the idea that people should not be ruled by a government unless they chose to. However, he still believed that men should be superior to women in almost all aspects. This is comparable to the Houyhnhms being superior to all Yahoos, without any regard for advancing the intelligence or social standing of the Yahoos. During the Enlightenment, women, such as Mary Wollstonecraft, began to make strides towards equality with men. Just as Rousseau compared the inequalities of men and women to limiting women's duties to "being a mother and wife", Swift shows that the inequalities of the Houyhnhms and the Yahoos as being very large and that the Yahoos were not to be used for much except labor.

Not only does Swift discuss the ruling of individual groups of people, but he also discussed the point of societies falling under strict rule. In Gulliver's adventure to Laputa, he is told the many ways that the island as a whole is used to rule over the cities on the ground. They rule by using the ultimate power of being able to control weather and cause severe destruction to cities. Swift is alluding that the island of Laputa is similar to that of absolutist rulers in England. Absolutist rulers have almost all powers to do almost anything they wish to those that they rule. However, similar to the city that successfully rebelled against the floating island of Laputa, such philosophers as David Hume and Immanuel Kant taught people that they should only be ruled if and by whom they want to be ruled. In the case in Gulliver's Travels, the city below the island did not want to be ruled by the floating island, so they took action and were able to set up their own government to live by their own society's standards.

Throughout all four islands that Gulliver comes across, he learns a new, totally different, way of living at each island. Whether if this involves a new language at each island, new types of food, or different ways to govern, Gulliver adapts to each and finds strengths in each society's rules and realizes that their rules are well-suited for their specified needs.

This ability for Gulliver to adapt relates to the ability of societies across the world to learn and accept new cultures and ideas from each other during the Enlightenment. This spread of cultures has allowed societies to adapt ideas that allow for the betterment of their society. Although Swift takes a very comical view of this using examples such as the fact that the peoples of Laputa must be hit with "flappers" in order to talk or to listen, this still shows that some societies act differently and Gulliver had to adapt also by being hit several times on the ears and mouth while in conversation with the Laputans.

Throughout Jonathan Swift's novel, Gulliver's Travels, there are many satirical relationships between Swift's adventures and the events of The Enlightenment of the eighteenth-century. These relationships are usually very extreme, but do provide parallels, sometimes criticizing, main themes of events during the Enlightenment. Throughout his travels, Gulliver becomes a better-rounded person from interaction with creatures of all sorts. Similarly to Gulliver, the Enlightenment period put the world as a whole under massive changes in technology, culture and religion. These changes have allowed for the successes and downfalls of today's society as we know it.

Feminist Approach to Gulliver’s Travels

Swift's view of woman was influenced by the times and the society that he lived in. The paucity of love in author's childhood and the little exposure he had to women when he was growing up also attributed to the corrosive personal isolation. Some critics like Lord Orrery, Middleton Murry and Norman O. Brown have suggested that Swift was a misogynist, because of the way in which he is attacking women's physical aspect. Jonathan Swift often mentions the female body with repugnance. He very often dwells with exaggerated horror at the sight of a woman’s body performing its normal bodily functions. Many have concluded from this that he hated women and considered them inferior to men. Gulliver hates humanity through women. Swift portrays women as inferior creatures, comparing them to lusty, dirty, and ignorant animals, ultimately leading to Gulliver's disgust in women in general at the end of the novel. In the moral domain, women inspire as much aversion as they do on the physical side.

In Lilliput, Gulliver illustrates the carelessness of women, when he retells the story of the fire. The only way to extinguish the fire is through urination, an act so lude and grotesque that a woman could not handle it. The queen is autocratic and infuriated when Gulliver urinates on her apartment to keep it from burning. She decrees that public urination be banned and that the contaminated building be left as it is. The method by which Gulliver describes this event, leads the reader to believe that only a woman would act so harshly to his actions.

In "A Voyage to Brobdingnag", when the farmer shows Gulliver to his wife, she screams with disgust, the way a woman would react to a bug.

Gulliver in Brobdingnag discovers that his sense was more acute in proportion to his littleness. He sees everything magnified, he examines everything as if through a

microscope. Looking up close at the women's anatomy, Gulliver notices that their skin seems very rough, discolored and greasy. Also he has difficulty breathing because of their strong and repugnant scent. He is disgusted by the sight of their huge pores, spots, pimples, hair and moles and even more repulsed by one maiden who places Gulliver on her nipple to play. Swift uses the Maids of Honor to illustrate flaws in a woman's beauty that are generally overlooked or hidden. Gulliver expresses his aversion to their naked bodies. They were, "very far from being a tempting sight", and gave him, "any other emotions than those of horror and disgust". Gulliver makes the connection that the women of England, that he normally finds so beautiful, have the same flaws, but he just does not see them as easily because they are of the same size: "This made me reflect upon the fair skins of our English ladies, who appear so beautiful to us, only because they are of our own size, and their defects not to be seen but through a magnifying glass, where we find by experiment that the smoothest and whitest skins look rough and course and ill coloured." Only the women are described as having such horrible discolored skin. Men had it too, but he only brought attention to the women.

When Gulliver describes a grotesque vision of humanity in Brobdingnag, he generally uses women as the objects of repulsion. It is the Empress who eats in a grotesque fashion. When Gulliver sees beggars and homeless, he describes in unkind detail the lice crawling on their clothes. The homeless beggar with cancerous breast is a horrific sight to Gulliver as he can see into the crevices and cavities in her body, destroyed by vermin and disease. That is "the most horrible spectacle that ever an European eye beheld". Swift deploys the rhetorical "instruments" necessary for such disavowal figuring the decaying body as female.

In Brobdingnag, Gulliver is shocked to see the "monstrous breast" of a nurse giving suck in front of him. Even the act of feeding does not escape his disgust: "I must confess no object ever disgusted me so much as the sight of her monstrous breast..."

The flying island of Laputa (from the Spanish la puta, "the whore") has been the object of several feminist discussions particularly to show that women are repeatedly described separately from men. The women are described by geometric shape and mathematical figures. Furthermore, the women are not allowed to explore or travel off the island without specific doctrine from the King. In Laputa, a wife is someone who would rather prostitute herself than stay with her neglectful husband. According to Susan Bruce, Gulliver's Voyage to Laputa enacts men's ultimate inability to control women's bodies and desires.

In Houyhnhnms women were also supposed to be gross, lusty, sexual, benevolent and disgusting as the description of the Yahoo female shows: "The females . . . had long lank hair on their heads and only a sort of down on the rest of their bodies. . . Their dugs hung between their fore feet and often reached almost to the ground as they walked." A young female Yahoo gets "inflamed with desire" at the sight of Gulliver. Never does Swift suggest they are more than what he presents them to be, nor does he suggest that they think, feel, love or are morally responsible. The Yahoo female who, driven by sexual craving, throws herself on Gulliver is a strikingly horrific image.

While the Houyhnhnm females are sexually modest and controlled, the Yahoo females are sexually aggressive: "A female Yahoo would often stand behind a bank or a bush, to gaze on the young males . . . and then appear, and hide, using many antic gestures and grimaces . . . and when any of the males advanced she would slowly retire, looking often back."

Swift is attracted to women on one hand but repelled by them on the other. Women's artifice and smells, to Swift, must have been both erotic and disgusting. We never hear the voices of the women however. Gulliver encounters several women in his travels but we never hear their opinions. We never find out how women think or what they feel about their own society. We also never find out what they think about Gulliver's society. The reason for this is that women did not have figurative voices. The conversations that he had with the queen, the lady and the women in Laputa are not brought up because it doesn't matter. Women's voices were not important.

When Gulliver returns home from the Land of Houyhnhnms, he finds the smell of his wife and children revolting, intolerable, due to his experiences with the Yahoos.

A closer examination of Swift's work shows that attacking women is a misconception. Swift did not believe, as his society did, that a woman should not be educated. Although he does utilize the feminine gender as a vehicle for his social thoughts, his text is more concerned with satirizing humanity, in order to express his ideal for their existence. Swift is exaggerating the characteristics of each society, so that they can be clearly seen. In fact, Swift perceives women to be on an essentially equal plane with men in three different areas. These areas are as follows: social accountability, educational abilities and purpose of existence. Actually, considering the century in which Swift lived, his views are extraordinary and differ drastically from the views of most of his contemporaries.

Jonathan Swift's writings convey that he believed that women should hold a larger role in English society. Swift also dismissed the idea that a woman should be valued on her physical appearance, rather than her actions as a human being.

Swift believed that people typically behaved immorally. Swift did not judge men and women separately for their actions, but looked at them as equally contributing factors in a society that was plagued by immorality, injustice and corruption. Swift writes "the handsomest among these Maids of Honor, a pleasant, frolicsome girl of sixteen, would sometimes set me astride one of her nipples..." The sexual reference and the attention to the girl's age, signify the lack of morals instilled in some young women of Swift's time. Swift makes examples of these women, not so much as to degrade them, but to condemn their behavior.

Swift is bashing, as much as the behavior of men and women in general. Swift puts women on the same level as men, where they are to be judged based upon their capabilities, and of being a worthwhile person, instead of an object of beauty. He goes to the extreme of using bodily functions as a means to symbolize equality, which also serves to express the ridiculousness of the entire situation. Essentially what Swift is

saying is that the value of a woman should be based on who she is and not what she appears or what a man desires her to be.

Jonathan Swift desired a better human race than existed in the 1700's. He wanted a society in which women were educated equally with men. He wanted a society in which men and women placed a great deal of importance on their virtue, morals and intelligence. Through his satirical views of the human condition, Swift illustrates the weaknesses of mankind and his own ideal for the improvement of humanity.

Science Fiction and Utopia in Gulliver's Travels

Jonathan Swifts Gulliver's Travels is one the most famous satires written in the history of English literature. Many critics consider this satire as one of the earliest science fiction writings, while many others exclude this book from the science fiction genre. Although Gulliver's Travels may not completely fall in to the category of science fiction novels, but it shares some major elements with them that makes them become close together. One this major elements, is the utopian and the dystopian outlook conveyed in this work.

'Cognition', with its rational, logical implications, refers to that aspect of science fiction that prompts us to try and understand, to comprehend the alien landscape of a given science fiction book, film or story. 'Estrangement' is a term from Brecht, more usually rendered in English-language criticism as 'alienation'; and in this context it refers to that element of science fiction that we recognize as different, that 'estranges' us from the familiar and every day. If the science fiction text were entirely concerned with 'estrangement' then we would not be able to understand it; if it were entirely to do with 'cognition' then it would be scientific or documentary rather than science fiction. According to Suvin, both features need to be present; and it is this co-presence that allows science fiction both relevance to our world and the position to challenge the ordinary, the taken-for-granted. The main 'formal device' of Suvin's version of science fiction is the novum.

Robert Scholes, while appreciates the cognitivism of science fiction, also tries to add structural elements to make the analysis more solid on the matter. Jones's ideas on science and novum are also identical with what Suvin says (10-11). Broderick also appreciats the previous idea as Roberts says: "Broderick develops and deepens the Suvinian sense of 'cognitive estrangement' and Scholes's 'structural fabulation'"(13), but he also tries to add more other factors to it and also objects on many science fiction writings that do not have the required quality.

What is evident in all these defintions is that they all agree on the three aspects Suvin defines for science fiction and take them as the foreground of their studies. Therefore relying on these critics, one may conclude that a work of science fiction is the one that uses esrangement as a literary technique in order to achieve a cognitive end in an imaginatory framework or novum.

In Gulliver's Travels, the notion of estrangement can be traced in all four books without difficulty. The first book depicts the journey to Lilliput. The little man's themselves create the estranged effect as well as the setting of their land with small trees and a village with small houses:

When I found myself on my feet, I looked about me, and must confess I never beheld a more entertaining prospect. The country around appeared like a continued garden, and the enclosed fields, which were generally forty feet square, resembled so many beds of flowers. These fields were intermingled with woods of half a stang, and the tallest trees, as I could judge, appeared to be seven feet high. I viewed the town on my left hand, which looked like the painted scene of a city in a theatre. (10)

The size difference although creates an estrangement effect in this book but does not satisfy the notion of "novum", as the Lilliputian world resembles the world of the author or the narrator in this case. Both worlds consist of similar social and political systems of monarchy and hierarchies while one of the main aspects of science fiction is to create a world which is completely different in social and political grounds to the world of the author: novum. This does not happen in this book. As well as this point, one can also add that no scientific matter is also considered in this book to contribute to the science part of science fiction. Therefore this book lacks the notion of novum and the scientific part of the SF genre. It can be concluded in here that this book is merely a satire on the British monarchy and society.

A similar analysis can be done for book two, where Gulliver on his second voyage to "Brobdingnag" meets the "Giants". The setting again has been estranged by the thought of giant men and giant landscape and towns. But the notion of novum can't be concluded from it as it again consists of similar social structures. As for scientific matters, again there are no significant scientific elements to be discussed. Overall both books one and two fail to be considered as a science fiction work.

The third book however can be considered with more concern. The "Floating Island" of "Laputa" itself contains all science fictional elements. It is based on a pseudo-scientific fact that a piece of land may float and move about space via a controlled electromagnetic field. The whole estranged setting of the Laputans reflected in their clothing, language based on abstract sciences such as mathematics and music, their strange anti geometrical behaviors, their interest in celestial bodies contribute to the estrangement effect required for a science fiction work. Their social and political systems also vary greatly, as the king had used the floating island as a weapon to control and punish the disobeying towns-fixing the island on top of their towns and depriving them out of sun and rain; and at the end had failed and is trapped to stay on the island forever.

So Swift is able to present a novum society, a novum world in his third book of Gulliver's Travels where conventional monarchy system has to some limits failed to control its people by implying force. Another important part of this book is "the academy". Gulliver tells us that the Laputans make him feel neglected and that he is bored by their

constantly talking about mathematics, music and geometry and etc. He is told that he can visit the academy. In his visit to the academy he finds absurd treatments of science and language and he becomes even more shocked. The position of mad scientist in an educational and research facility itself contributes to an estrangement effect in this book.

But the other important complementary factor needed to put this chapter among SF writings is "cognition". This chapter by showing us a different kind of society and also by the way it presents the academy brings to mind questions about man, knowledge and the limits in them. Questions that initiate from the usage of science and technology (the giant magnet of the floating island) and that ends in the mere philosophy of knowledge showed in its absurd end (in the academy). These questions lay among epistemological questions aimed to give cognition. Therefore the third book of Gulliver's Travels can be considered as a science fiction story.

The fourth book of Gulliver's Travels is perhaps the most favorable among the whole book. The setting is a forest similar to that we find in our own world but what can create an estrangement effect is perhaps the people who populate it: the talking, intelligent horses, "the Houyhnhnms" and the savage human beings or "Yahoos". Nothing scientific again goes on, even though horses speak in their own language, there is no reference to any sort of scientific explanation, so it is considered as mere fantasy. The comparison between the Yahoos who look like man but act like animals and the horses that look like animals and act and speak as man is interesting as it raises questions that lead to cognition. In any how any satirical work leads us to cognition as it questions the way we live, it criticizes our societies, our habits, our ways of life and thinking; but it does not necessarily have to have science fictional elements. This is the case with Gulliver's Travels, except for its third book.

But Gulliver's Travels can easily fall into the sub-genre of science fiction: Utopia. Michael Holquist in his article "How to Play Utopia: Some Brief Notes on the Distinctiveness of Utopian Fiction" explains the different aspects of utopia by comparing it to the game of chess and they are: abstraction of the society, the order that reigns in a Utopia, the need for limits, borders and exclusions (time and space),its inflexibility of mending rules as it is perfect in itself and the fact that it takes place in a peculiar time and place, a place "outside our world" and a "time off our clock" and its arbitrariness. (Rose 130)

Utopia has … is a simplification, a radical stylization of something which in experience is of enormous complexity, often lacking any apparent symmetry. Chess substitutes for war, Utopia for society. In each case what was rough is made smooth, what was chaotic is made orderly. (132)

By applying these rules to Jonathan Swift's Gulliver's Travels, one can see how in the first three books Swift pictures dystopia in three sets of societies of little, giant and normal sized men and how in the fourth book, in a society of horses he pictures a utopia for his readers. All the four societies are found outside our world as a result of a journey to unknown places, unknown lands. So it is obvious that they are all set outside our place and time. They are all abstracts and are arbitrary as they only know their own

existence and are cut off from the rest of the world and they even neglect the existence of other worlds.

The societies showed in all four books are to be compared with the society of England in Swift's time. The Lilliputians are smaller creatures; they are depicted in a way to show the falsies of Swift's England. The election of government members done by "rope dancing" for example is showed here to ridicule the election of government members in England. The constant wars between them and the "Blefuscus" that started over the way they should eat an egg resembles the constant wars between England and other countries such as Spain and France and this satire is aimed to show the dystopia that leans on unimportant affairs and loses many men for it.

The second book shows the small mindedness of England's society in comparison to the giants. The giant's king is unable to understand Gulliver's explanations about England, the necessity of wars "gun powder", etc. The line between dystopia and utopia somehow merge in this chapter as the giants' world has its perfect and imperfect sides. Poverty and hierarchies still remain in this society but the notion of peace is something fixed that its lack is not understood by them. The order reigns more fully in this kingdom.

Laputa depicts man's desire for knowledge and technology and shows it as something bad and destructive, which results in force, isolation and madness. The dystopia depicted here is more understandable as this book also possesses stronger science fictional roots. It has been shown that the knowledgably, intelligent people of Laputa eventually used their knowledge for force and power but they failed and they were forced to stay on the floating island and never leave it. The academy again is another good example of how this society and its mere reliance on knowledge lead to destruction and decay. Another important thing that happens is the children who are born with a red mark on their foreheads and are immortal. Swift shows us through these immortals that immortality is not desirable and it again leads to decay.

The "Houyhnhnms" in the fourth book are the only race that has achieved a utopian society. They are wise and are deprived out of all negative desires and qualities. They are shown in contrast to the "Yahoos". The world of the Houyhnhnms is so perfect that Gulliver does not want to ever leave it. But as explained above, utopia is so perfect that it becomes unbendable to change, so the Houyhnhnms refuse to accept him as a part of their societies, because accepting him means a change and may result in the decay of their system. So Gulliver is forced to leave. When he arrives home he buys two horses and wants to repeat the utopian experience by conversing with the horses. But utopia is a place out of our world and its experience is not repeatable.

Jonathan Swift's Gulliver's Travels shares some aspects of science fiction genre in its use of the estrangement technique and the use of utopia and dystopia in its context. But overall the thing that brings this satire close to science fiction is mainly the way it makes the readers think. The epistemological questions that are raised in this book among our realization of social faults and the depiction of man in several conditions with its strengths and weakness both in body and mind, all lead to a "cognition" that are

promised by a good science fiction story. Therefore although Gulliver's Travels does not fall completely in to the genre of science fiction, but it could have been one of the main inspirations and predecessors of this genre.

Exploring the Humanity in Gulliver's Travels

The wars which is portrayed between the Lilliputians and the Blefuscians seems to be interesting and well mentioned since the Lilliputians and the Blefuscians were only 1/12 in height or 1/1728 in volume when compared to Gulliver. Gulliver confronted to his first war which was more like a dispute over the manner of eating an egg. Swift mentions in the book about a former king who seemed to take the personal right from his people by telling them to eat the egg from the small end instead of the large end. Swift through this tried to portray the nature of dictatorship where a dominant ruler oppresses his subjects, which even continues in present day scenario. He also tried to portray how a ridiculous act like this can cause a war which continued through generations, when the people actually continued to fight without realizing the reason, a trend which reflects even in today's society where a mere fight/war causes so much of loss but still people fail to understand why they are actually fighting.

Swift seemed to mock at the nature of contemporary wars or conflicts which are fought by the people in order to win control over some trifling matters, like to win more wealth or property as well as to get access to more power. Swift also uses the family to explain the extent of war by pointing out that not only war can destroy nations but it can also destroy the strong bonds of family.

Swift expresses a satire on war with the incident that Gulliver visits a man who can bring to life important figures or war heroes from the past. This is another example to point out that war is really very influential on society. Later on in the land of the horses, it is observed that there is no conflict or war, but rather it reveals a disintegration of societies in the form of separation to avoid those conflicts. The land is split into two societies of the barbaric Yahoos and that of the peaceful and logical horses. However, Gulliver understood that life seems to look beautiful without any war or conflict. He desires to live in this peaceful society of horses, but his nature of conflict seems to have got deep roots. He is unable to live up to the expectations of the horses. Swift is trying to point out that people want to live their lives in peaceful manner but it is also true that some form of conflict exists within the society. People constantly fight with one another since they never feel satisfied with what they possess. Therefore, they hold grudges against one another which cause constant turmoil.

In the book it is shown that war often seem to create the social classes, which is evident most highly when Gulliver encounters the giants. He comes from a world that considers him a giant and therefore, he offers little more entertainment to the giants, but that is in order to get him to the queen's palace. Swift argues upon the fact that upper class always tend to look down upon the poor people in society. Similarly, it is noticed that the Queen can afford to hire new people who can render better service to her by bringing her more entertainment, therefore replacing others who were previously in the service.

This is a common fact which is evident even in a modern society. Swift therefore, trying to point us that society seems to be divided into two strata- the rich and the poor. The upper greedy rich people tend to exercise their control over the poor people in the society, thus this seems to be the basic human instinct which drives the upper classes not to treat the lower strata people equally.

Gulliver's views on certain issues started changing as the story goes on. He encounters the real world when he visits the horse society, where he found life is without violence or oppression. He understood the fact that man as superior species is not true. He finds that power can be gained not through the means of domination but through tolerance. The horse society can at any moment destroy or cause harm to the Yahoos but that would never happen since they know that would make no difference between them and their enemy. When Gulliver witnesses the destruction of all his belongings his true nature is portrayed. Swift claims that human beings tend to find the violent means and methods easier to win over a situation rather than resolving an issue through peaceful means.

The story of Gulliver's Travels pushes the aspect of imagination, which reflects a strong example of the use of satire to make society see things from a different point of view. The lessons that Gulliver learns throughout his entire journey focuses on the different nature of human beings. It creates the structure of a modern society and reveals that all kinds of wrong methods are used to control it. The story of Gulliver focuses not only into human culture but also explores the true nature of the human beings living in that society. It also points out to what extent potential lies in patience, determination, as well as in perception. Swift applied his satiric technique to offer an important message to the readers by pointing to the fact when Gulliver came back to his own home, he realized that his attitude towards looking at surrounding things have changed completely, since he no longer desire to be a part of the human race which only reflects their greedy attitude rather than treating each other with respect and love. He started disrespecting his leaders whom he looked at once with a feeling of proud. Gulliver developed a positive attitude towards his own family and learnt to respect it and preserve it. He in fact, recognized the true meaning of life and tried to analyse things from a rational point of view. He understood his true identity and realized that one should take a sense of pride of where they are from, and treats everyone with love and upheld the ideals of brotherhood to promote peace everywhere.

Gullible Gulliver and His Hoaxes

Gulliver's Travels is a brilliant masterpiece that has stood the pressures of time. It is a witty (and sometimes biting) and satirical portrait of modern London. Like Alice in Wonderland, it is also an amazing book containing brilliant science fiction and travel literature, but at the same times it effortlessly parodies both. These facts are

acknowledged by its readers. However, what most readers tend to forget is the continuous comical interlace that sustains the book from becoming a boring lecture on man. In "Part 4: A Voyage to The Country of Houyhnhnms", readers have mistaken the comedy as serious facts and therefore are bewildered by Swift's cruel and dismal portrayal of the European man. Unable to explain Swift's wounding tone and dialogue they have dismissed him as a crazy, rampant misanthrope.

I on the other hand, reject this coupling of Gulliver's actions as akin to Swift. I believe that Swift has been thought misanthropic for several reasons: (1) both Houyhnhnms and Yahoos have been symbolized incorrectly and their representations have been misinterpreted; it is not Swift but Gulliver who equates Yahoos with humans (2) the usage of the beast-fable tradition was not to be taken seriously, it was a genre of satire quite popular in London and was meant to invoke comedy. (3) After Gulliver's voyage from Houyhnhnm-land, critics have interpreted Gulliver's disgust for mankind in Swift. Gulliver should not be substituted for Swift. At the most our "misanthropic" sea captain has become the comedic satirical butt of travel yarns, where upon taking one too many journey he has lost his marbles.

I have found, from my limited knowledge that most critics have misunderstood the representation of the Houyhnhnms and the Yahoos. That the Houyhnhnms symbolize Swift's version of the ideal man, and the Yahoo's the current man, is a fact that that I disagree on.

Gulliver was proud to be associated with the "perfection of nature," the Houyhnhnms. He was proud of his exposure to the Houyhnhnms, their rationality, stoic nature and simple wisdom. Swift never meant for us to become like the Houyhnhnms, because what makes us humans is the exact thing that these horses lack. As Monk states, "Houyhnhnmland is the perfect rationalistic Utopia and the horses are the embodiment of reason" (67). They lack in every emotion and prefer to solve their matters systematically while maintaining control. Their economy is controlled by a "democratic council" and "government is entirely conducted by periodic assemblies" (Monk 67). There is no hatred, selfish desires, or lust and everyone is loved equally. "Courtship, love, presents, jointures, settlements, have no place in their thoughts" (1376).They practice eugenics, and "marriage" for them is just to produce suitable offspring-therefore, even the amount of offspring is monitored. As one can see, the Houyhnhnms do not possess any of our vices, but they do not possess any of our qualities either. This was not Swift's version of the ideal man. I am in an agreement with Monk when he states that it is Gulliver, not Swift, who is fascinated by the Houyhnhnms; it is Gulliver "who aspires to rise above the human condition and to become pure intelligence as these horses and angels are" (68).

The Yahoos are one of the most important symbols in the book, as they warn us what humanity could become, in the absence of reason. I support Monk's opinion, where he states that Yahoos were not mean to represent the current man, but the "bestial element in man, the unenlightened, unregenerate, irrational element in human nature" (67). This is why the female Yahoo, wishes to have sex with Gulliver, and why the Houyhnhnms lump Gulliver with the Yahoos. Besides, Yahoos are amphibious creatures and unlike us, they walk on all fours. In addition, Gulliver observes, that they "appear to be the most unteachable of all animals, their capacities never reaching higher than to draw or carry burthens" (1375). Gulliver disgusted by his relation to the Yahoos and distraught by the Houyhnhnms grouping grows to hate himself for being a "Yahoo." Furthermore, when Gulliver finds a connection between "human depravity as they exist in European society" and the "society and conducts of the Yahoo" he is repelled by the similarity (Monk 68). During the three years in Houyhnhnmland Gulliver finds all the vices of humankind and he concludes that both Yahoo and man are "cunning, malicious, treacherous and revengeful" (1375). Here in Houyhnhnmland, there were no "factions of parties; no encouragers to vice by seducement; [...] no cheating shopkeepers; [...and] no scoundrels raised from the dust upon the merit of their vices or nobility thrown into it on account of their virtues." As Monk says, Gulliver was aiming to cross the boundaries of human rationality, into the angels, but since he could not, he resorted on equating himself and the rest of humankind to Yahoos.

When the kind Don Pedro, a man much like Gulliver before his madness, saves Gulliver, Gulliver instead of thanking him his tries to "leap into the sea and swim for [his] life" (pg 1385). Sadly, Gulliver is not able to see the hospitality of the Houyhnhnms in Don Pedro, because he only sees the Yahoo Don Pedro and can no longer recognize the traits of kindness and tolerance in a human being. What Swift is trying to demonstrate here are the two dualities, the Houyhnhnms and the Yahoos that make up humankind. Gulliver representing humanity is a blend of both dualities; deviating towards either pole would be disastrous. Gulliver makes the mistake of pursuing only the Houyhnhnm pole; therefore, the rest of his society alienates him. Additionally, he commits the same error of the Houyhnhnms in equating human beings with Yahoos. Sadly, he is left in a place where is accepted neither as a Yahoo, or a Houyhnhm, for he has betrayed the middle link.

I believe, that most readers can agree that the Yahoos are disgusting characters. Nevertheless, according to Stone, Swift's readers would not have only found them disgusting, but his "audience [would have] had good reason for appreciating the cleverness of what may revolt us" (368). According to Stone's sources, "Yahoo like Hottentots, Hodmadods, and Indians" were common in the time of writing and Swift and his readers were familiar with them (369). Furthermore, to even suggest the

idea that the gross Yahoos, "were faintly like [them] would evoke laughter" among Swift's readers (Stone 369). Stone believes that what Swift was using was "theriophilism." Theriophilism is a belief that "beasts are more prudent, temperate, and chaste than men, and more restrained in their desires; their pleasures are natural ones, they have no useless arts, they are clever at learning, and so on" (Stone 370). These "beast-fables" were a popular concept with Swift's London. Moreover, readers were familiar with this concept of animals possessing human rationality, and therefore found it more amusing. I am not saying that all of Swift's satire is to be taken comically, but the exaggeration of the characters, particularly the Houyhnhnms in Part 4 is quite comical. Where is "horse sense" that enables the Houyhnhnms to build houses, or to thread needles? Gulliver himself is "much surprised" (1359) when he witnesses the Houyhnhnms raising their hoofs to their mouth, while eating.

Stone believes that this type of gifted animal belongs "to the same group as Pliny's crabs which reach the oyster by throwing pebbles between its open shells so that they cannot close, and as Martin Martin's dexterous seals, which eat no fish till they first take off the skin" (371). In addition, there are also recent media references to these kinds of gifted animals. For example, Alice in Wonderland has its fair share of gifted animals, such as the Caterpillar, the Cheshire Cat and the Jabberwocky all of whose dialogues are human-like and comical. The Caterpillar who advises Alice to ponder on important issues resembles the rational mind of the Houyhnhnms; however just like the horses, when he smokes his Hookah the Caterpillar is as funny as the Houyhnhnms reciting poetry. Stone believe that Swift employed the usage of the beast-fables, for comical reasons and "simply to wound man's pride [and to] reduce his arrogance" (370).

Gulliver, our narrator is a middle-class English sea captain. He is not a brilliant satirist, essayist or writer; on the other hand, Gulliver is quite dull and sometimes a bore. This is why I wonder why critics and readers sometimes substitute Swift for Gulliver's disgust for mankind and when he pursues his "misanthropic" adventures. According to Stone, the protagonist of Swift's misanthropic comedy is, "if anything, is the scornful reader of travel books gone a-traveling himself" (372). Why is it then poor Gulliver has lost his wits? First, what most tend to forget is that Gulliver has been living with the Houyhnhnms for 3 years without any human company. Lonely Gulliver has no humans to converse with, share his views, or support him-he has no one to agree or disagree with when the Houyhnhnms declare him a "gifted" Yahoo. Secondly, his closest brethren, the Yahoos have mistreated him, who infuriate Gulliver and as a result, he distances himself from them. As Stone says, "his allegiance [to the Houyhnhnms] was only a natural one" but tragic as his mind becomes temporarily unstable (373).

Examples of Gulliver's derangement or "misanthropic" adventures are when he stuffs his nostrils with "rue or sometimes with tobacco" (1385), at the "touch of that odious animal, [his wife he falls] into a swoon", and to top it all off, he has great conversations with his stone horses for "at least four hours every day" (1386). As I imagine these instances, instead of feeling Gulliver's misanthropy, I feel the comedy that Swift has created. Don Quixote a parallel of Gulliver, goes mad from reading too many chivalric romances, and finds examples of them in the mere instances of life. Gulliver, in return goes mad from living in isolation and because of his awe for the horses (his only role models), he "denounces all of mankind in a list of vices that is magnified to absurdity" (Stone 373). An example, of Gulliver's madness, is Gulliver's wife who used to be "lovely, chaste and submissive" (Stone 373), has now become a "ranting, lewd expensive" wife (1380). Three years before, in Houyhnhnmland Gulliver stated, "there were a few great lovers of mankind, at that time, than myself" (1359). However, at the end, he criticizes the European man in his rant against the "backbiters, pickpockets, bawds, buffoons, tedious talkers, [and] fops, bullies, drunkards..." (1380); we can safely conclude that Gulliver is not the same man he was before. Agreeing with Stone, I believe that, "Swift is employing the familiar technique of mock-serious satire...like the pseudo-misanthropic spectator and the beast-fabulists" (Stone 373). I am not saying that all of Part 4 of the Travels is a satirical comedy, for Swift did want us to learn a lesson on the moral dangers European man was approaching, but I believe that Gulliver's return was set to lighten the mood, not to pronounce Swift as a misanthropic man.

Gulliver's Travel is an amazing book, which encompasses various genres in one book. From satire that challenges and entertains, to a children's story, to a developed Science Fiction, Gulliver's Travel is at the same time a humorous and grave masterpiece where its readers are educated without being bored. I believe the Travels have stood to be popular, because of its slippery and controversial nature, where critics and readers are never sure about Swift's intention of writing the Travels. I agree with Monk and Stone, that Swift never meant for Part 4: A Voyage to the Country of Houyhnhnms to be a tale that ends in misanthropy. Yes, Swift was tired of the "sinfulness and folly of mankind" (Monk 71) but I do not think he had deemed humankind hopeless. By examining the Houyhnhnms and the Yahoos we understand that dualities that make up human nature, the rational and the sensual. Man is incomplete without either, and through Gulliver, Swift has illustrated what becomes of a man when he pursues only the rational. Through the Yahoo, we receive a warning from Swift where he poses the question of whether man is doomed to be corrupt or that he becomes corrupted. Overall, the last voyage of Gulliver's Travels is one that is comic, serious and reformative.

The Redress of Poetry

SEAMUS HEANEY; 1939-2013

Seamus Heaney, the eldest of his nine brothers and sisters, was born in April 1939. His father dealt mainly in cattle besides having a small farm of some fifty acres in County Deny in Northern Ireland. Heaney's mother belonged to a family called McCann whose connections were more with the modern world than with the traditional rural economy. His parentage thus contains both the Ireland of the cattle-herding Gaelic past and the Ulster of the Industrial Revolution. He considers this to have been a significant tension in his background, something which corresponds to another inner tension, also inherited from his parents, namely that between speech and silence. His father was conspicuously thrifty of talk and his mother notably ready to speak out, a circumstance which Seamus Heaney believes to have been fundamental to the quarrel with himself out of which his poetry arises.

Heaney grew up as a country boy and attended the local primary school. As a very young child, he watched American soldiers on military exercises in the local fields, in preparation for the Normandy invasion of 1944. They were stationed at an aerodrome which had been built a mile or so from his home and once again Heaney has taken this image of himself as a consciousness poised between 'history and ignorance' as representative of the nature of his poetic life and development. Even though his family left the farm where he was reared in 1953, and even though his life since then has been a series of moves farther and farther away from his birthplace, the departures have been more geographical than psychological: rural County Deny is the 'country of the mind' where much of Heaney's poetry is still grounded.

When he was twelve years of age, Seamus Heaney won a scholarship to St. Columb's College, a Catholic boarding school situated in the city of Derry, forty miles away from the home farm. This first departure, for him, from Mossbawn was the decisive one. It would be followed in years to come by a transfer to Belfast where he lived between 1957 and 1972, and by another move from Belfast to the Irish Republic where Heaney has made his home, and then, since 1982, by regular, annual periods of teaching in America. All of these subsequent shifts and developments were dependent, however, upon that original journey from Mossbawn which the poet has described as a removal from "the earth of farm labour to the heaven of education." It is not surprising, then, that this move has turned out to be a recurrent theme in his work, from "Digging", the first poem in his first book, through the much more orchestrated treatment of it in "Alphabets" (The Haw Lantern, 1987), to its most recent appearance in "A Sofa in the Forties" which was published this year in The Spirit Level.

At St. Columb's College, Heaney was taught Latin and Irish, and these languages, together with the Anglo-Saxon which he would study while a student of Queen's

University, Belfast, were determining factors in many of the developments and retrenchments which have marked his progress as a poet. The first verses he wrote when he was a young teacher in Belfast in the early 1960s and many of the best known poems in North, his important volume published in 1975, are linguistically tuned to the Anglo-Saxon note in English. His poetic line was much more resolutely stressed and packed during this period than it would be in the eighties and nineties when the "Mediterranean" elements in the literary and linguistic heritage of English became more pronounced. Station Island (1984) reveals Dante, for example, as a crucial influence, and echoes of Virgil—as well as a translation from Book VI of The Aeneid—are to be found in Seeing Things (1991). Heaney's early study of Irish bore fruit in the translation of the Middle Irish story of Suibhne Gealt in Sweeney Astray (1982) and in several other translations and echoes and allusions: the Gaelic heritage has always been part of his references and remains culturally and politically central to the poet and his work.

Heaney's poems first came to public attention in the mid-1960s when he was active as one of a group of poets who were subsequently recognized as constituting something of a "Northern School" within Irish writing. Although Heaney is stylistically and temperamentally different from such writers as Michael Longley and Derek Mahon (his contemporaries), and Paul Muldoon, Medbh McGuckian and Ciaran Carson (members of a younger Northern Irish generation), he does share with all of them the fate of having been born into a society deeply divided along religious and political lines, one which was doomed moreover to suffer a quarter-century of violence, polarization and inner distrust. This had the effect not only of darkening the mood of Heaney's work in the 1970s, but also of giving him a deep preoccupation with the question of poetry's responsibilities and prerogatives in the world, since poetry is poised between a need for creative freedom within itself and a pressure to express the sense of social obligation felt by the poet as citizen. The essays in Heaney's three main prose collections, but especially those in The Government of the Tongue (1988) and The Redress of Poetry (1995), bear witness to the seriousness which this question assumed for him as he was coming into his own as a writer.

These concerns also lie behind Heaney's involvement for a decade and a half with Field Day, a theatre company founded in 1980 by the playwright Brian Friel and the actor Stephen Real. Here, he was also associated with the poets Seamus Deane and Tom Paul, and the singer David Hammond in a project which sought to bring the artistic and intellectual focus of its members into productive relation with the crisis that was ongoing in Irish political life. Through a series of plays and pamphlets (culminating in Heaney's case in his version of Sophocles' Philoctetes which the company produced and toured in 1990 under the title, The Cure at Troy), Field Day contributed greatly to the vigour of the cultural debate which flourished throughout the 1980s and 1990s in Ireland.

Heaney's beginnings as a poet coincided with his meeting the woman whom he was to marry and who was to be the mother of his three children. Marie Devlin, like her husband, came from a large family, several of whom are themselves writers and artists, including the poet's wife who has recently published an important collection of retellings of the classic Irish myths and legends (Over Nine Waves, 1994). Marie Heaney has been

central to the poet's life, both professionally and imaginatively, appearing directly and indirectly in individual poems from all periods of his oeuvre right down to the most recent, and making it possible for him to travel annually to Harvard by staying on in Dublin as custodian of the growing family and the family home.

The Heaneys had spent a very liberating year abroad in 1970/71 when Seamus was a visiting lecturer at the Berkeley campus of the University of California. It was the sense of self-challenge and new scope which he experienced in the American context that encouraged him to resign his lectureship at Queen's University (1966-72) not long after he returned to Ireland, and to move to a cottage in County Wicklow in order to work full time as a poet and free-lance writer. A few years later, the family moved to Dublin and Seamus worked as a lecturer in Carysfort College, a teacher training college, where he functioned as Head of the English Department until 1982, when his present arrangement with Harvard University came into existence. This allows the poet to spend eight months at home without teaching in exchange for one semester's work at Harvard. In 1984, Heaney was named Boylston Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory, one of the university's most prestigious offices. In 1989, he was elected for a five-year period to be Professor of Poetry at Oxford University, a post which requires the incumbent to deliver three public lectures every year but which does not require him to reside in Oxford.

In the course of his career, Seamus Heaney has always contributed to the promotion of artistic and educational causes, both in Ireland and abroad. While a young lecturer at Oxford University, he was active in the publication of pamphlets of poetry by the rising generation and took over the running of an influential poetry workshop which had been established there by the English poet, Philip Hobsbaum, when Hobsbaum left Belfast in 1966. He also served for five years on The Arts Council in the Republic of Ireland (1973-1978) and over the years has acted as judge and lecturer for countless poetry competitions and literary conferences, establishing a special relationship with the annual W.B. Yeats International Summer School in Sligo. In recent years, he has been the recipient of several honorary degrees; he is a member of Aosdana, the Irish academy of artists and writers, and a Foreign Member of The American Academy of Arts and Letters. In 1996, subsequent to his winning the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1995, he was made a Commandeur de L'Ordre des Arts et Lettres by the French Ministry of Culture.

Redress of Poetry : Introduction & Short Summary

Ever since Plato, poets have been a victim of the allegation that poetry is a useless thing and that it does not have anything to offer. And poets have always been trying to defend themselves. It is probably Heaney who has defended poetry the best. He starts with the argument that a Heckler might question about the use of poetry but might not have a thorough reading of poetry. He would have his allegations based merely upon the little reading he might have had in his lifetime. He might say that politics, science and other fields of knowledge have contributed towards the development of mankind but poetry has not served mankind at all, as poetry is something associated only with imagination and poets are the imaginative people who do not have anything concrete to offer.

To answer these charges, Heaney proposes a number of advantages of poetry. First of all, poetry has a redressing effect. It renders hope to its readers by saying "it is a state of mind not the state of the world." Secondly, a poet sees the society and finds out the reasons of disturbance in the equilibrium in a society. He is the one who not only recognizes the source of disturbance but also adds weight to the lighter scale to restore the equilibrium. Similarly, poetry gives an outlet to the powerful emotions of the poet as well as the reader and hence protects them from "violence without".

Heaney also answers the question why we do not enjoy poetry. He says that we enjoy poetry only when our experience coincides with the experience of the poet. As "the taste of apple does not lie in the fruit itself but in its contact with the palate".

The first poem quoted in full in this book is George Herbert's 'The Pulley'; the last is one of Heaney himself, a twelve-line section from a sequence called 'Squarings'. The 'Squarings' poem tells the story of an apparition experienced by the monastic community in Clonmacnoisie sometime during the Middle Ages: a crew-man came down to them out of a visionary boat in the sky but could not stay and had to be helped back out of the human element because, as the abbot perceived, he would have drowned in it if he had remained. 'The Pulley' is a parable about God devising a way to keep the minds and aspirations of human beings turned towards the heavenly in spite of all the pleasures and penalties of being upon earth. Both poems are about the way consciousness can be alive to two different and contradictory dimensions of reality and still find a way of negoti-ating between them, but I did not notice this correspondence between their thematic and imaginative concerns until the whole book had been assembled in manuscript.

Redress of Poetry : Critical Appreciation

Introduction: Comprised of the lectures Seamus Heaney delivered as professor of poetry at Oxford, this book is evidence not only of the commitment of the new Nobel laureate to his craft, but of the generosity of his spirit and the eloquence of his tongue. The apparently casual and unsystematic nature of the approach, with lectures on poets as diverse as, among others, Christopher Marlowe, George Herbert, Brian Merriman, John Clare and Elizabeth Bishop, serves only to emphasise the coherence and integrity of his view of poetry.

He says that he felt that "a reliable critical course could be plotted by following a poetic sixth sense". That sixth sense is by now utterly trustworthy, and one of the great pleasures of the volume is to see how heterogeneous poets are yoked so stimulatingly together, not by violence, but by a lovely unforced sensitivity. The lectures examine different ways in which poetry may redress the imperfections of our state (and of our states) and yet remain stubbornly itself: "the idea of poetry as an answer, and the idea of an answering poetry as a responsible poetry, and the idea of poetry's answer, its responsibility, being given in its own language rather than in the language of the world that provokes it" this is how Heaney sees his central theme.

Heaney's belief and faith: Heaney's basic belief is that poetry helps us to have life and have it more abundantly. There is nothing grandiose or solemn in his advocacy: the more abundant life may be derived from our attention to John Clare's old mouse bolting in the wheat, or to the tender eroticism of Marlowe's "Hero and Leader", as much as from our respect before the sonorities of Yeats. Heaney's vision of poetry is, nevertheless, religious in the wider sense of the term, and this book is his defence of poetry in terms which Joyce, another priest of the imagination, would have approved: "the imaginative transformation of human life is the means by which we can most truly grasp and comprehend it".

Dancing alongside the gravitas, as has also been the case in Heaney's recent volume of poetry, Seeing Things, there is a high-spirited celebration of the sheer pleasure of poetry. Indeed, Heaney himself insists on the correct priority: "the movement is always from delight to wisdom and not vice versa". There is throughout the lectures a most attractive insistence on the freedom of poetry from all kinds of political correctness, on the way in which the achieved or fully imagined poem is "a great unfettered event".

Thus he speaks generously about Dylan Thomas, of his desire to "affirm his kind of afflatus as a constant possibility for poetry, something not superannuated by the irony and self-knowing tactics of the art in postmodern times"; thus he praises the "spirit of hilarity and transgression" in the extravagance of Merriman's "The Midnight Court". The essay on Merriman is especially fine in its unforced demonstration of the truth of Heaney's belief that great poetry should "answer" to the conditions of the world (in this case, 18th-century Ireland suffering under the penal laws), yet remain unconstrained in the imaginative largeness of its procedures, so that "it represents not a submission to the conditions of the world, but a creative victory over them". One thinks of many great poems by Heaney himself, such as "The Other Side", "Casualty", and "The Strand at Lough Beg", which offer the redress of poetry to the intransigent conditions of his own province.

His tone and style: Heaney's tone is celebratory, but he cannot be confused with a chit-chat show. While duly praising the "inspirational" qualities of Hugh MacDiamid, he also speaks of his "linguistic overweening", of his doctrinal extremism, his anglophobia, and his "vindictive nativism", and even, woundingly, says that "the blether of William McGonagall" sporadically overwhelms MacDiarmid's own voice. Dylan Thomas was the "in-house bohemian" of the literary establishments on both sides of the Atlantic, offering himself too readily as a form of spectator sport. Oscar Wilde's "literary tragedy was that he did become like his mother" in the fervency of the rhetoric of parts of "The Ballad of Reading Gaol".

Heaney never gives in to malice pure and simple, however, and one keeps returning to the sense of his openness to many different types of literary experience. His most telling rebukes are aimed at trends in contemporary criticism which are producing a narrowing of the reader's arteries. Here is his sturdy defence of the "untrammelled climb" of Marlowe's verse in Tamburlaine: "Though I have learned to place this poetry's expansionist drive in the context of nascent English imperialism, I am still grateful for

the enlargements it offered, the soaring orchestration, and the roll-call of place names and of figures from classical mythology. . . It is necessary to find a way of treating the marvellously aspiring note of his work as something more than a set of discourses to be unmasked."

Heaney's religious Redress: For Seamus Heaney, as it is for many who originate from Northern Ireland, religion is closely allied to politics. Heaney's religious ideals, however, extend beyond the divisiveness of sectarianism, and stem from the desire for unity, balance and redress. He finds these religious and social ideals voiced by Simone Weil, the religious writer and social activist. The religious nature of Heaney's early poems originates in part from his regard for the landscape as a sacramental book that offers an alternative reality beyond the covert level of meaning. By naming or renaming a place, one has written or rewritten one's meanings onto it, endowing it with an alternative reality. Hence, the first task of historical redress is to recover the poet's alternative or Celtic heritage beneath the Anglicisation of place names. The second task, which balances and interrogates the first, is to seek out the linguistic heritage shared by the Celts and their British colonizers. Heaney's etymological endeavours, therefore, work to uncover and unite the different and yet interrelated cultural identities of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Likewise, his desire for equilibrium enables him to reread and interrogate the wounded text-bodies of sectarian 'martyrs', thereby challenging their apotheosis. He compares the poet to a medieval poet-scribe whose function was to negotiate between two differing visions of reality, the 'pagan' and the Christian. Similarly, he believes the present-day poet may offer the middle way of peace and redress.

Conclusion: Heaney is a great critic because he is a great reader, ever alert to "minor points of major importance". He speaks of "the immaculate ballet of courtesy and equilibrium" in that poem of Herbert which begins "Love bade me welcome: yet my soul drew back"; he writes of Clare's "totally alert love for the one-thing-after-anotherness of the world". The humanist theme of the great essay comparing the attitudes of Larkin and Yeats to death has already been much commented upon, but not its beautiful sensitivity to the contrast between the rooks of Yeats's cold heaven, Hopkins's dapple-dawn-drawn falcon, and the carolings of Hardy's darkling thrush, and the silence of the birds in Larkin's dawn-song. Here is where the poet-critic does his real work. Reading Heaney on poetry makes one want to say with George Herbert, one of the poets celebrated in these lectures, "I once more smell the dew and rain, /and relish versing".

Redress of Poetry : Heaney and the concept of Poetry

Introduction: The good of poetry has come to be an article of faith, not just in poetry's commercial promotion (which is perhaps fair enough), but in the messages sent to a reading world by many poets themselves. In his introductory remarks to Finders Keepers, a generous and valuable selection from thirty years of his own critical writings, Seamus Heaney speaks of how his essays are mostly "appreciations, reports on the good of poetry itself", and goes on to acknowledge that they "are also, of course, testimonies

to the fact that poets themselves are finders and keepers, that their vocation is to look after art and life by being discoverers and custodians of the unlooked for".

Heaney's "of course" speaks much of redress. It is interesting that an announcement like this of the poet's vocation to "look after" us at the same time as - indeed in the very act of - looking after art, can be passed off as a matter of course. The "of course" is perfectly justifiable though, since Heaney is voicing a matter that is at present one of genuine consensus. For many of us, the goodness of and in poetry reflects on the society in which it is appreciated, and validates those best instincts which in all our areas of concern - the personal, the cultural, and even the political - we tell ourselves that we share. In this scenario, the poet-critic becomes a wise family doctor who prescribes the artistic medicines and pick-me-ups to keep us all in good shape.

Like any consensus, this is comforting. Yet there are good grounds for being a little suspicious of the authority on which the ministrations of many poet-critics are based. At one extreme, the poet-critic might use his or her eminence to whisper to academic audiences the sweet nothings that convert wilful obscurity, or scholarly waywardness, into the winningly idiosyncratic and whacky, tickling the jaded palates of professional elite. At the other extreme, the spectacle of a media poet-pundit calling for unmetaphorical blood to be shed in the Middle East in order to satisfy his own hatred of Zionists might give us pause in considering the large-scale good that poetry can do. Of course, Heaney's relentlessly positive and affirming attitude to "life" (like his attitude to "art") makes such extremes in his own case unimaginable; but his notions of the poet's authority, and the poet's entitlement to speak on the realities that make up our common life, are by now articles of faith for a culture that rewards, as a matter of course, celebrity with authority.

Heaney's Approach: But we have all taken too much on trust the easy job-share which that hyphen in "poet-critic" effortlessly implies, as though the two parts of a complicated function worked obviously and naturally in accord, and one part simply cross-subsidized the other. This element of trust is where issues of authority reside whenever we encounter someone who writes poetry telling us about what poetry is: he or she has earned our trust, the assumption goes, and we should listen carefully to what they have to say. To pay attention to poets' criticism, then, is a way of assenting to, and respecting, what Heaney calls their "vocation". As with any matter of deep religious faith, there is little point in attempting to argue with this; but we might remember, all the same, what W. H. Auden (himself a busy critic) had to say about the whole enterprise, when he wrote in 1956 of how "I am always interested in hearing what a poet has to say about the nature of poetry, though I do not take it too seriously", and hardly spared himself in following this up:

As objective statements his definitions are never accurate, never complete and always one-sided. Not one would stand up under a rigorous analysis. In unkind moments one is almost tempted to think that all they are really saying is: "Read me. Don't read the other fellows".

Perhaps, though, this is less self-castigating than it sounds. There is a subtle, but altogether persuasive connection being established here between critical rigour and unkindness; and just as Auden's winning candour effectively gets the rigorous analysts off his case, so Heaney's gift for the humane and life- affirming makes critical disagreement with him both difficult and distasteful.

Poetic Vocation: For Heaney, the poet's vocation conditions his criticism, and speaks for its ultimate authority. In a fascinating essay on T.S. Eliot (collected here for the first time), Heaney writes of how "poetic vocation entails the disciplining of a habit of expression until it becomes fundamental to the whole conduct of a life". While Heaney characteristically underestimates the extent of Eliot's doubt on the matter of his own poetic vocation, the confidence of this connection between expression and the conduct of a life is impressively and persuasively voiced. There are no reasons for doubting that fine poets like Heaney - and other excellent poets before him - have felt a sense of "vocation"; at the same time, mediocre poets have also professed to have such a sense, and it has been far from unknown amongst the downright bad poets of all ages. "Vocation" is not enough in itself: for many are called, but few are chosen.

It is at this point, the point of comparison and evaluation in the reader's exercise of judgement, that the critical function comes into play, and here Heaney is both an excellent guide and practitioner. Finders Keepers reprints a number of critical essays which have become essential items for serious readers of the poets they examine: Heaney's insight and acuteness on W. B. Yeats, Patrick Kavanagh, Philip Larkin, Elizabeth Bishop, William Wordsworth, and John Clare are enough to give him serious critical weight, and an assured currency. Even so, the worth of this criticism is sometimes confused with its attitude, with its impeccable manners and ability to work the cultural room, and Heaney himself is not always able to prevent his admiration for writers shading in to a mode of proprietorial congratulation; in this sense, the constant juxtaposition of reminiscence and personal reflection with critical assessment is not always to Heaney's advantage.

Heaney's Erudition: It would be hard, though, to call any of the autobiographical elements in Heaney's prose idiosyncratic or distracting. On the contrary, these stretches (which may account for whole essays, or which may introduce or conclude a critical discussion) seem brilliantly of a piece with the tone of address overall, and offer scores of connections with Heaney's own poetry, assuring us that the critical and the creative functions of this mind are moving in step, and towards some wholeness of aesthetic perception and activity. In terms of rhetorical effect, Heaney's technique is a triumph.

While this achievement encourages other poet-critics, it does not necessarily vindicate their efforts. One secret of Heaney's success is the relatively conservative nature of what he has to say, and the safely canonical area in which he chooses to operate. Situating himself rhetorically above the academic fray, Heaney can afford to wear his learning lightly, while voicing critical views that have weight and consequence in the academic/critical world. And, just occasionally, we can make out the sound of points being scored in the academic power-play, as when Heaney (in 1991) affirms that "Poets

are more likely to attest without self-consciousness to the living nature of poetic tradition and to the demotic life of 'the canon'", and laments that "Nowadays, undergraduates are being taught prematurely to regard the poetic heritage as an oppressive imposition". This taught "suspicion", Heaney continues, is "destructive of cultural memory when it is induced in minds without any cultural possessions whatever". It is when "a poet quotes from memory or from prejudice or in sheer admiration", he concludes, that "'the canon' is manifested in an educationally meaningful way". These sentiments (which are both correct and necessary) are coming from a poet, but also - and perhaps more meaningfully - from an Ivy League Professor.

Culture, Personality and Criticism: "Cultural memory" is where criticism, like poetry, has its true business. Yet the term itself is snared in difficulties and complications. What is unfortunate in Heaney, and distressing in some poet-critics who take his success as their example, is the failure to understand that an artist's sense of authority, and the authority residing in our common memory and culture, are not the same thing. Audiences, in this respect, have a lot to answer for: Heaney writes, for example, of their "desire to have the worth and meaning of the art confirmed" when the poet, reciting or lecturing, stands before them. There is a glitzy confusion here, which affects more poets than Heaney. It is as though a rapt audience adores through its hero the art of poetry itself, binding listeners and performer into a common identity. The celebrations here are also implicitly matters of mutual congratulation. If the true critic seldom feels this, there are good reasons why he or she cannot feel it, and cannot let it condition or influence the work in hand. And, in this case at least, it is the critics who are in the right, and the poets who are dazzled by the occasion, and misled into mistaking the authority of acclamation for the authority in culture.

"Culture" is, of course, a much fought-over word, and we use it in the singular here with a degree of deliberateness. However, culture means nothing without criticism: a series of celebrity-endorsed poets and poems does not add up to a culture, and the replacement of poetry's slow complexity of meaning and effect with a set of easy-access sound bites and pre-fabricated evaluations does not constitute criticism. Here, the poets who attempt to peddle their "personality" are parts of the problem: this holds good for the determinedly idiosyncratic as much as for the in-your-face epigrammatists, who offer two kinds of stand-up routine in which a facile cleverness does duty for thought. Too often, media-weight is the measure of authority. Of course, critical authority can and does exist; but it comes from careful judgement, engaged analysis, and reasoned argument. The language needed for that kind of authority is clear and precise; while it may sometimes be difficult, it must always be accountable to the world in which it is read, without resort to any kind of special pleading. No allowances need be made. In part, though, it is Heaney's drive towards a wholeness of personal and cultural memory, critical and creative engagement, which helps to underwrite the cultural amnesia he properly condemns.

Literature, though necessarily a private pleasure, is not ultimately "personal". Good criticism operates on this understanding, and on the good faith that language can be thought about, and thought twice about, without such thinking being overpowered by

the force of anyone's personality. And this takes time, for patience is the first critical virtue. If it takes a lifetime to appreciate Wordsworth or Milton, let it: so much the better. But that lifetime must be our own, not someone else's; other people's memories of literary experience, like second-hand interpretations, cannot replace or override the real thing. Our interest in poets' criticism ought to be a critical interest, and not an aspect of our veneration for the poets concerned.

Conclusion: All of this must sound both stern and sour, and it would be difficult, to convince many readers that these reflections stem from what is actually an admiration for Heaney's prose. At his best, Heaney reads himself and others with an utterly persuasive clarity, and expresses his own gratitude to both art and life with an old-fashioned delicacy and grace: the best of this criticism is, in the best sense, indeed good for us. Yet there is a sense in which Heaney only gives us the good news about literature, and this is the prose of a man whom the audience always applauds, and for whom the uncertainties, contradictions, difficulties, and ambiguities of language and memory are always going to be reassuringly resolved in the end. Such a resolution - which may indeed be a necessity for the poet in Heaney - sometimes tells fibs to the critic, for whom the audience's applause seems to constitute a further confirmation of integrity and vocation. These "appreciations", in other words, seem often to bask in the knowledge of their own appreciation. However we admire the performance, it is less critical exertion and all-out struggle than it is a relaxed lap of honour. At a time when too many poets are poet-critics, and when even the most modestly gifted feel obliged to possess a personal ars poetica, there are good reasons for refusing to take Heaney as an example.

Heaney's Concept of Redressing Effects of Poetry

Introduction: The more we understand about poetry the better we can appreciate its unique contribution to our lives. As men and women committed to learning and advancing a Biblical worldview, we must not neglect the benefits poetry can bring to our lives. Poetry has much to teach us – about the deeper significance of ordinary things, the workings of the soul, the nature of true pleasure and the meaning of delight, and the power of artful language.

Further, reading and meditating on poetry can make us better readers overall, and more acute observers of the world around us. As one whose calling is to be an interpreter of God's Word, I shall be forever grateful for my undergraduate training and ongoing studies in poetry, for they have been of much help in the exegetical and hermeneutical work of isolating units of meaning and interpreting texts. As important as this, however, has been the value poetry has been in helping me to understand the human condition, become a more careful observer of the world, and find satisfaction in words and images. But, in order to gain the benefits poetry can afford us, we must apply ourselves to learning how poetry works, and what the work of poetry is. Poets can sometimes be our best guides in this quest for understanding, particularly when their poems lead us behind the veil of poetry's mysteries and reveal to us the inner workings of the craft. Seamus Heaney, the Irish Nobel laureate, is an especially helpful and altogether willing guide in

this cause. In many of his poems and all his prose works he invites us to consider the work of poetry from the inside. Heaney helps us to understand the poet's sense of calling to this work; shows us what work a poem can do; gives us insight into the actual work of making poems; and helps us to understand how good poems work to accomplish their objective. All these poetic features are claimed by Heaney in his Redress of Poetry. The Redress of Poetry is a series of lectures given by Seamus Heaney at Oxford; in all of them, he examines poetry and how it can be strong enough to help the reader, to act as an equal force to the life lived by the reader. He looks at all kinds of poets - Dylan Thomas, Christopher Marlowe, Yeats, Wilde and Bishop - and of course talks about his own position as a Catholic from the Northern Ireland living in Dublin. In all the lectures Heaney is wonderfully informal and funny, while still solidly getting across how important and vital these writers are. The lecture on Thomas alone is a great lesson on writing and authenticity, and the last one, "Frontiers of Writing", makes a strong case that a nation is imagined by writers first - that language, poetry, opens up possibilities in nations as well as in people. Though he knows that words can't do everything, Heaney's affection for writing and writers is convincing.

Heaney's imaginative power: Heaney's redressing of poetry is vividly imaginative, whilst being firmly rooted in reality. Seamus Heaney is described as imaginative and honest whilst enabling him to share his views on the political and social situation in Ireland at that time. Through the use of metaphors and strong imagery aided by his choice of form and structure Heaney is able to appeal to a wide range of people. The use of etymology, the study of words, furthers this.

His approach to Redress of poetry is all nostalgic as a result of Heaney's upbringing and his family situation. Heaney says that poetry should be used to voice his feelings of insecurity after the birth of his first child. Within this section in 'Blackberry Picking' Heaney uses the childhood tradition of picking blackberries to express his adult view on how naively hopeful he was as a child. The poem is used as a metaphor to explain that even as an adult that a recurring delusion, where there is a perpetual consciousness that life, love and youth do not 'keep' but the temptation for another try is always succumbed to. Heaney's use of metaphors in order to relate a current feeling through a childhood incident gives evidence of not only his feelings but also is able to be related to by many who feel they are unable to express their views in similar situations. Heaney is able to appeal to these readers, through showing his feelings of worthlessness and dejection after the birth of a child, through the use of poetry. Heaney's poetry is described as being 'rooted in reality' because he is able to express his truthful emotions 'I hoped they'd keep, knew they would not' despite the social constraints of having to feel ecstatic after the birth of a child.

Poetry and emotions: Heaney's success in showing his emotions is as a result of the strong imaginative imagery 'our palms sticky as Bluebeard's'. This use of strong imagery shows Heaney's desire to create a perfect portrait of the image within his mind. Heaney uses lavish description in order to create the 'lust for picking'. By juxtaposing this with his negative view 'lovely canfuls smelt of rot' he heightens the impact of his condescending adult perspective of how things never live up to our expectations. His

own poetry apart from the critical work of redress of poetry asserts this fact. The poem 'Requiem for the Croppies' describes rebel farmers in 1798 striving to save their land in a vicious battle with English armies. Heaney uses the poem to give voice to those to whom history has denied. The use of a possessive pronoun 'we' shows the reader which side they are encouraged to identify with, reinforced by the lack of rhyme scheme to show their deficiency of army knowledge. The poem is inventive in portraying a scene often forgotten 'we moved quick and sudden in our own country'. It also shows Heaney's imagination in recreating a full picture of a scene based before his time in situations Heaney has never experienced. Heaney is able to show the reality of death in 'they buried us without shroud or coffin' whilst praising their spirit in dying for those in Ireland in reference to 'Requiem' in the title.

Poetry and politics: In each of Heaney's poems is an underlying implication of Heaney's political views. In 'Requiem for the Croppies' Heaney refers to the 'barley grew up out of the grave' and in doing so reflects on how little the Irish in Ulster appreciate the martyrs who died for the cause. In the poems throughout 'Wintering Out' Heaney embellishes this, particularly in 'Gifts of Rain'. At first read the poem regards a simple river akin to the poem 'Broagh'. However, in the line 'I cock my ear / at an absence' Heaney refers to those who have died and have worked to uniting Ireland without violence. He asks for help to go back in time to hear advice from those who have made a difference in uniting Ireland 'Soft voices of the dead are whispering by the shore'. The use of the central imagery throughout the poem of water reflects the nature of being purged, to come out clean with a fresh beginning. Heaney's ability to be 'firmly rooted in reality' is most clearly shown in each poem through his ability to connect everyday landscapes such as the 'River Moyola' to the political situation in Ireland.

Seamus Heaney and Irish Tradition: In the poems featured in 'Wintering Out' Heaney uses several examples of a tradition known in Irish poetry as dinnshenchas. Through this Heaney explores the linguistic elements and lore of a place name. In the poem 'Anahorish', Heaney explores the place name of where he went to school as a child. Heaney's analysis of the name's phonetics, 'soft gradient / of consonant, vowel meadow' leads him to imagine the landscape to which the name was attached. He believes the rise and fall of the word over the consonants reflects the gradient of the land, rising and falling. This is further embellished upon throughout the poem 'Gifts of Rain. Heaney analyses the phonetic sounds of the name of the local river 'Moyola' , 'the tawny guttural water, spells itself: Moyola'. The name reflects the undulating notion of the water's movements. Heaney shows through his use of etymology his imagination in reflecting sounds with place names and imagining the histories that add to this. In connecting this with the political situation of Ireland, Heaney shows how by taking an elaborate concept behind a place name one can resolutely connect this to our lives today.

Evidence for Heaney's ability to connect a place name and the political situation in Ireland is most identifiably showing 'Broagh'. Heaney connects both the linguistic etymology and the political views within the poem to give an underlying message only accessible by the Irish. In taking a simple concept such as a river the poem is taken at

face value to be regarding a 'riverbank'. Heaney uses the word 'Broagh' and compares this to the landscape of a riverbank. However, the poem title 'Broagh' meaning riverbank is unable to be voiced by the English as is pronounced 'bruach' in Irish, 'ended almost suddenly / like the last gh the strangers found difficult to manage'. In using words of an Irish only dialect such as 'rigs' and 'docken', Heaney isolates the English reader to unite Ireland through linguistics, "Broagh is a sound native to Ireland, common to unionist and Nationalist but unavailable to the English" (Heaney).

Poetry as calling Poetry for Seamus Heaney is his life's calling. In "Digging", one of his first published works, he likens his calling as a poet to the work of his father and grandfather. He looks upon his father's work of digging potatoes and his grandfather's labor digging peat as noble callings, but not right for him. Indeed, he seems to regard himself as not of the same caliber of "stuff" to follow in their footsteps. Instead, he will take up another traditional Irish vocation, that of the poet. He will dig – that is, make his mark on the earth and provide for his needs – as a poet.

But his work in this vocation will also allow him to "dig up" mysteries and delightful images to benefit others. This sense of the poet's calling Heaney explores more fully in "The Diviner." Here he presents "poetry as divination" and the poet likened unto one who uses a forked stick to divine for water. As he wrote in an essay entitled, "Feeling Into Worlds," "The diviner resembles the poet in his function of making contact with what lies hidden, and in his ability to make palpable what was sensed or raised." As the diviner needs a forked stick to discover hidden water, the poet needs the tools of his trade, and a certain confidence that hidden mysteries and meanings actually exist, in order to bring those freshets of meaning to the surface.

This same idea can be seen in "The Rain Stick," where the poet leads us to discover worlds of water, and all the images and sentiments associated with those worlds, in the very place where no water exists whatsoever, the hollowed out branch of a cactus plant in which seeds and grit rush from one end to the other as the stick is upended.

Few poets – including Heaney – are able to make their living entirely by writing verse. However, this does not prevent their taking up poetry as their primary calling, the means by which they seek to realize their reason for being, and through which they hope to make the world a little more expansive and meaningful for the rest of us. Heaney regards the poet's work, as he wrote in The Redress of Poetry, to be that of "[bringing] human existence into a fuller life":

We go to poetry; we go to literature in general, to be forwarded within ourselves. The best it can do is to give us an experience that is like foreknowledge of certain things which we already seem to be remembering. What is at work in this most original and illuminating poetry is the mind's capacity to conceive a new plane of regard for itself, a new scope for its own activity.

The poet whose work accomplishes this objective makes an extremely useful contribution to the rest of us.

The Function of Poetry But what does poetry do? What does it achieve? Two of Seamus Heaney's objectives in the work of poetry are to dare and to delight. In "Digging" we see this idea of the poet as daredevil only in the background. It is skillfully suggested in the final stanza, which repeats the first stanza except for the omission of the words, "snug as a gun." Heaney grew up in strife-torn Northern Ireland, and was himself torn with what his own role should be in view of "the troubles." Should he just retire from nation's pain and be a rural farmer, like his forebears? A noble and traditional calling, to be sure, but hardly the kind of work that will redeem a nation. Should he become a revolutionary? But can violence against one's neighbors ever accomplish true redemption? His refusal to follow either of these paths would cause him trouble and pain at various times in his life. But by becoming a poet – a filidh, in the Celtic tradition – he keeps his Irish roots firm and takes up a calling that, he believes, has redemptive potential. And by omitting the phrase, "snug as a gun," in the closing stanza he makes us mindful, by the absence of this image, which is nevertheless in his mind, that he believes his poetry can make its own "revolutionary" contribution to his nation's future.

In many of his poems he dares his readers to find in verse a way out of their present, stultifying existence by delighting them with the experience of new worlds – water where there is none ("The Rain Stick") or where one has to search carefully and diligently to find it ("The Diviner"). He challenges us to engage our imagination with ordinary things in order to discover extraordinary new meanings and possibilities. He dares his readers to let their minds expand to consider new worlds beyond their present, and to hope for better things, even as he delights them with remarkable and even unforgettable images. As he wrote in The Redress of Poetry,

An exuberant rhythm, a display of metrical virtuosity, some rising intellectual ground successfully surmounted – experiencing things like these gratifies and furthers the range of the mind's and the body's pleasures, and helps the reader to obey the old command: nosce teipsum. Know thyself.

The techniques of Poets In order to fulfill his calling and accomplish his purpose to dare and to delight, the poet must become a careful observer of the world around him, able to associate images of various kinds with one another and to link these with other images and ideas in order to reach into the soul of the reader. We see him doing this in a remarkable way in "Digging." His father digging in the flower bed recalls an image of his father twenty years earlier digging potatoes. This connects with an image of his grandfather digging peat, with all the sights and sounds each image suggests. Then to connect their work with his own – the work of poetry – accomplishes the effect of rolling all the nobility and nuance, sweat and struggle, harvest and happiness of his father's and grandfather's vocations into his own choice of work. In so doing he invites the reader to consider his or her own sense of calling and connectedness to the past, present, and future.

The images that appear in Heaney's poetry come from his rural past, experiences he has known, Ireland's history and troubles, and everyday objects. Like the diviner the poet must believe there is in every image that presents itself to his mind a refreshing truth to

be discovered. So, "nervous, but professionally/Unfussed", he takes up the tools of his trade – the "squat pen" between his thumb and finger – and begins to walk the terrain of the image, waiting for the "pluck" of what lies beneath to announce its presence.

The working mechanism of poetry The challenge then becomes to relate that "pluck" in an image that will be familiar to the reader, so that what the poet experiences can be the reader's experience as well. But it is not enough just to leave the reader saying, "I get it." The poet wants the reader not just to see what he sees or know what he has come to know; he wants the reader to feel all the excitement, wonder, pain, anxiety, joy, or delight that he himself experienced in the process of making these associations of images. In order to accomplish this the poet draws on subtle devices – such as the slant-rhyme scheme in "The Diviner" and the careful alliteration of "s's" and "ck" sounds to replicate the slushing and trickling of water in "The Rain Stick." A poet must have "[a]n awareness of his own poetic process, and a trust in the possibility of his poetry" in order to bring his art to life ("Canticles to the Earth"). At the end of "Digging" we're left with a kind of curiosity about the poet's sense of calling by that modified image: Is he not going to use his poetry in a revolutionary manner? Or will his revolution be more subtle? He lets us know elsewhere that his purpose is clearly the latter, when he writes of "poetry's high potential, its function as an agent of possible transformation, of evolution towards that more radiant and generous life which the imagination desires" (The Redress of Poetry).

Good poetry can thus expand our imagination, enlarge our world, enrich our experience, and enlighten our worldview. Because of the power of poetry to capture the affections, communicate ideas in images, and point people toward new possibilities, we who are committed to the Biblical worldview could realize much benefit by devoting at least part of our time in this endeavor to developing our ability to read and enjoy poetry. Seamus Heaney's work can be an excellent place to begin or further refine your skills in this endeavor.

Conclusion: Heaney's poetry is referred to as 'vividly imaginative, whilst being firmly rooted in reality', a sentence of which is essential in understanding Heaney's poetry. Throughout each collection Heaney takes a central idea of 'childhood' or 'place names' and connects these through his own emotions to his strong feelings on the disastrous political situation in Ireland, 'I am afraid'. However, The strong emotions Heaney feels connected through a central face value theme is most strongly shown through Heaney's evocative imagery, metaphors and structure. Heaney's poetry endeavours to be 'vivid' through using strong personal messages that relate to the reader but succeeds most readily by combining this with the subtlety of using a common theme. All the above features in Heaney's poetry shows that as a poet, Heaney himself has achieved the redressing effects of poetry.

The power of poetry is supreme so it creates a balance in the environment, discuss.

In his essay "Redress of Poetry" Heaney brings poetry's creative role to light. Besides other function of poetry, he especially evaluates poetry as a balancing force. He finds support for his views about imaginative literature, which poetry is, in Plato's theory of Ideas.

Plato has banished poets from his Republic, he says that they take us away from the ideal but Aristotle is of the view that poets are essential to keep balance in society. Aristotle insisted that the poet takes us towards the ideal not away from ideal. To support his argument Heaney quotes Robert Frost's poem "Directive".

The poem is about a house that the children make with sand. They try to put in it all the comfort of a good real house. It means that poetry is an alternative to the world of actuality. Thus poetry serves to show us that perfection which we want to achieve. Actually poetry is a link between the real and ideal. Poetry takes us to Paradise while we stay on earth. This is how poetry strikes a balance between the real and the ideal.

Many critics say that poetry has nothing to do with real world and poets have been considered as idle creators, who are always lost in their flights of imagination. But Heaney says that the world of reality and the world of imagination are two different worlds but they depend upon each other and they reinforce each other. He gives an example that once poets wrote the tales of flying carpets with the help of their imagination and today as a result now man only can fly in sky in aeroplanes but he has also conquered the space.

Heaney considers poets as a positive influence upon the people as poetry strikes a balance between the suffering of real world and human aspiration with its power of consolation. Poetry builds for us our world of consolation. We live in the world which is given to us. We did not choose it. But in our imagination we create our own world. That is the world of poetry. Poetry shows us the glimpse of those things which we miss in our life. This is consolation. Aristotle says that poetry performs catharsis and purifies human mind. Arnold went to the extent of saying that

All that now goes in the name of religion or philosophy will be replaced by poetry. He says poetry will show man the right path and it will bring consolation to man. Poetry has a power of sustaining man in difficulties. Here, he quotes Hardy's poem, Afterwards, he says that the poet tries to answer the question raised by life. Life creates anxieties; Poetry tries to relieve them. Sidney wrote in "Apology for Poetry" Poetry strengthens the faculty which is the organ of the moral nature of men, in the same manners as exercise strengthens a limb.

Many people say that poets should write revolutionary poetry to shock the minds of people. And if anyone is writing he must write to evaluate the benefits of his state and as well as to promote the political views of people. There must be a balance between narrow nationalism and humanism.

He considers poets human first and patriots after that Here, he quotes W.B Yeats an Irish poet, who in one of his poems remembers the Irishmen who were killed in the rising of 1916. But he is also sorry for the Englishmen who died in the fight. Talking about the humanitarian zeal of poetry, Heaney says, that Yeats considers both enemies and friends as men. Heaney says, this is what poetry conveys to us, every man whether black or white, Irish or English has the same feelings, passion and blood. He says that poetry promotes the love of humanity while Politics divide.

Heaney rejects the "Obedience to the force of gravity". He says in Politics we are always carried away by the force of gravity. The point which the poet wants to take side with stronger or weaker side. The poet should go with the merit of case. This is how there would be a balance between nationalism and humanism.

Many critics only emphasized an aesthetic role of poetry, they were of the opinion that poetry only reflects life. This opinion brings a only reflects life. This opinion brings a blot on constructive role of poetry that it cannot serve society as it is not practical. But Heaney says that poetry does more than reflecting life. Poetry is no longer just an aesthetic piece of art, it's real value lies in its political usefulness and practical efficiency. But the impact of poetry is not practical, it is psychological. It is most important function of poetry to violent practically. Heaney says that if poetry becomes practical, it will not remain poetry, it will become propaganda. He says that poetry shows possibilities; it shows what is desirable and politician and other people from different sections the hidden hints in poetry. Thus, poetry gives us wisdom through delight. Giving pleasure and entertainment is the main function of poetry which satisfy our aesthetic sense. Poetry entertain us with its beautiful words, rhyme, and thought. If the thought would not be impressive and helpful, poetry would lose its value. Thus poetry entertains us with it's musicality and aesthetic values and also serves as a pragmatic force through Psychological impact with the help of useful thoughts.

Heaney tries to demonstrate that poetry has a function in life, it serves as a balancing force. Poetry does not lead towards extremism. It shows us right way and leads towards perfection. If there are sufferings and miseries in life, poetry consoles us. Poetry deals well with our responsibilities to a nation but also infuses in us a spirit of humanism. It is poetry which is the real motive power in life. In his essay "Redress of Poetry" Heaney brings poetry's creative role to light. Besides other function of poetry, he especially evaluates poetry as a balancing force. He finds support for his views about imaginative literature, which poetry is, in Plato's theory of Ideas.

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How far is Seamus Heaney justified in seeking the redress of poetry? (P.U. 2005)

The subject that Seamus Heaney has treated, the redress of poetry, is not a new subject. The nature and purpose of poetry has been a subject of practical importance to everyone who has an interest in poetry. Heaney builds different assumptions for the redress of poetry. The question is that whether, poetry is a useful activity in society; whether poetry is an aesthetic or a pragmatic work.

There have been a lot of discussions whether poets and poetry are of any use in the complexities and miseries of life or not some are of the view that the poets are worthless people and some condemned them as idle people. As Plato is among the haters of poets and poetry. He had banished the poets from his 'Republic'.

Aristotle was of the view that the poets are essential to keep balance in society and they took us towards the ideal. There were others also who kept defending poetry against all kinds of objections for instance, Sydney asserted that

'The poet takes us to the ideal'. So did Shelley support poetry because poetry teaches the perfect? Oscar wild said that life should imitate art because art presents the perfect. Arnold went to the extent of saying that all that now goes in the name of religion or philosophy will be replaced by poetry. Sidney wrote in "Apology for Poetry" "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the World".

Heaney makes a fresh attempt to defend poetry in this age of science and technology when everyone is becoming a utilitarian and even education has been commercialized. Poetry and Philosophy are now considered idle mental luxuries while commerce, computer and business administration have been given the name of education. Heaney starts his thesis by distinguishing two planes of existence. Here he quotes George Herbert's poem 'Pulley; which suggests that the mind and aspiration of the human beings turned towards the heavenly in spite of all the pleasures and penalties of being upon the earth. This can be done by poetic sixth sense which provides a passage from the domain of the matter of fact; into the domain of the imagination. Here Heaney also quotes the same explanation of religious experience by John Donne. Donne says God throws down in order to rise up. It s a religious paradox that sin brings man closer to God. This is how Heaney concludes that these paradoxes are captured only by poetry.

Heaney is of the opinion that the world of reality and the world of imagination are two different worlds but they depend upon each other and they reinforce each other and this is the subject of his poem "Squarings". From this story, Heaney concludes that there are two worlds, our everyday world and the world of visionary crew. Heaney keeps moving between the world of fact and the world of imagination. He quotes from Pinskey to support his argument. Pinskey in "Responsibilities of The Poet" says that the poet has a responsibility to answer. He is to answer the question raised by life. Life raises questions and poet gives answers.

Seamus Heaney defends poetry on the ground of utility also. He says poetry focuses from delight to wisdom. He says the world of poetry is an answer to the world of fact. Life creates anxieties; Poetry tries to relieve them. Life disturbs but poetry consoles. It shows man the right path and poetry has a power of sustaining man in difficulties. These are the pragmatic advantages of poetry. Heaney also defends poetry on the level of its aesthetic utility. We get pleasure out of words. Man comes to wisdom through delight, not to delight through wisdom. Man studies poetry to amuse himself and to satisfy his soul but in this psychological state he gets wisdom as well. Thus, poetry is a pleasurable study of life.

Poetry can very pleasantly and easily explore the subjects which are generally denied by social, racial, sexual, and political prejudices and all this is done through the linguistic medium. But the poet has to take care that while discussing these issues poetry should not be sacrificed, Heaney says that the poets should not narrow down their scope by limiting poetry to certain dimensions of time and space. It should be free from any restriction. Some demand that the poets should write against the common trend to shock the minds of the people. They should write revolutionary poetry. But the impact of poetry is not practical, it is psychological. Poetry does not force man to go and fight. But poetry shows what is wrong and what is right. If poetry becomes practical, according to Heaney, it will not remain poetry, it will become a propaganda. It is not the nature of poetry. Heaney quotes Wallace Stevens in order to evaluate his argument. Wallace says! Poetry creates an alternative world to the world of fact. Poetry suggests what life ought to be. Poetry makes sketches and plans. It shows possibilities; it shows what is desirable.

Moreover, Poetry is about man. Poetry promotes, love of men. Poetry shows that all men are human beings and they deserve sympathy. But politics tells us that some people deserve sympathy and some deserve our wrath. Poetry speaks of love for all people: Politics forces people to kill other people. In fact politics divides men. If poetry becomes politics then it will not remain poetry, it will become a propaganda and in this way it will divide humanity into friends and foes. For instance, the Irish men who were killed in the rising of 1916. But he is also sorry for the Englishmen who died in the fight. Talking about the humanitarian zeal of poetry. Heaney says, that zeals considers both enemies and friends as men. He does not discriminate between the Irish People and the English people. Both were fighting for their ideals. That is exactly what poetry conveys to us, everyman whether black or white; Irish or English has the same feeling, passions and blood.

Heaney raises an interesting point here which is also shared by Edward Said in "Culture and Imperialism" that the sensibility of the people of the colonies is coloured by the sensibility of the imperial masters. As the Irish condemn the English but they use the English medium. Imperialism has inculcated in their minds a culture that they tried to reject. But this is also a very healthy experience. The Irish hate the English, still they love Shakespeare and Keats.

To conclude, Heaney tries to demonstrate that poetry has a function in life, though not ostentatious. The poet does nothing on purpose, but poetry is a medium which by its very nature serves a purpose. This can be understood with reference to a statement by Wordsworth that his poetry has a purpose. It is not meaningless activity. But this purpose is not imposed upon poetry. Since Wordsworth lives a purposeful life, therefore whatever he does has a purpose in it. Heaney believes that poetry cannot be subjected to any particular direction and not limited to any certain aspect of society. He emphasises that poets should elevate their services on universal level and poetry should be above all racial, social and political prejudices. This is how he evaluates brighter sides and aspects of poetry in his essay 'Redress of Poetry"

Heaney's prose style is aphorist like Bacon, philosophical like Russell; but antithetical and unique in its own right, discuss the statement.

Seamus Heaney an Irish poet and writer was awarded the noble Prize in 1995. In the course of his careers, he contributed to the promotions of artistic and educational cause, both in Ireland and abroad.

Heaney's approach is rational, scientific and it is imaginative as well. This is a paradox that Heaney is scientific and imaginative at the sometime. But he does convey his thought in an impressive and convincing way. He seeks balance and does justice to both reality and imagination. He lives to convey his thought and meaning through appropriate language and words and he avoids all superfluous expressions. His approach is anecdotal. Heaney's style is that he begins by giving examples or by telling stories. He

develops an argument with the help of stories, as he begins his essay "The Redress Of Poetry" with the story of fantastic crew from some other world arriving on the earth.

Heaney's style is a blend of the classical and the romantic. He also has an intuitive approach. He very much bases his arguments on the sixth sense though he is a practical thinker. Thus like the romantics, he believes in institution and like the neo-classics, he believes in reason and practice. He is also didactic. He believes that the poet has a responsibility and that is to respond the questions raised by life. He believes that poetry gives lessons. This is Heaney's mysticism. Heaney is an idealist too. He is of the view that poetry gives an alternative view of life—a view of what life ought to be is desirable as well as possible.

Heaney's approach is historical. He sees the issues of poetry in the historical perspective. For instance, he starts the essay with Plato's condemnation of poetry. Another aspect of his classical approach is that he believes in authority. He quotes other writers, critics and poets in his favour. This is a classical style of argumentation. His arguments are based upon other's views besides his own reason. There are many textual references in his writings, such as references to the poems of Robert Frost, Hardy, George Herbert and his own poetry. There are allusions from Poetry as well as from prose. Heaney's well known for his antithetical style which has also been very popular among the schoolmen. Heaney is very much conscious of Paradoxes- "Creators/Creative, heaven/earth, soul/body, eternity/Home, life/death, Christ/man, grace/guilt, virtue/sin." All these antitheses help Heaney a lot in his defence of poetry.

Heaney's Prose style has the qualities of precision and meaning through appropriate language and words. His use of proper words in proper places is in a straight forward manner. His prose style is aphoristic But his aphorisms are not as striking as those of Bacon. Still there is a glimpse of his terseness of thought. As he says;

"Poetry is comprehensive of events but not itself productive of new events"
"Life raises questions; Poetry answers them".
"Poetry leads from delight to wisdom".

These kinds of paradoxes, balances, counter balances, comparisons and contrasts are typical of Heaney's prose style. He also appeals to the common sense of the everyday practice of life to bring a point home. As he says we condemn English by using the English language .Through language and Media we have already been influenced by what we condemn. This creates another Paradox, and it is a culture paradox. Heaney uses linguistic paradox as well as a culture paradox. Heaney talks of force can be physically expressed as one shaking with excitement. Like Eliot Heaney also believes in a personal mind and a communal mind. The two become one, as in the case of Irish Poets, Poetry and Politics become one .The individual poet has the same feelings of liberation does not become a propaganda.

Heaney's approach is partly religious, partly intuitive, partly anecdotal and partly rational. Thus it is a blend of the neo-Classic, the Scientific, the romantic and the

pragmatic. He is versatile and practical thinker. He, unlike the schoolmen, is not dogmatic. He talks, argues analyses and critically evaluates the commonly held beliefs and then gives own philosophy the basis of the opinions of different critics, poets and writers and all this makes his essay "The Redress Of Poetry" a literary achievement.

Seamus Heaney discusses the concept of poetry from a number of angels, discuss.

The essays in The Redress of Poetry have more cumulative force than individual character. Though seldom striking in themselves, they are convincing in their belief that poetic invention "represents not a submission to the conditions of [the] world but a creative victory over them." If Heaney does not have the original prose voice of Auden or Eliot, he has maintained for English poetry a responsive, gratified and radical ear. Redress of Poetry exhibits a number of themes, critical concerns and stylistic prose bytes. To achieve this, Heaney also used many intertexual references.

For example, he refers to Herbert. Herbert is an unexpected model, coming from the man who, more than anyone, speaks for civilization and decency in contemporary Ulster, a more polemicized hero seems to be in order. But Heaney has always had a bittersweet relationship to his community. In 1975, he made an early appearance on the international stage with his poem "Punishment." This was around the time that the IRA began tarring and feathering Catholic women who dated British soldiers. Heaney compared those women's bodies to that of a neolithic adulteress who had been stoned to death and dumped in a bog. He concludes:

My poor scapegoat, I almost love you but would have cast, I know, the stones of silence.
I am the artful voyeur of your brain's exposed,

This is a far cry from Herbert's clever machinations on Anglican theology. The choice of Herbert as a model is also a flagrant defiance of the poet with whom Heaney is too often compared: W.B. Yeats. (It takes Heaney five pages to use the Anglo-Irishman's name.) This is understandable: enormous difference stands between the photographic mind that captured "Punishment" and the misty painter's eyes that looked into Victorian medievalism and saw a Celtic Revival. We shall see whether Heaney can actually become Herbert, and what effect that attempt will have on his writing. In any case, he is, now in position to make the attempt.

Seamus Heaney wrote of the need to bring about a redress of poetry in modern poets. The concern indicated is the place that poetry should strive to attain in a socio-political setting. The idea is that poetry should function in redress of balance to unbalanced forces acting upon the world of the poet. This is such that the prevailing sentiments of the poet's surroundings should shape and bend the nature of the focus of their writing. For example, Heaney states that an American poet writing during the Vietnam period should concern themselves with poetry that addresses the existing unrest in such a way as to bear a standard for the position of the author within the conflict also. In this the poet unsheathes his pen in the same manner as the soldier lifts his rifle, and towards the

same goal, i.e. the elevation through victory, or the ode that praises it, of the position for which the warrior-poet strives. Thus the American "wave[s] the flag rhetorically", just as the English poet, the German poet, or any other nationality elicits support and response from its poets as patriots of its cause. Though this can easily be anti-governmental as well, and poets are supposed to establish redress through support of revolution where that imbalance is detected also. Poetry, and the act of redress is a system of weights and counterweights, or to be more accurate reality and counter-reality. The poet sets up through his words a disparate view of a particular situation than would be readily apparent by having merely observed the situation. This creation of a counter-reality does in no way suggest a conflict with the presented reality and the observed reality, these two need not be placed into such direct opposition.

However, the reality suggested by a poet through their work should highlight a position in order to more easily show a concurrent yet different position, which the poet presents as a better scenario. This presentation need not be explicit. Nowhere in poetry must the poet in true expository style state the redress he wishes to make and support his position. It is up to the reader in trying to gain a true understanding, not only of the poet's words, but of his position, to justify that position via the vision given him by the poet's words. Perhaps a good place to begin in examining the issue of redress in poetry would be in Heaney's own work "Requiem for the Croppies". This is a poem that deals with a people's need for redress, which is actively sought through warfare. This position can be gleaned by careful study of the poem, and is never expressly stated by Heaney.

In this particular piece, Heaney is attempting to speak to an audience about the difficulties he personally has observed in his native Ireland. To do this he utilizes the language which would be a common parlance for that region, and sets up with his readers a familiarity based on language between the reader, and the subjects of the poem. Heaney is careful, unlike some of his contemporaries and most of the literary models of excellence to refuse obscurity in his poem. This is of course obscurity both of language, and of reference. Such things, though they admittedly show a great knowledge, and creative use of the language would only serve in this instance to distance the reader from the subject Heaney is presenting. This linguistic style is also a matter of redress, and stems in large part from Heaney's conscious or unconscious desire not to distance himself from his origins, but rather to exemplify them through the elegant simplicity of language. The redress of poetry is an issue that Heaney is remarkably adapted to presenting.

Throughout the 10 lectures reverberates the overall theme of redress — in its dictionary sense meaning reparation, and in one of its obsolete definitions suggesting "a course where something unhindered, yet directed, can sweep ahead into its full potential." The first poem cited, Robert Frost's allegorical "Directive," commences with the hard monosyllabics of desolation, "Back out of all this now too much for us," but glimpses nevertheless a potential order of things "beyond confusion" and implies "that the imaginative transformation of human life is the means by which we can most truly grasp and comprehend it." Poetry, Heaney states, is essentially an answer to the conditions of the world given in poetry's own terms rather than the language of uplift. "To effect the

redress of poetry, it is not necessary for the poet to be aiming deliberately at social or political change." Which, of course, does not mean the poet dodges his civic responsibilities; only that poetry reconciles two orders, the practical and the poetic, the former teaching us how to live, the latter how to live more abundantly. When Mr. Mandela's writing rises to a noble statement, that statement has been earned. It has behind it the full weight of a life endured for the sake of the principles it affirms.

Consequently, there is genuine healing power rather than mere rhetorical uplift in Mr. Mandela's espousal of the aims of the Durban conference, and the conference could well adopt as its sacred text something he wrote in his book, "Long Walk to Freedom": "It was during those long and lonely years that my hunger for the freedom of my own people became a hunger for the freedom of all people, black and white. I knew as well as I knew anything that the oppressor must be liberated just as surely as the oppressed. I am not truly free if I am taking away someone else's freedom, just as surely as I am not free when my freedom is taken away from me. The oppressed and the oppressor alike are robbed of their humanity."

With such personal, individual empathy, Mr. Mandela shows himself to be an artist of human possibility. He might well be called an activist, but he has a visionary understanding and would surely agree with the conviction that sustains. Highly recommended for anyone to whom poetry is important and feels that most criticism seems to miss the point. These lectures were originally conceived and delivered as individual pieces, but as a collection they also provide an account and defence of Heaney's philosophy of poetry. Heaney deals with poems from the point of view of a reader to whom poetry is important as a means of understanding and coping with life — for whom, as he says, poetry is "strong enough to help". As literary criticism they are excellent (if eclectic), and are particularly valuable because they are free of much of the nonsense which creeps into academic commentary on poetry. This isn't to say that Heaney always makes perfect sense, and a couple of the pieces veer towards self-indulgence; nevertheless they are extremely readable, stimulating and — an extremely rare thing in critical writing — inspiring.

In 'The Redress of Poetry, Heaney wants now to speak directly to the issue of aesthetic release and its relation to ethical concern. This impossible and necessary relation is one interrogated afresh by artists in each generation….[He] suggests that the truest ethical concern for the writer must be the widening of consciousness, first on his own part and then perhaps on the part of his readers….But when the chief aspect of poetic utterance which is being appreciated is ethical intent–as in all the chant about 'the personal is political' and 'the poetry of witness'–the time requires Heaney's insistence on the irrepressibility of headlong imagination and spontaneous linguistic freedom which he finds not only in Marlowe but also in the comic energy of Merriman.

Heaney wants to think of poetry not only as something that intervenes in the world, redressing or correcting imbalances, but also as something that must be redressed–re-established, celebrated as itself. The criticism poets write is most often interesting because of their own poetry, but Heaney's criticism would be read even if it were

unbolstered by a contiguous poetic achievement. The essays are not always startlingly revisionary; they are the result of a deeply personal engagement that has been transmuted into what feels like common–communal–sense. Heaney has the most flexible and beautiful lyric voice of our age, and his prose often answers his poetry in a run of subtle and subtly resonant phrasing….The essays in 'The Redress of Poetry' have more cumulative force than individual character….If Heaney does not have the original prose voice of Auden or Eliot, he has maintained for English poetry a responsive, gratified, and radical ear. Heaney's tendency is to look for the poet's visionary prowess within a repressive social context. This is not a simple political stance…but the endurance of the poet's words to envision either a Utopia or a chaotic universe entrapped by its priorities.

The position of a poet within the political and social movements of their times is a precarious one in that the poet has two public duties to fulfill, while at the same time has many personal obligations that cannot be negotiated or subsumed for any public option that might present itself. Heaney often quotes Stephen Dedalus's dictum that the poet, famous or not, unconsciously or not, "forge[s] the uncreated unconscious of the race," and I think this is indicative of the tension and tradition from which Heaney himself must fall back upon and uphold. This pulling, this turning of the head one way at one moment, another way the next second can prove to be quite debilitating when there is any sort of self-conscious self-reflection. The poet remains hidden under layers of public namings and roles he must play, but at the same time has this inner privacy that tries desperately to remain unaltered and true to the poet's techne, that all-encompassing descriptor of means and ends, teachable and unteachable.

But what does this mean for the poet, this moment of looking back and forward that remains perpetually encased in all uncoverings and disclosures? For Heaney it remains essentially the pull between private and public, between personal motivations and wants and public demands and beckonings–those "daunting pressures and responsibilities on anyone who would risk the name of poet." Much of the time, Heaney remains focused towards his discipline, his techne, which is that of "Seamus Heaney, Nobel laureate poet." But is this what remains of Heaney after these namings are taken off? What of the Heaney who sits in front of his fireplace reading Eastern European poets? What of the Heaney who talks to his wife on a nightly basis, and does the usual "person" duties that all of the masses who read his texts do? What of the Heaney that is underneath the all-encompassing propaganda machine that is the literary trade in Western neo-liberal capitalist states?

The conflict of topos, figuratively and literally, is teased out throughout much of Heaney's prose works. He seems constantly lost within these dueling forces, who present to him no answers but more problems and questions in which the poet, consciously or not, answers with what Pinsky calls the "feel to answer, a promise to respond." But this response, as Heaney continues, throws the poet's experience into a "labyrinth" from which the aporia of his situation arises and becomes pronounced as a poet to face and take heed of. Heaney is taking his own frontiers of his written work and recasting it within the needed commentary of what it means to be a poet in a specific

historical situation that seems to have no alternatives, no ways of curing the disease of contempt and historical baggage. Heaney wants poetry to provide an alternative:

Poetry that is, being instrumental in adjusting and correcting imbalances in the world, poetry as an intended intervention into the goings-on of society–even then, poetry is involved with supreme fictions as well as actual conditions. What [poetry] is offering is a glimpsed alternative, a world to which 'we turn incessantly and without knowing it.'

Poetry can do this, I think, to a certain event. I would argue even more so in Ireland than in the United States, where poetry has fallen below many other forms of cultural creations and is now considered romantic entertainment by the catchy media conglomerates who control dissemination of ideas. But with the Irish still caught up in troubles that are beyond borders and nationalities (all people everywhere should be worried about what is going on in Ireland), it still remains to be seen what poetry can do for specific cultural/social realities. I mean, honestly, is poetry going to provide an alternative political reality for someone stuck in a abusive/discriminatory social environment? Is poetry going to provide some notion of truth that is obtainable by a populace of literate people? Heaney comments:

To be a source of truth and at the same time a vehicle of harmony: this expresses what we would like poetry to be and it takes me back to the kinds of pressure which poets from Northern Ireland are subject to. These poets feel with a special force a need to be true to the negative nature of the evidence and at the same time to show an affirming flame, the need to be both socially responsible and creatively free.

What Heaney is describing is something that is long past in his career and at the same time something he speaks of in the present tense–the need to be cognizant at all times the historical milieu that the artist, the poet is thrown in existentially, is under the influence of intellectually, and must respond tow as a figure that provides alternative worlds from which some escape can be had be an audience.

A poet's political views will more likely turn up in his prose, but even here Mr. Heaney is wary. That very wariness was the subject of a series of public lectures he gave between 1989 and 1994 as the Professor of Poetry at Oxford. Ten of those fifteen lectures have now been gathered in "The Redress of Poetry," and the result is a meditation on the uses of art and power, a fresh and astute defence of poetry against any attempt to reduce it to a relevant or useful commodity. Poets from Sir Philip Sidney to Percy Bysshe Shelley to Wallace Stevens have all written impassioned, stirring defences of their art. In its more reasoned, subtle and amiable way, Mr. Heaney's new book takes an honoured place with theirs.

Poetry is not printout, never merely a fading duplicate of experience. Instead, the book's title essay insists, a poem is the imagined alternative: "If our given experience is a labyrinth, its impassability can still be countered by the poet's imagining some equivalent of the labyrinth and presenting himself and us with a vivid experience of it." And reading, then, is a fable about crossing from one dimension of reality to another.

Poetry's counter reality, furthermore, is meant to complicate experience rather than simplify it, to distort in order to reveal. Grotesque or ecstatic, its excess is meant to balance "life's inadequacies, desolations and atrocities" without being expected to assume ethical obligations or political motives. Mr. Heaney's first principle is pleasure. After all, "no honest reader of poems . . . would see moral improvement or, for that matter, political education, as the end and purpose of his or her absorption in a poetic text." The pleasure we take in poems — even our guilty pleasure in poems written by a talented "oppressor" — comes from their sensuous bravura, from their ability to include what Rilke once called "the side of life that is turned away from us," and finally from their instinct to transform the circumstances and conditions of life.

An exemplary reading of Christopher Marlowe's "Hero and Leander," which was written in the late 1580's, makes his point convincingly. Mr. Heaney first read the poem as a student at Queen's University in Belfast, and even then could see it as an example of nascent English imperialism: "This English pentameter marched in step with the invading English armies of the late Tudor period." However he may have winced at the implication, he thrilled to the lines, and he began to see how Marlowe's mind worked: "a mind that knows both the penalties of life and its invitations, one closer to the spirit of carnival than to the shock tactics of agitprop." Marlowe's gorgeous poem of doomed love is, at its grandest, a parable about the motion of the soul, a motion toward liberation and beatitude but "countered by an implicit acknowledgment of repression and constraint." Its artistic virtuosity, in other words, is at once undercut and heightened by its psychological realism.

In his "Defense of Poesy," Sir Philip Sidney linked the creative act of the poet with the pursuit of virtue, "since our erected wit maketh us know what perfection is, and yet our infected will keepeth us from reaching unto it." There is, of course, something too simple . . . about that account of the matter. . . . There's more phenomenological accuracy in John Keats's notion that poetry surprises by a fine excess, although it's worth remembering that by "excess" Keats did not mean just a sensuous overabundance of description. What he also had in mind was a general gift for outstripping the reader's expectation, an inventiveness that cannot settle for the conventional notion that enough is enough, but always wants to extend the alphabet of emotional and technical expression. Even a poem as tonally sombre as, say, "Tintern Abbey" is doing something surprising and excessive, getting further back and deeper in than the poet knew it would, the poet being nevertheless still ready to go with it. . . . At these moments there is always a kind of homeopathic benefit for the reader in experiencing the shifts and extensions which constitute the life of a poem. An exuberant rhythm, a display of metrical virtuosity, some rising intellectual ground successfully mounted — experiencing things like these gratifies and furthers the range of the mind's and the body's pleasures, and helps the reader to obey the old command: nosce teipsum. Know thyself.

Redress of Poetry display much of the intellectual restlessness, linguistic wizardry and political conscience that have shaped Heaney's own poetry. His thesis is that poetry of the highest order must redress social imbalances, at once transfiguring the circumstances it observes and offering an unforeseen, more humane, aesthetic

alternative. This is an abstract and rigorous idea, yet non-academic readers will find much to savour as Heaney tests and refines his paradigm in light of a largely canonical selection of poets (most are from the British Isles). Ranging freely from a brief life of each poet to a close reading of a few poems by him or her, he addresses, for instance, how Elizabeth Bishop's "One Art" assuages the "loss" to which it alludes; how Christopher Marlowe's "Hero and Leander" "extended the alphabet" of Elizabethan sexual mores; and how 19th-century rustic poet John Clare achieved a truly lyrical local idiom at odds with official English. With their palpable evocation of the writing process and their disavowal of jargon and trendy political abstractions, these are exemplary essays? and tell us much about the influences and obsessions of this year's Nobel laureate in literature.

By "redress" Heaney means the preferred definition of compensation for a wrong, but he also intends the obsolete meaning of bringing hunting dogs back to the chase, since poetry is a game of "fundamentally self-delighting inventiveness," one in which a force "unhindered, yet directed, can sweep ahead into its full potential." Eminently readable, the various essays here are united by a personal yet profound tone. They explore a broad range of poets, from Christopher Marlowe and John Clare to W.B. Yeats and Elizabeth Bishop, but Heaney's focus is on poetry's ability to redress "all of life's inadequacies, desolations, and atrocities," not by means of direct political response but simply by being its own intrinsic reward. For all literary collections.

Heaney's sonorous lyricism stems from his love of the cycles of country life, the mystery of the sea, the satisfying rhythm of hard, physical work. But Heaney loves poetry and poetics as well as nature and expresses this passion in his forceful if demanding literary essays. Heaney explains how poetry balances the "scales of reality towards some transcendent equilibrium." After considering all the burdens contemporary poets carry, from the long tradition of the form itself to pressing political perspectives, Heaney still insists that "poetry cannot afford to lose its fundamentally self-delivery.

Poetry is as much relevant as ever even in this highly industrialised age of ours. Discuss with reference to Seamus Heaney. (P.U. 2006)

Poetry has always been a powerful medium throughout human history; even in this industrialised and mechanised age, poetry does have a function to play because where politics divides, poetry unites. Seamus Heaney in his essay "Redress of Poetry" defines the effectiveness and creative role of poetry in society. He disagrees with the idea of PLATO in 'The Republic' who regards poets as an idle creature Heaney defends poetry by explaining its functions in society. He also points of that the true art of poetry is above all prejudices ad worldly considerations. He says that art should not lose its effectiveness by representing Culture and Politics.

Seamus Heaney sustains very clear notions about art in general and poetry in particular. Coming from Irish background, he closely observed the relationship between art and politics. The first problem he faced due to the influence of politics was of language.

English was regarded as the language of the enemy and English literature was unacceptable to Heaney's countrymen was, therefore, an unpatriotic act.

Heaney began to feel that Irish patriotism, particularly the fanatic nationalism was poisonous rather than healthy. It only served to narrow down the Irish thinking. Irish language and tradition were a work of national identity but on the other hand were chains binding free thinking. The study of English literature, Heaney thought, exposed him to thought outside the Irish culture and enlarged his mind. Heaney's poetry, therefore, looks within but also beyond the Irish.

Stevens and many others believe that poetry is not meant just for aesthetic satisfaction. Their view was that poetry cannot and should not be divorced from politics. Poetry must speak for those who have been suppressed; who cannot speak for themselves. Poetry is the voice of redress Stevens disagrees with those who only emphasise the aesthetic and artistic value of poetry. According to this point, of view poetry creates a world of art as opposed to the world of reality. Heaney does not feel happy with this role of poetry. Poetry shall do more than just reflect.

Heaney evaluates the dangers of the influence of politics on poetry. He says that Politics damages the faculty of rationality, therefore, the poets cannot serve society with utility of poetry. He says poets should not narrow down their scope by limiting poetry to certain dimensions of time and space. It should be free from any restriction. Some demand that poets should write against the common trend to shock the minds of people. They should write revolutionary poetry. But the impact of poetry is not practical; it is psychological. Poetry does not forces man to go and fight. But the poetry shows that what is wrong and what is right. It is the most important function of poetry to create psychological effect rather than lead to violent practically. If poetry becomes practical, according to Heaney, it will not remain poetry, it will become propaganda.

Heaney explains that in time of practical tensions and national disaster, there was common trend of generalising and simplifying the situation in black and white. The real point is that a political situation is never too simple as to be labelled into opposite elements. Politics divides men, poetry promotes the love of men. Poetry shows that all men are human beings and they deserve sympathy. But politics tell us that some deserve our wrath. If poetry becomes politics then it will not remain poetry, it will divide humanity into friends and foes.

To evaluate the role of poetry in Political crises, Heaney quotes W.B Yeats, an Irish poet; who remembers the Irish men who were killed in the rising of 1916. But he is also sorry for the English men who died in the fight. Talking about the humanitarian zeal of poetry, Heaney says that Yeats considers both enemies and friends as men. He does not discriminate between the Irish People and the English people. Poetry conveys to us, everyman whether black or white Irish and English, has the same feelings, passions and blood. All should be regarded as equal and there should be no compromise on merit. In short, Poetry should not follow the force of gravity.

Regarding this role of poetry, Heaney quotes Simone Weil, who in her book, "Gravity and Grace", writes that the function of poetry is to serve as a balancing force. In Politics we are always carried away by the force of gravity we always, try to side with the weak party. The point which poet wants to make is that it is not the function of poet and poetry to side with the weak party. The poet should go with the merit of the case. If the weak is wrong, then it is necessary not to support it rather it must be condemned. Poetry speaks the truth. It does not seek balance; Politics seeks balances. As poetry is not politics, it should not try to strike a balance; it should support where the truth lies.

Heaney neither rejects the influence of politics and poetry fully, nor accepts it totally. He seeks the ideal midway where poetry serves its role of entertainment and providing needed ideas for the betterment of humanity. To Heaney, poet is a universal figure. He is a member of a community but he is also a citizen of the world- a representative of humanity without regarding religious, sexual, regional and social differences. He considers poet an observer not a participant in political movement and an observer must not take sides.

Political and industrial influences have always been in the history of world; only 20th century is a little more prominent in this case; but the we have seen that even the present age does accommodates poetry because poetry is human and where there are humans (however industrialised, politicised and mechanised), there is poetry.

Culture and Imperialism

Edward Said; 1935 –2003

Edward W. Said was born in Jerusalem, Palestine and attended schools there and in Cairo. He was a Christian Arab. He received his B.A. from Princeton and his M.A. and Ph.D. from Harvard. He is University Professor at Columbia. He is the author of Orientalism, The Question of Palestine, Covering Islam, After the Last Sky, and Culture and Imperialism.

He delivered his speech Culture and Imperialism at York University, Toronto, February 10, 1993. He was an influential writer, speaker and teacher. 1950's he went to the USA and studied at Princeton and Howard. His writings have been translated into 26 languages. Orientalism is his most influential book which presents the Western view of the Islamic World. It is limited to the Middle East only but it covers the whole landscape occupied by 19th and 20th century. He had been a teacher of Literature (Comparative) and made critical and literary analysis of most writers literary allusions are frequently found in his political works. He died on 25th September, 2003.

Edward Said's views on Culture and Imperialism

Culture and Imperialism is a lecture by ES. It briefly surveys the formation of Western Culture to show that the process itself was a result of imperialism. In defining the two terms he says that

Culture: The learned, accumulated experience of communities and it consists of socially transmitted patterns of behavior. According to the anthropologist Cliff Greety, Culture is: An ordered system of meanings and symbols in terms of which social interaction take place.

Imperialism: (According to OED may be defined as): aggressive expansion of peoples at the expense of the neighbors. This has been going on for years.

Imperialism implies some sort of collective premeditation which means a policy formed at home by the imperialistic force before launching an offensive against another nation. The Historian Solomon Modell says: "Imperialism is a policy extending a country's power beyond its own borders for the purpose of exploiting other lands and other peoples by establishing economic, social and political control over them."

Introduction to the Book: Culture and Imperialism is an important document. Edward Said explains his own concepts of Culture and Imperialism. Edward Said explains Imperialism as "the practice, the theory and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center that rules a distant territory." Imperialism originated with the industrial revolution in 19th century. The British and the French held sway over a large part of the globe.

For the industrial revolution, cheap raw material and labor was needed so for the development of the backward countries, loud claims were made out to be need of the nations. The slave nations were taught to regard it as a blessing. 1st world war ended the European Imperialism to some extent, but the 2nd world war brought about it. The two hot wars initiated a major cold war between USSR and the USA. Thus, Imperialism took a new shape. The USA reduced USSR and came to be the sole super power. It the USA-based Imperialism that ES targets in his works.

The book also has its literary merits like Conrad's Heart of Darkness, E.M. Forster's A Passage to India and many others.

Important Textual areas of his Speech: "The 19th century is rise of the west for its dominating posture." "It grabbed lands so largely and abundantly as never before." "The industrial revolution caused imperialism."

Colonialism, almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territories. Imperialism is simply the process or policy of establishing or maintaining an empire.

Direct colonialism of the British in India, the French in Algeria and Morocco has largely ended but Imperialism exists. Russia acquired bordering lands and the British and the French jumped thousands of miles for occupation.

The Soviet Union's and America's super power status which was enjoyed a little less than half a century derives from very different histories than those of Britain and France in the 19th century. In the expansion of western empires, profit and the hope of further profit was important – spices, sugar, slaves, cotton etc. gold. There was very little domestic resistance to foreign dominations in Britain & France because the superior thought it a metaphysical obligation to rule the inferior. According to them, their imperialism was different from that of the Romans who were for the loot but they went there with an idea of civilizing and improving their life.

We see in the empire nothing but a mitigated disaster for the native people. It was their native, cultural design and need that matured imperialism and they regret it now. Imperialism has caused dislocations, homelessness for the Muslims, Africans and the West Indians. They have created the troubles for Britain and France and also caused the emergence of Soviet and later today America.

According to Arno Mayer's telling phrase, "of the old regime" The Willy Brandt Report, entitled North-South: A program for the survival published in 1980. It says that the needs of the poorest nations must be addressed. Hunger must be abolished and other problems solved. The main purpose is power-sharing in decision making within the monetary and financial institutions.

It is different to disagree with it. But how will the changes occur? The post-war classification of all nations into three worlds: First world, Second world and the third

world. The solution is the revised attitude to education, to urge students on insistence of their identity, culture and democracy, thus nationalism is the solution.

The relationship between culture and empire is one that enables disquieting forms of domination. Imperialism considered the mixture of cultures and identities on a large scale, but its worst and the most paradoxical gift was to allow people to believe that there only white, black, western or oriental.

Imperialistic allusions from literature: He believes that novel has been important in formation of imperialistic attitudes, references, and experiences. He calls Robinson Crusoe "the prototype of modern realistic novel". He draws his arguments particularly from the novel because he believes that "Narrative is crucial to my argument here, my basic point being that story are at the heart of what explorers and novelists say about strange regions of the world, they also become the method colonized people use to assert there an identity and the existence of their own history." Said further argues that narratives of emancipation and enlightenment mobilized the people to rise against the yoke of imperialism. The stories of Sir Walter Scott charged the Scottish nation against the British rule. Edward Said cites Mathew Arnold who says that culture is each society's reservoir of the best that has been known and thought. Literature is, no doubt, the mirror that faithfully captures and reflects the picture of culture.

He says that his entire life was devoted to teaching culture. He developed the habit of looking for the imperialistic implications in the stories. He says that in Great Expectations by Charles Dickens "What Dickens envisions for Pip, being Magwitch's London Gentlemen is roughly equivalent to what was envisioned by English benevolence for Australia." Edward Said believes that nearly all Dickens' businessmen, wayward relatives and frightening outsides have a fairly normal and secure connection with Empire.

Edward Said highly admired Joseph Conrad – a star novelist of the late Victorian period for his superb criticism of Imperialism, especially in the Heart of Darkness which is still highly relevant to the situation across the world.

Edward Said's message is that Imperialism is not about a moment in history, it is about a continuing interdependent discourse between subject peoples and the dominant empire. Said's view of the empire and colonialism is best expressed through Fanny and Sir Thomas from Jane Austen's Mansfield Park which is the story of Fanny's being taken into Sir Thomas's life at Mansfield Park where she eventually adjusts into the role of mistress of "estate". Fanny was poor. Her parents are not capable managers of wealth. These skills she acquires when she goes to Mansfield Park to live at 10. Said's comment on Jane Austen's writings highlight the extent to which he sees in her the reflection of empire.

Culture and Imperialism : Introduction

The extraordinary reach of Western imperialism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is one of the most astonishing facts in all of geopolitical history. Neither Rome,

nor Byzantium, nor Spain at the height of its glory came close to the imperial scope of France, the United States, and particularly Great Britain in these years.

But while the rule of these vast dominions left scarcely a corner of life untouched in either the colonies or the imperialist capitals, its profound influence upon the cultural products of the West has been largely ignored. In this dazzling work of historical inquiry, Edward Said shows how the justification for empire-building was inescapably embedded in the Western cultural imagination during the Age of Empire, and how even today the imperial legacy colors relations between the West and the formerly colonized world at every level of political, ideological, and social practice.

With Culture and Imperialism, Said offers a powerful investigation of the relationship between culture and the imperialism of the West. Probing masterpieces of the Western tradition--including Austen's Mansfield Park, Conrad's Heart of Darkness, Verdi's Aida, and Camus's The Stranger-Said illuminates how the justification for empire-building in the 19th and early 20th centuries was inescapably embedded in the cultural imagination of the West. The result was a way of thinking that affirmed not merely the Europeans' right but also their obligation to rule--and touched nearly every facet of life in both the colonies and the imperial capitals.

Said reveals as well how writers such as W. B. Yeats, Salman Rushdie, Aime Cesair, and Chinua Achebe have challenged this imperial vision to reclaim for their peoples the right of self-determination in history and literature. Imperialist assumptions, Said argues, continue to influence our politics and our arts--from the media s coverage of the Gulf War to debates about what literatures are worth teaching in our schools. Finally, Said argues for awareness that all cultures are interdependent and that the true human community is global. Probing some of the great masterpieces of the Western tradition - including Conrad's Heart of Darkness, Austen's Mansfield Park, Verdi's Aida, and Camus's L'Estranger - Said brilliantly illuminates how culture and politics cooperated, knowingly and unknowingly, to produce a system of domination that involved more than cannon and soldiers - a sovereignty that extended over forms, images, and the very imaginations of both the dominators and the dominated. The result was a "consolidated vision" that affirmed not merely the Europeans' right to rule but their obligation, and made alternative arrangements unthinkable. Pervasive as this vision was, however, it did not go unchallenged. Edward Said also traces the development of an "oppositional strain" in the works of native writers who participated in the perilous process of cultural decolonization. Working mainly in the languages of their colonial masters, these writers - including William Butler Yeats, Aime Cesaire, and Chinua Achebe - identified and exposed mechanisms of control and repression. In so doing, they reclaimed for their peoples the right of self-determination in history and literature. In today's post-colonial world, Said argues, imperialist assumptions continue to influence Western politics and culture, from the media's coverage of the Gulf War to debates over what histories and literatures are worth teaching in our schools. But his vision reveals a hopeful truth: if the West and its former subject peoples are to achieve a meaningful, harmonious coexistence, it will depend upon the development of a humanistic historical understanding that all cultures are interdependent, that they inevitably borrow from one

another. Finally this passionate and immensely learned book points the way beyond divisive nationalisms toward awareness that the true human community is global.

Imperialism: Imperialism is a practice by which powerful nations or peoples seek to extend and maintain control or influence over weaker nations or peoples. Scholars frequently use the term more restrictively: Some associate imperialism solely with the economic expansion of capitalist states; others reserve it for European expansion after 1870. Although imperialism is similar in meaning to colonialism, and the two terms are sometimes used interchangeably, they should be distinguished. Colonialism usually implies formal political control, involving territorial annexation and loss of sovereignty. Imperialism refers; more broadly, to control or influence that is exercised either formally or informally, directly or indirectly, politically or economically.

History: Imperialism dates from antiquity, and throughout history it has taken many forms. In any given historical period, certain forms tend to be more prevalent than others. In the ancient world imperialism manifested itself in a series of great empires that arose when one people, usually representing a particular civilization and religion, attempted to dominate all others by creating a unified system of control. The empire of Alexander the Great and the Roman Empire are salient examples.

Early modern European imperialism (1400-1750), by contrast, generally took the form of overseas colonial expansion. Rather than one state attempting to unify the world, in this period many competing states established political control over territories in South and Southeast Asia and in the New World. Imperial systems were organized according to the doctrine of mercantilism: Each imperial state attempted to control the trade of its colonies, in order to monopolize the benefits of that trade.

In the mid-19th century yet another variant of imperialism appeared, the imperialism of free trade. The practice endured in this period even though mercantilism and the pace of formal empire building declined significantly. European, especially British, power and influence were extended informally, mainly through diplomatic and economic means, rather than formally, through direct colonial rule. The imperialism of free trade, however, was short-lived: By the end of the 19th century European powers were once again practicing imperialism in the form of overseas territorial annexation, expanding into Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. Since the end of World War II, when most of the formal empires were dissolved, what might be called modern economic imperialism has come to predominate. Control is exercised informally and less overtly. The U.S., for instance, exerts considerable influence over certain Third World nations, as a result of its national economic power and its dominance of certain international financial organizations, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Similarly, European powers have continued to affect significantly the politics and the economics of their former colonies, and they have consequently been accused of neocolonialism—the exercise of effective sovereignty without the formality of colonial rule.

Motives behind Imperialism: Historically, states have been motivated to pursue imperialism for a variety of reasons, which may be classified broadly as economic,

political, and ideological. Theories of imperialism break down similarly, according to which motive or motives are viewed as primary.

Economic explanations of imperialism are the most common. Proponents of this view hold that states are motivated to dominate others by the need to expand their economies, to acquire raw materials and additional sources of labor, or to find outlets for surplus capital and markets for surplus goods. The most prominent economic theories, linking imperialism with capitalism, are derived from those of Karl Marx. Lenin, for example, explained the European expansion of the late 19th century as the inevitable outcome of the need for the European capitalist economies to export their surplus capital. Similarly, contemporary Marxists explain the postwar expansion of the U.S. into the Third World in terms of economic imperatives.

Alternatively, some stress the political determinants of imperialism, contending that states are motivated to expand primarily by the desire for power, prestige, security, and diplomatic advantages vis-à-vis other states. In this view, late 19th-century French imperialism was intended to restore France's international prestige after its humiliating defeat in the Franco-Prussian War. Similarly, Soviet expansion into Eastern Europe after 1945 can be understood in terms of security needs, specifically the need to protect the nation from another invasion across its western border.

A third set of explanations focuses on ideological or moral motives. According to this perspective, political, cultural, or religious beliefs force states into imperialism as a "missionary activity." Britain's colonial empire was motivated at least in part by the idea that it was the "white man's burden" to civilize "backward" peoples. Germany's expansion under Hitler was based in large measure on a belief in the inherent superiority of German national culture. The desire of the USA to "protect the free world" and of the former Soviet Union to "liberate" the peoples of Eastern Europe and the Third World are also examples of imperialism driven by moral and ideological concerns.

Finally, some explanations of imperialism focus not on the motives of powerful states but rather on the political circumstances in weaker states. The argument holds that powerful states may not intend to expand, but may be forced to by instability on the periphery; new imperial actions result from past imperial commitments. The British conquest of India and the Russian colonization of Central Asia in the 19th century are classic examples of reactive imperialism.

The Effects of Imperialism: Because imperialism is so often viewed as economically motivated, discussions of its effects also tend to revolve around economic issues. Disagreement arises between those who believe that imperialism implies exploitation and is responsible for the underdevelopment and economic stagnation of the poor nations, and those who argue that although the rich nations benefit from imperialism, the poor nations also benefit, at least in the long run. The truth has been difficult to ascertain for at least two reasons: (1) No consensus has been reached on the meaning of exploitation, and (2) it is frequently difficult to disentangle the domestic causes of poverty from those that are possibly international. What is apparent is that the

impact of imperialism is uneven: Some poor nations have enjoyed greater economic benefits from contact with the rich than have others. India, Brazil, and other developing nations have even begun to compete economically with their former colonial powers. Thus, it is prudent to examine the economic impact of imperialism on a case-by-case basis.

The political and psychological effects of imperialism are equally difficult to determine. Imperialism has proven both destructive and creative: For better or worse, it has destroyed traditional institutions and ways of thinking and has replaced them with the habits and mentality of the Western world.

Culture and Imperialism : Stripping the mask from the ugly face of Imperialism

Before discussing Edward Said's views on culture and imperialism, it is better to have a brief view on those events, reasons and trends of English Society which caused extending or expanding their culture and imperialism to the other territories of the world. We shall talk historically at first as the history of English society shows though the trend of industrialization had been initiated or started in the 17th century yet it took its speed or rapidity in 18th century.

Under the influence of this trend of industrialization, the landlords, farmers and peasants of rural class of English society were converting their farms, lands and dairies into industrial units. As the industries or industrial units were becoming more under the influence of the trend of industrialism in European countries, hence their demands for raw material as iron, silver, chemical, oil, stone etc. were also increased. To fulfill their basic needs arid demands of running the industrial units for modernization, European as well as other super powers extended their immense power to the other territories of the other weaker or underdeveloped countries which were loaded with natural sources and raw material. To capture the natural sources of other territories of the countries, the imperial countries dominated over metropolitan centres of other countries and then started ruling over distant territories.

It is very worthy to note here that these imperial countries outwardly gave an expression to the rest of the world that they had intervened or came into these territories in order to civilize the ignorant, uncivilized and uncultured natives but as a matter of fact is concerned, they intruded in their countries in order to loot or capture their natural resources of raw materials. That's why, Edward Said says rightly that this immense power which concentrated in Britan and France as a result of industrialization, was more formidable than the power of Rome, Spain, Baghdad or Constantinople in the past. Gradually, other Western countries especially USA also joined with Britain and France in this practice. So, we can say that 19th century showed a climax of ascendancy of the west.

Here, Edward Said also points out a very important fact that Western countries extended their domination of acquisition of foreign territory by the rate of 247000 square miles a

year. These Western countries did so under the influence of their expanding economics which were "hungry for overseas markets, raw materials, cheap labour and fertile land".

This practice increased more after the mergence of the North American territory. Now these allied countries captured distant lands of Philippines, the Caribbean Central America, Barbary coastal parts of Europe and the Middle East, Vietnam and Korea. Said rightly says in the regard:

"The US was forward as an empire ...... that would expand its population and territory and increase in power". Subcontinent was also dominated and ruled by Englishmen. As the history of subcontinent itself shows that Englishmen invaded over sub-continent through trade and business and ultimately occupied the whole territory. As this territory was enriched or loaded with mineral and natural sources, it fulfilled the demands and needs of raw material for the industrial units of the Western Countries for a long time.

There was a time when Romans also exploited or looted the territories of other countries but the exploitation of the rights of the natives of dominated territories by the imperialism of French and the British was different in its nature. In other words, it means to say that they went out with the aim of improving those backward regions. It was their outward feigned declaration which, history had itself shown the falsity of that flattering notion. They were more interested in exploiting and looting their rights as well as raw materials than civilizing them.

To prove this fact, Said gives reference of Conrad's Heart of Darkness in which Conrad has openly and ruthlessly exposed the violation, exploitation and cruelty of the natives of Congo in Africa by the Englishmen. Another writer named as Franz Fanon also openly says in this regard in the following words:

"Colonialism and imperialism have not paid their dues when they withdrew their flags and their police forces from our territories. For centuries the foreign colonists have behaved in the under developed world like nothing more than criminals".

The literature of this time only exhibits the vice of imperialism because whatever the writers and critics felt in that period portrayed through their literary compositions and works. Edward Said rightly says in this connection:

"Imperialism means the practice, the theory and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre that rules a distant territory".

Throwing light on the term "colonialism" Edward Said utters: "Colonialism which is almost always a consequence of imperialism is the implanting of settlements on distant territory".

There is no doubt in saying that some European writers of that time wrote on the problem of nostalgia; faced by dislocated natives and immigrants who were colonialized in the foreign territories; it was nothing but a yearning for-the supremacy which they enjoyed.

After the Second World War, imperialism did not come to an end even after the post-war decolonization. The cultural effects of western countries can even be observed or seen in the countries like India and Algeria which are still linked in a legacy of connections to France and Britain.

The ending of the second world war heralded the message of freedom and liberty from the foreign imperial rulers and as a result many colonized territories were decolonized, yet the influence of the cultural rites and customs was very much dominant on the ways of life of subjugated people of dominated and occupied territories by western rulers. Though direct colonialism like the British in India' and French in Algeria has almost vanished yet it does not end from its roots absolutely. Now it is present in its other forms. It is rather reflected in the changed outlook or mentality of the two nations.

It is very worthy to note here that some of the European writers defined imperialism as: "... ideas that certain people and certain territories require and beseech domination".

Some European writers and critics of the second half of the 19th century illustrated this above mentioned idea by favouring it as that India was created only in order to be ruled by England. Edward Said quoted Kipling's novel Kim to support in this connection.

Edward Said further says in his lecturers on "Culture and Imperialism" that after the end of the cold war, the super powers of the world devised a new world order. In this respect or regard, USA is at the top of the list. In other simple words, it is a new brand of imperialism.

Willy Brandt presented a so-called report on North South problem in 1980. This report also demanded a sudden solution of the problem because the newly diagnosis of the North South problem was being applied to all the underdeveloped countries in the world. This-new world order is itself a doctrine of USA's responsibility to set things right all over the world.

Now in the present age, we see that USA is the guardian of setting all the things right in all the countries of the world. The 'doctrine of "world responsibility" is taken as justification for USA's involvement in any affair of other countries under the sun. Once again Said absolutely says right in this connection: "The goal of US foreign policy is to bring about a world increasingly subject to the rule of law. But it is the United States which organizes the peace and defines the law".

Edward Said has rightly said that these terms as "world responsibility", "new world order" symbolise a new brand of imperialism. It is also an open and causeless exploitation and loot of the rights as well as the raw materials of the third world countries. In this present age, we see that under the guise of world's responsibility to set things right, the guardian of the world is making its involvement in affairs of the third world in order to fulfill their economic interests by capturing the natural sources and raw materials of these countries rather than having any genuine concern for the people of the world.

In this connection Chomsky rightly condemns this so called western ideology in the following words: "It is an absolute requirement for the western system of ideology that a vast gulf be established between the civilized west, with its traditional commitment to human dignity, liberty and self-determination, and the barbaric brutality of those who, for some reason, perhaps defective genes, fail to appreciate the depth of this historical commitment".

It is also very rightly observed that USA advocates its self-appointed writ which runs in the entire world of today. Americans think that whatever their country thinks or regards, it is just as the rest of the people of the world want.

Edward Said is of the view that if the counter forces to imperialism such as migrant workers, refugees and decolonized people, black immigrants, urban, squatters, students and popular insurrectionists are united on two points—one is of security of personal freedom and second is of environmental concerns, these millions of dislocated people can rise a formidable revolt. Moreover, these dislocated human beings are free from ethnic and national prejudices because their dislocation has made them free from these rational, national and ethnic prejudices. They also know that if they indulge in such kind of petty prejudices, it will help imperialists. They make it easy for them to divide and rule. Actually they are the instruments of the so called and vicious system enforced by imperialism.

To conclude this above mentioned discussion, we can say openly and forcefully that whatever Said has delivered in his lecturer on culture and imperialism, absolutely shows the clear picture of the so called imperialism, exploitation and lootings of the basic rights of natives of the subjugated territories of the world. The hunger of the western economies for fulfilling the needs, necessities and demands of raw materials for industrialization, led the western countries to extend their domination on the distant territories of the other countries in order to capture their natural sources of raw materials. This imperialism even did not come to end after the post war decolonization but it shaped in newly devised world order by the US which was no more than a worst kind of reproduction of the old imperial order under the feigned guise of setting the things right in all the other countries.

Culture and Imperialism : Culture as a “sort of theatre”

A series of lectures that Edward Said delivered on the relationship between culture and empire in the universities in the United States, Canada and England shows that Edward Said wants to expand the appeal of his arguments to the rest of the world. The arguments which he put forward in “Orientalism” were particularly focused on the Middle East but now through the subject matter of these lectures on culture and imperialism, he wants to describe a more general structure of relationship between the modern metropolitan West and its overseas territories.

It is worthy to note here that instead of doing so really by the cores of heart, the imperialists just did not care to apologize. There were their vanity, pride and feigned

arrogance which did not allow them to bow before the people over whom they had ruled. As far as the matter of financial loss is concerned; those who suffered by the land and property, could have been compensated by the imperialists but they did not do so. Instead, they ironically bestowed independence on the natives as a favour which actually could not have been held back longer in the changed post-war situation. The African writer Franz Fanon rightly utters in this regard:

"Colonialism and imperialism did not pay their dues when they withdrew their flags and police forces from our territories".

Edward Said quotes another writer named Noam Chomsky who very aptly and clearly exposes the lame and feigned western claims of civilizing the uncivilized, brutal and ignorant people of Asia and Africa. Apparently Western ideology was of ensuring human dignity, liberty, self-determination and self-sufficient economy for all the independent countries of the world but practically it served for fulfilling the interests of the western imperial powers. In fact, this ideology or claim of the western countries has proved the cruel nature of the Englishmen. They want to keep under developing countries poor, ignorant and insufficient in modern technologies so that they may rule over them through the various money-lending agencies like the World Bank and I.M.F. Whatever Chomsky has pointed out by saying, is absolutely right in the present age. Western imperialists are holding the economies of the third world countries by lending loans through World Bank and I.M.F. and above all they proclaim that they are favouring these countries by helping them in their difficult time of poverty, lack of technology and feeble economy. Noam Chomsky rightly points out in this connection and utters:

"It's an absolute requirement of the western system of ideology that the vast gulf be established between the civilized west, with its traditional commitment to human dignity, liberty and self-determination, and the barbaric brutality of those who, for some reason, perhaps defective genes, fail to appreciate the depth of this historical commitment".

In all aspects whether it is intervention or domination or interference, one thing or reason is very much evident that it is unending thirst or greed for capturing and looting the raw materials of most of the countries of Asia and Africa. Said once again rightly refers to British and French imperialism which once had dominated and penetrated to the farthest territories of distant lands. It had been the practice of imperialistic Englishmen that wherever they found any sign of raw materials in any country, they went for capturing it without caring how many miles these distant territories might be. The subcontinent was one case in point; so was Congo. The history of these continents shows that Englishmen had once ruled over these lands by capturing all their natural resources of raw materials for fulfilling their industrial needs. They came in these lands under the feigned guise of professing an aim of developing the resources for the welfare of the natives, but their intervention was actually inspired by economic and strategic interests.

Their intervention and domination of a long period resulted in an interaction of cultures in the process. Edward Said also takes much interest of this interracial culture which has

its positive and negative results for the natives. Actually these developments and enlightenments did come through the interaction; as it still haunts the nations that remained under imperial rule. He takes too much interest in, the cultural impact of this interaction, and opines that the attitudes and feelings of the nations involved towards each other owe to their origin to the colonial experience of the past.

To conclude this above mentioned discussion, we can say that Said has very openly and clearly exposed the inner cruel nature of imperialistic society of Europe. He has very strictly rebuked and condemned the supreme authority of the United States. After the end of the cold war, America has been assigned a role of setting the things right in all the countries of the third world under the devised term of world's responsibility. USA has also introduced a new world order which is nothing more than a reproduction of the old imperial order. Said's lectures on the subject of culture and imperialism clearly and openly show the feigned supremacy and imperialistic attitude of the Englishmen of western countries. The appeal of his lectures not only affects the subjugated people of the dominated territories of the third world but also the rest of the people of the whole world. Whatever Said has said in his lectures, did absolutely happen in the history; and is still happening by the western countries under the feigned claim of civilizing the uncivilized nations of the third world countries.

Culture and Imperialism : References from English novelists and Novels

When we have an analysis of Said's book "culture and imperialism" in detail, we come to know that the main idea of this book was inspired by Said's earlier work Orientalism. This book was limited to the Middle East. But his book culture and imperialism presents a clear picture of the domination on the distant territories of the countries of Asia and Africa for capturing their natural responses of raw materials by the imperial western countries. Said also includes the Caribbean Islands, Ireland, the Middle East, East and even some certain areas of the USA.

It is also very worthy to note here that Said does not draw his subject matter from European writings on Africa, India, Far East, Australia and the Caribbean Islands. The writings of these European writers were based on rhetorical figures like the mysterious East, the Indian, Africa or Irish mind and further they depicted violation, torture to death, punishment of flogging the primitive barbaric people for civilizing them. They also asserted in their writings that such punishments were being required when they misbehaved or became rebellious.

Said takes much interest in the cultural study of imperialism and is of the view that the best source of such kind of study can be drawn by the fiction of the period. He also believes that the novel serves as the best source of forming of imperialist attitudes, references and experiences of a certain age. Being a professor of Comparative literature, he has devoted his entire professional life to teaching literature and yet his outlook was influenced further by the colonial system of the Englishmen. That's why, it became his habit to expose and draw the imperialistic implications in the stories. Further, he also

quotes the references from the great novelists' works to support his view point on cultural imperialism. Referring to the great novel Great Expectations by Charles Dickens, he says:

"What Dickens envisions for Pip, being Magwitch's London gentleman, is roughly equivalent to what was envisioned by English benevolence for Australia".

As it is known that Said always writes in organizing the resistance against imperialism, so, his genius tallies to Conrad's genius, who also writes on the imperialistic exploitation of the basic rights of Africans by the Englishmen. Being the great admirer of Joseph Conrad, Said's conscience is spurred up or affected by Conrad's superb criticism of imperialism, especially in Heart of Darkness. In this novel, Conrad openly and clearly exposes the feigned claim of civilizing the barbaric uncivilized people of Congo in Africa. Kurtz who was a British administrator, was sent to Congo to prepare a report on the unspeakable rites, customs and behaviours of the savages of Congo and took suitable steps or measures to eliminate these rites. But what Kurtz did there, was absolutely contrary to our expectations because an imperialistic effect got the better hold of his noble intentions and he turned into a beast by looting, exploiting and snatching their basic rights. He became a cruel collector of ivory and started robbing the wealth of the natives of Congo. In short, we can say that this novel is absolutely and rightly regarded as the severest indictment of imperialism. In the very introductory paragraph of Introduction to Culture and Imperialism, Said rightly utters:

"For the enterprise of empire depends upon the idea of having an empire, as Joseph Conrad so powerfully seems to have realized in Heart of Darkness. He says that the difference between us in the modern period, the modern imperialists, and the Romans, is that the Romans were there just for the loot. They were just stealing. But we go there with an idea".

Here, one point is very worthy to note though Said's criticism and indictment of imperialism are not so severe and violent as Conrad's are yet it is his indictment of imperialism which has shaken the sentiments of the people all over the world.

Commenting on Conrad's detachment, Said points out in the following words: "Never the wholly incorporated and fully acculturated Englishman, Conrad therefore preserved an ironic distance (from imperial conquest) in each of his works".

In his views on Culture and Imperialism, Said chooses four novelists whose work clearly highlights and promotes their current ideas of their day about the British Empire.' These four great novelists are as Joseph Conrad, Rudyard Kipling, Jane Austen and Charles Dickens.

Quoting Jane Austen, Said says that it seems that by causally referring to Antigua in Mansfield Park, Austen revealed that she had the empire in the back of her mind most of the time, that she was nevertheless indifferent to tie condition of the subjected peoples. Actually, in the Mansfield Park, she sublimates the agonies of the Caribbean existence to

a mere half dozen passing references to Antigua, and that she dodged facing up to her true responsibility to condemn imperialism and its entire works.

At another place in the book culture and imperialism, Edward Said refers to Dickens in Great Expectations. In this novel, we see that he sent the convict Magwitch off to Australia, which was absolutely a dreadful place, unfit for decent Englishmen; it showed that Dickens intentionally knew that he was a despised colonial lad.

Said is of the views that colonialism is also a consequence of imperialism and it takes its final shape in implanting of settlements on distant territory. Here he quotes the historian Michael Doyle who states as:

"Empire is a relationship, formal or informal, in which one state controls the effective political sovereignty of another political society. It can be achieved by force, by political collaboration, economic, social or cultural dependence. Imperialism is simply the process or policy of establishing or maintaining an empire".

In addition to the novelists, Edward Said also quotes some prominent historians of English society who have differently favoured the imperialism and domination of the western countries. For example, a very allowable but curious idea was propagated by the English historian J.R. Seeley. He was of the views that some of Europe's overseas empires were originally acquired by accident, it does not by any stretch of the imaginative account for their inconsistency, persistence and systemized acquisition and administration, let alone their rule and sheer presence.

As David Landes also speaks in the same connection but to some an extent it is about the industrial expansion of western countries. He states in the following words as "the decision of, certain European power to establish plantations, that is, to treat their colonies as continuous enterprises, was, whatever one may think of the morality, a momentous innovation".

In the mid of 19th century though the era of imperialism came to an end because France and Britain gave up their strong possessions after World War II yet that era had an identity — for example, Eric Hobsbawm, talked about the latter part of the nineteenth century. He utters as: "Though the age of empire clearly had an identity all of its own, and historians talk about it roughly from 1878 through World War II, the meaning of the imperial past is not totally contained within it, but has entered the reality of hundreds of millions of people. Its existence as shared memory in a highly conflicted texture of culture, ideology memory and policy still exercises tremendous force".

Talking about the flattering notion of the French and the British that they were going to improve and civilize the barbaric people of backward regions, Franz Fanon, another historian openly exposes the real cruel nature of exploitation of the imperialists of the western countries in the following words: "Colonialism and imperialism have not paid their dues when they withdrew their flags and their police forces from our territories. For

centuries the foreign colonists have behaved in the underdeveloped world like nothing more than criminals".

The end of the Cold War resulted in a new world order with the United States at the top. Edward Said is of the views here that it is a new kind of imperialism which gave US an authority of setting things right all over the world. In the present age, we see its implimentation in almost all the countries of the third world because this doctrine of "world responsibility is now considered as justification for US involvement in any affair of every country.

In this regard, Said rightly quotes the words of Chomsky who aptly and beautifully lashes out at the western ideology of "world order" and "world responsibility" in the following words: "It is an absolute requirement for the western system of ideology that a vast gulf be established between the civilized west, with its traditional commitment to human dignity, liberty and self determination, and the barbaric brutality of those who, for some reason perhaps defective genes, fail to appreciate the depth of this historical commitment, so well revealed by America's Asian Wars, for instance".

In the concluding portion of the book, Said gives reference from Kurnan's saying who points out that now America's self-appointed writ is running and working throughout the world today. As the utters: "America loved to think that whatever it wanted was just what the human race wanted".

Every prominent critic knows and believes that the counter forces to imperialism are migrant workers, refugees, and decolonized people. Imperialism always threatens personal freedom as well as environment ironically under the guise of trying to civilize and improve these both. Under these circumstances, these millions of dislocated may unite on these two points and rise a very dreadful revolt against the champion of world order and responsibility. It is also observed now that U.S.A has become weaker and unstable due to its inner problems of economic and cultural crisis, for example, there has been a lot of discussion about the "Canon". It's power is decreasing due to these internal crisis and on the other hand there is ascendancy of Pacific Rim States, like Taiwan, China and Japan.

Culture and Imperialism : Understanding Post-colonial literature

In Twentieth Century literature has been attacked rigorously for containing hegemonic tendencies. Critics have vehemently opposed the subjective tendencies in literature. Critical tools have put literature under a microscope and have tried to find out if there are any real truths without politics in it. Literature is under suspicion now. We have begun to doubt the virtue of literature. Its healing powers are forgotten and its political values are now taken into analysis.

The modern responses to these past experiences have been equally away from objectivity, though we still have to keep it as our noble ideal guiding our academic

approaches to life. Though the academic world is craving for objective thought, thoughts and their critiques are always found within some emotional center. Post-colonialism is also a subjective response to western dominance. It questions western literature for its hegemonic tendencies. The problem with Indian post-colonialism is that it has negated its native colonial tendencies. It questions the other's faults without bringing into picture its own issues of domination. Even criticism has to have some ethical balance in its questions. When Indian scholarship has not questioned India's colonial attitudes, it has no moral right to question others. To acquire credibility, Indian post-colonialism has to do some self-critique.

Indian post-colonialism has borrowed heavily from the critical model of Edward Said. Orientalism is studied by Said as a mechanism, which constructed the orient in a political, sociological, ideological and scientific sense . Said suggests that justice should be practiced in academic research, instead of making partial judgments based on prejudices. He proves that ideologies are created by humanity to promote the self of man. Orientalism cannot stand the test of rationalism. To prove his point Said uses not only political issues, but also literature, treating works of art as pieces of political documents containing agendas and inner meanings.

Said uses the same method in his book Culture and Imperialism. When students try to do similar analysis for book after book in the name of research, we are encouraging a pessimistic and negative interpretation of literature. Precious time is spent in the name of research finding out the politics in every work of art. This kind of criticism will not encourage young readers to read literature. They will be more interested in tearing it apart to prove their superiority over the literary work itself and will ultimately lead to depression in society, as all value systems will be deconstructed one by one.

If Indian post-colonial thought believes in this method it should also expose the hegemonic tendencies in Indian literature too. Lectures in post-colonialism spend hours together speaking about the greatness of Sanskrit and the second-rate quality of other Indian languages while trying to decry English. If deconstruction is used for such academic practices, there is no point in talking about critical rationalism. Our intellectual energies are wasted in becoming anti-colonials all the while openly welcoming globalization. We don't want to accept this double quality in our thought, but are keenly interested in finding out the westerner's double standards.

To Said, a poet has to be basically a human being and should have the ability and the sensitivity to feel the pain of the loser also. In short, in his views, literature should not be hegemonic, but humanistic. But the literary form he is discussing here is an epic. It needed heroes and villains. All oral traditions and origin stories are the same. In Ramayana, Valmiki treats the Srilankan king as a villain. That does not make Ravanan a villain as is portrayed. A political reading of Ramayana will make Southerners hate North Indians. When Valmiki wrote he did not intend this end. During his times, the concept of the world would not have been as large as this. The unknown guy becomes the enemy in epics. To the Greeks, Asians must have been like the aliens. In Mahabharatha, Vyasar makes the sons of Dhirithrashtran as villains. Without a clear-cut definition of villains

and heroes epic writing is not possible. With modern concept of the world we cannot read the classics. Five thousand years ago the concept of world must have been quite small. We have to take into account of the movement of time and the shift in politics from monarchy to democracy. Aeschylus would not have been a bad man that he would have hated Asians. He is writing not to please millions of readers, but to please his king and the other elites in his society. Quite naturally he would want to exaggerate certain factors.

If Said had tried to find out what Asian thoughts have felt about Europe then his criticism would have been impartial and humanistic. How does the Indian mind take western culture and tradition? Does it accept western attitudes and the colonial presence with total submissiveness? Could European tendencies really succeed in quenching the spirit of India? Is the Indian really against the westerner? What is the politics in Indian literature? Is it against east and west or Indian north and Indian south? Does India acknowledge the presence of Europe in its literature?

In Culture and Imperialism, Said reinterprets a few 19 century English novels. Of all the novels, the novels of Kipling and Jane Austen, obviously considered the canon texts, receive maximum attention from him. His interpretation of Kim by Kipling reveals the imperialistic tendencies and models of colonialism, which the writer has not negated. Said refers to Kim, as a successfully sustained and mature piece and accepts his literary position as a master stylist, one who acquired a large audience. The question he asks is: Does Kipling portray the Indians as inferior or as somehow equal but different? This question is contemporary as Kipling lived in a modern era used to democracy and mass publication different from the world Aeschylus lived. Why did Kipling encourage a portrayal of Indians as inferior people? Britain recognized the attitudes of Kipling as he became popular. Or, he wrote what the public wanted.

Said goes ahead and gives a short summary of the novel followed by an extensive and detailed discourse analysis looking at the novel from a political angle. Suitable passages are selected which can easily give in to such readings. All the while the artistic achievement and workmanship of Kipling are not questioned.

Kipling refuses to recognize Indian nationalism, and thus he fails to accept reality, and instead constructs his own sense of reality. A writer of the stature like Kipling himself has not arisen above the immediacies of life. He has only catered to his readership. Races have dreams of geographical extensions and writers are people drawn from a society caught by such dreams. Visions of writers become realities and thus the power of thought and word is very high. Subhramaniya Bharathi in Tamil strongly visualizes a free India.

How can we expect Bharathi to sing in support of the British, while his voice is the voice of the people? The poet cannot stand alone, distinct from his people. Right or wrong, the voice of people is the voice of the poet. After hundred years or thousand years or even now, can we blame Bharathi for encouraging fanaticism? What comes first? Writing or social thought? Can writing exist without social thought? Could Kipling have consciously

moved himself away from the current social thought? Is it possible for Jane Austen to have separated her thought processes from her society? Can criticism expect a phenomenon that is not possible at all from writers? When we deal with the subject that deals with human emotions, passions and thoughts can we expect it to practice impartiality?

There is no drama in human life if every one practices impartiality. Impartiality in writing is possible only when people become impartial. Writing reflects life and not the other way. No writer can influence society if the society does not share his views. The power of the pen is itself the power of social thought. When the writer expresses and stamps the thought, he becomes successful. Writers become popular even among critics, only if highbrow thinking identifies its thought in them.

Literature should maintain a philosophical distance from actualities and identify with it is the message of Said in his books. What was the real purpose behind orientalism? Was it Europe's dream of becoming rich and powerful? Similarly, what is the dream of India now? What is going to be the future of India? Why is it encouraging globalization? Do all the writers from Asia keep themselves philosophically distant from geographical and political issues? As orientalism of the west is only one side of the story, what is the other side of the story? Even if the east did not construct a west, what is the reason?

How did Mulk Raj Anand or Manohar Malgonkar or even Tagore or Bharathi represent the white man, Said never bothers to find out. Said's criticism encourages leftist writing and calls right wing writing as hegemonic. To what extent can India portray or present England to Indian audience with neutrality? To whom will the author write, if not for his people? When Indian public is in favour of something, can the writer negate it?

When Kipling writes about India he concentrates in the problems westerners faced in India. Can we negate the pain the English man also went through in this alien land, if we have to practice the tenets of scientific principles in criticism?

To find fault with western imperialism we can directly use political policies of the government instead of using novels. When we read Kim, we do not look at it as an English novel against India, till we read Said. Deconstruction has politicized the novel that after reading Culture and Imperialism, we cannot enjoy the novel any more. If every work of art is going to be dehistoricised like this, finally there will be nothing left for our students who opt for literature. Which epic or novel or movie can withstand the test of politics? It is time to review our stand in post colonialism and establish an objective stand in interpreting literature.

Unpopular Essays

BERTRAND RUSSELL; (1872-1970)

Bertrand Russell, in full Bertrand Arthur William Russell, 3rd Earl Russell of Kingston Russell, Viscount Amberley of Amberley and of Ardsalla (born May 18, 1872, Trelleck, Monmouthshire, Wales—died Feb. 2, 1970, Penrhyndeudraeth, Merioneth), British philosopher, logician, and social reformer, founding figure in the analytic movement in Anglo-American philosophy, and recipient of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1950. Russell's contributions to logic, epistemology, and the philosophy of mathematics established him as one of the foremost philosophers of the 20th century. To the general public, however, he was best known as a campaigner for peace and as a popular writer on social, political, and moral subjects. During a long, productive, and often turbulent life, he published more than 70 books and about 2,000 articles, married four times, became involved in innumerable public controversies, and was honoured and reviled in almost equal measure throughout the world. Russell's article on the philosophical consequences of relativity appeared in the 13th edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica.

Russell was born in Ravenscroft, the country home of his parents, Lord and Lady Amberley. His grandfather, Lord John Russell, was the youngest son of the 6th Duke of Bedford. In 1861, after a long and distinguished political career in which he served twice as prime minister, Lord Russell was ennobled by Queen Victoria, becoming the 1st Earl Russell. Bertrand Russell became the 3rd Earl Russell in 1931, after his elder brother, Frank, died childless.

Russell's early life was marred by tragedy and bereavement. By the time he was age six, his sister, Rachel, his parents, and his grandfather had all died, and he and Frank were left in the care of their grandmother, Countess Russell. Though Frank was sent to Winchester School, Bertrand was educated privately at home, and his childhood, to his later great regret, was spent largely in isolation from other children. Intellectually precocious, he became absorbed in mathematics from an early age and found the experience of learning Euclidean geometry at the age of 11 "as dazzling as first love," because it introduced him to the intoxicating possibility of certain, demonstrable knowledge. This led him to imagine that all knowledge might be provided with such secure foundations, a hope that lay at the very heart of his motivations as a philosopher. His earliest philosophical work was written during his adolescence and records the skeptical doubts that led him to abandon the Christian faith in which he had been brought up by his grandmother.

In 1890 Russell's isolation came to an end when he entered Trinity College, University of Cambridge, to study mathematics. There he made lifelong friends through his membership in the famously secretive student society the Apostles, whose members included some of the most influential philosophers of the day. Inspired by his discussions

with this group, Russell abandoned mathematics for philosophy and won a fellowship at Trinity on the strength of a thesis entitled An Essay on the Foundations of Geometry, a revised version of which was published as his first philosophical book in 1897. Following Kant's Critique of Pure Reason (1781, 1787), this work presented a sophisticated idealist theory that viewed geometry as a description of the structure of spatial intuition.

In 1896 Russell published his first political work, German Social Democracy. Though sympathetic to the reformist aims of the German socialist movement, it included some trenchant and farsighted criticisms of Marxist dogmas. The book was written partly as the outcome of a visit to Berlin in 1895 with his first wife, Alys Pearsall Smith, whom he had married the previous year. In Berlin, Russell formulated an ambitious scheme of writing two series of books, one on the philosophy of the sciences, the other on social and political questions. "At last," as he later put it, "I would achieve a Hegelian synthesis in an encyclopaedic work dealing equally with theory and practice." He did, in fact, come to write on all the subjects he intended, but not in the form that he envisaged. Shortly after finishing his book on geometry, he abandoned the metaphysical idealism that was to have provided the framework for this grand synthesis.

Unpopular Essays: Introduction, Summary and Critical Stance

The Author's Intention to Combat Dogmatism: - The book called Unpopular Essays is a collection of ten essays on various subjects, a chapter containing Russell's impressions of some of the eminent men with whom he had come in contact, and a piece called "Obituary", in which Russell anticipates his own death and expresses briefly his own view of his character and his achievement.

In the preface to the book, Russell tells us that these essays were intended "to combat in one way or another, the growth of dogmatism whether of the Right or of the Left, which has hitherto characterized our tragic century". Russell also tells us that these essays were inspired by a serious purpose, even though at times they seem flippant. He also explains, in the ironical manner so characteristic of him, why he has called this book "Unpopular Essays". There are several sentences in this book, says Russell, which some unusually stupid children of the age of ten may find difficult to understand. That being so, he could not claim that the essays would be popular; and so, if not popular, then, unpopular.

The Popular Appeal of these Essays: - In actual fact, however, these essays have proved to be far from unpopular. The ideas expressed in them possess a popular appeal, and they are written in a style which is easily intelligible even to the layman. Besides, these essays have been made interesting, and almost entertaining, by Russell's unique treatment of the subjects chosen by him, and by his ironical and satirical wit. Nor can the serious purpose of these essays be questioned. A critic has made the following comment on the essays in this collection: "The frivolous wit on the surface almost disguises the serious task of mental slum-clearance to which they are addressed".

Russell's Many-sided Genius: - These essays cover a fairly wide range of subjects. We here see Russell as a philosopher, as a political theorist, as a social scientist, as an educationist, as a moralist, as a propagandist, as a close observer, and as an analyst of human life and character. Indeed, these essays reveal Russell's many-sided genius and his intellectual breadth.

The Contents of Russell's Book: - The following are the contents of this collection of essays: (1) "Philosophy and Politics"; (2) "Philosophy for Laymen"; (3) "The Future of Mankind"; (4) "Philosophy's Ulterior Motives"; (5) "The Superior Virtue of the Oppressed"; (6) "On Being Modern-Minded"; (7) "An Outline of Intellectual Rubbish"; (8) "The Functions of a Teacher"; (9) "Ideas That Have Helped Mankind"; (10) "Ideas That Have Harmed Mankind"; (11) "Eminent Men I Have Known"; and (12) "Obituary".

A brief synopsis of each of these chapters in this collection of essays is given below in order that the student may be able to have a bird's eye-view of the book as a whole.

(1) "Philosophy and Politics"

The Disastrous Political Consequences of Hegel's Philosophy: - This essay is an attack on the political consequences of Hegel's philosophy and a defence of Locke's philosophy of empiricism. After briefly explaining Hegel's belief in what Hegel called the Absolute Idea, Russell tells us that this philosophy had disastrous consequences in the political field. From Hegel's metaphysic, it follows that true liberty consists in obedience to an arbitrary authority, that free speech is an evil, that absolute monarchy is good, that war is desirable, and that an international organization for the peaceful settlement of disputes would be a misfortune. A philosophy which leads to such consequences is evidently something obnoxious, and it is really surprising how at one time this philosophy held a sway over the minds of intellectuals not only in Germany but even in Britain and America.

The Merits of Locke's Philosophy of Empiricism: - Russell then brings out the merits in Locke's philosophy of empiricism which, he tells us, offers a theoretical justification of democracy. Locke also preached religious toleration, representative institutions, and the limitations of governmental power by the system of checks and balances.

Conclusion: - Russell concludes this essay by recommending empiricism not only on the ground of its greater truth but also on ethical grounds. Empiricist liberalism is the only philosophy that can serve mankind's purposes in our times.

(2) "Philosophy for Laymen"

The Need of Teaching Philosophy to People: - In this essay, Russell explains very briefly the uses of philosophy. Philosophy, he says, means a love of wisdom. Philosophy in this sense is what people must acquire if the new technical powers achieved by man are not to plunge mankind into the greatest conceivable disaster.

However, the philosophy which the ordinary people should be taught is not the same thing as the philosophy of specialists.

The Theoretical Function of Philosophy: - Philosophy has always had two different objects: to arrive at a theoretical understanding of the structure of the world; and to discover and propagate the best possible way of life. Philosophy has thus been closely related to science on the one hand and to religion on the other. On its theoretical side philosophy partly consists in the framing of large general hypotheses which science is not yet in a position to test. (When it becomes possible to test such hypotheses they become part of science, and no longer belong to philosophy,) There are a number of purely theoretical questions, of everlasting interest, which science is unable to answer at present. Do we survive after death? Can mind dominate matter, or does matter completely dominate mind? Does this universe have a purpose, or is it driven by blind necessity? To keep alive the interest in such questions is one of the functions of philosophy.

The Practical Aspect of Philosophy: - On its practical side, philosophy can greatly increase a man's value as a human being and as a citizen. It can give a habit of exact and careful thought. It can give an impressive breadth and scope to the conception of the aims of life. It can give to the individual a correct estimate of himself in relation to society, and of man in the present to man in the past and in the future. It can offer a cure, or at least a palliative, for the anxieties and the anguish which afflict mankind at present.

(3) "The Future of Mankind"

The Need of a World-Government: - Here Russell visualizes the consequences of the next world war and expresses the view that only the establishment of a world-government can bring about lasting peace in the world. Russell would like the establishment of a world-government to take place under the leadership of America because there is greater respect in America for a civilized life than there is in Russia. By a civilized life, Russell means freedom of thought, freedom of inquiry, freedom of discussion, and humane feeling. If Russia dominates the world, all these freedoms will be crushed, and there will be a narrowing of science, philosophy, art, and literature. Only democracy and a free circulation of opinion can prevent a powerful government from establishing a servile State, with luxury for the few and overworked poverty for the many. Such a servile State has been established by the Soviet Government wherever it is in control.

Three Dangers to be Averted: - Mankind has to guard against three dangers: (a) the extinction of the human race; (b) a going back to barbarism; and (c) the establishment of a universal servile State, involving misery for the vast majority, and the disappearance of all progress in knowledge and thought. The only way to guard against these dangers is the establishment of a world-government through peaceful means, if possible, and through war if necessary.

(4) "Philosophy's Ulterior Motives"

The Distorting Influence of Desire Upon a Philosopher's Reasoning: - In this essay, Russell dwells upon the dangers and pitfalls faced by philosophers. It often happens that a philosopher is led by certain preconceived notions into a false reasoning, and in this way arrives at false conclusions. Russell takes the case of Descartes first. Descartes had a passionate desire for certainty, and so he started thinking out a new method of achieving certainty. He found that, while everything else could be doubted, he could not doubt his own existence. This became an excellent starting-point for him. He existed because he could see himself clearly and distinctly; and so he came to the conclusion that the things which he conceived very clearly and very distinctly were all true. He then began to conceive all sorts of things very clearly and very distinctly; for example, that an effect could not have more perfection than its cause. Since he could form an idea of God—that is, of a being more perfect than himself—this idea must have had a cause other than himself, which could only be God; therefore, God existed. Since God was good, He would not perpetually deceive Descartes; therefore the objects which Descartes saw when awake must really exist. And in this way Descartes went on throwing all intellectual caution to the winds. Everything that followed from this kind of reasoning was loose and slipshod and hasty. His method of reasoning thus showed the distorting influence of his own desire.

The Absurdities of the Reasoning of Some Other Well-known Philosophers: -

After showing us the absurdity of the conclusions which Descartes reached by his way of reasoning, Russell goes on to expose the absurdity of the reasoning and the conclusions arrived at by certain other philosophers. The other philosophers whom Russell considers here are Leibniz, Bishop Berkeley, Kant, Hegel, and finally Marx.

(5) "The Superior Virtue of the Oppressed"

The Tendency to Discover Some Superior Virtue in the Oppressed Sections of Society**: -**

In this essay Russell illustrates his view that there is a tendency on the part of writers, especially moralists, to attribute some superior virtue to those classes of people who are oppressed. Russell gives us five examples of the classes of people who have been, or who are, oppressed and who therefore are thought to possess some superior virtue.

The Various Examples Offered by Russell to Prove his Thesis: - The first example to illustrate the central idea of this essay is that of the poor people. The poor people were long regarded as morally better than the rich. The next example is that of nations which have been under foreign domination. Subject nations were believed to have possessed certain superior gifts and some special charm. However, as soon as the subject nations became independent, the belief in their superior gifts also disappeared. Then there is the case of the female sex. Women were believed to have a certain spiritual quality as long as they were dominated by men; but as soon as they achieved equality with men, their angelic qualities also vanished. Next is the example of children. Children were thought to be innocent and pure as long as parents could tyrannize over

them; subsequently these superior qualities disappeared, and a new belief arose, namely that there was great wickedness in children in their unconscious minds. Lastly, a superior virtue has been found in the proletariat or the working-class, because this class has been oppressed for a long time. As soon as the proletariat attains its full rights, the superior virtue attributed to this class of people will also disappear. Stated in a nutshell, the thesis of this essay is that there is a tendency to glorify the oppressed class of people, the object behind such glorification being to continue the exploitation of that oppressed class,

(6) "On Being Modern-Minded"

Opinions Dominated By Fashion: - It has become a general tendency nowadays, says Russell, to adopt opinions which are current, and to show a contempt for the past. When fashion alone dominates opinion, it becomes unnecessary for people to think for themselves. The result is that a man deliberately suppresses what is individual in himself in order to acquire the opinions which are popular. A mentally solitary life for an individual has become pointless nowadays, according to the modern standards.

The Value of Detachment and Objectivity: - After criticizing the present-day trend towards adopting ready-made current opinions, Russell concludes the essay by pointing out the value of detachment and objectivity. A certain degree of isolation both in space and in time is necessary for the most important intellectual work. We must not sacrifice the independence of our minds merely to win the admiration of the crowd by holding opinions which have become current.

(7) "An Outline of Intellectual Rubbish"

Irrational Beliefs Propagated By Priests: - This is an essay directed against irrationality. The ages of faith, says Russell, were ages of superstition, and so there was little evidence of rationality in the outlook of people. Priests have always propagated irrational beliefs. The whole conception of sin in the past was merely a manifestation of the superstitious bent of mind. Similarly, the views relating to the resurrection of the body, the sacredness of human corpses, divorce, etc., were purely superstitious.

False Ideas of National and Racial Superiority: - As soon as we abandon our own reason, says Russell, and are content to rely upon authority, there is no end to our troubles. Human beliefs have various causes. There is, for instance, the belief which human beings have about their own excellence. The Englishman, the Frenchman, the Russian— each thinks of the superiority of his own nation and his own superiority as a member of that nation. There is also the belief that man is the supreme creation of God, and that centuries of evolution have been guided by one great divine purpose, namely, the appearance of man. But when we realize that life on this planet is temporary, this belief in the importance of man loses its validity. A scientific view of the future of the solar system lends no support to the view that man is all-important. Then there is the belief in the racial superiority of the white man over the coloured people, while the

scientific fact is that there is no difference between the blood of a Negro and the blood of a white man.

A False Belief Regarding Human Nature and the Inevitability of Wars: - There is another wide-spread belief having no rational basis. It is that human nature cannot be changed, and that, for this reason, there will always be wars. The actual fact is that a powerful government, by following certain psychological methods, can produce a population of sane and reasonable people who will discard war. Unfortunately most governments do not wish to achieve such a result, because sane and reasonable people would fail to admire the politicians who are at the head of these governments. Most governments now instill their own particular brands of political ideologies among their respective populations. This kind of thing leads to a bitter hostility among nations which have been fed upon conflicting ideologies.

Some Other Irrational Beliefs: - Irrational beliefs hold a sway upon the minds of people with regard to birth control and with regard to the nature and disposition of the female sex. There are also irrational generalizations about national characteristics.

Some Simple Rules of Conduct: - Russell is of the opinion that by observing a few simple rules mankind can avoid the deplorable consequences which afflict human life because of irrational beliefs. One such rule is to base one's beliefs on actual observation. People must not be dogmatic; they must keep their minds open, and they must discuss their opinions with those whose views and opinions are different from their own. The feeling of self-esteem should also not be allowed to play any part in the holding of beliefs. Another desirable course is for human beings to conquer fear, because fear is the main source of superstition, and one of the main sources of cruelty.

A Note of Frivolity: - Russell closes this essay on a frivolous note, saying that superstitions are not always dark and cruel but that often they add to the gaiety of life.

(8) "The Functions of a Teacher"

The Need of Freedom for the Teacher: - In this essay we see Russell as an educationist. Russell is opposed to the rigid manner in which the State nowadays enforces its own ideology through the education that is imparted to pupils. In countries like Russia, the system of education is such as to produce fanatical bigots who are ignorant of the world outside their own country and who are unaccustomed to free discussion. As a result of the kind of education that is imparted to pupils in different countries, the spirit of cultural internationalism has received a severe setback. Russell pleads for the emancipation of the teacher from the intellectual bondage imposed upon him by the government of his country. Education should never be dogmatic, and that is possible only if the teachers are free to teach what they please and in the manner they think to be the best.

Teachers, the Guardians of Civilization: - Teachers are—more than any other class of people—the guardians of civilization. Civilization is a matter partly of knowledge

and partly of emotion, and it is the duty of the teacher to impart the right kind of knowledge in an objective spirit, and similarly develop in the pupils the right kind of emotions. If democracy is to survive, the teacher should try to produce in his pupils the spirit of tolerance which will enable them to understand people who are different from themselves. An attitude of intolerance, which results from ignorance, is the very opposite of a civilized outlook; and the teacher should not allow the spirit of intolerance to take roots in the minds of his pupils. If the teacher is to succeed in his purpose, he must be free: he should feel himself to be an individual directed by an inner creative impulse, and not an individual dominated and controlled by an outside authority.

(9) "Ideas That Have Helped Mankind"

The Advances Made in Pre-historic Times: - In pre-historic times, mankind benefited greatly by the evolution, of language, the discovery of fire, the art of taming animals, the invention of agriculture, and the art of writing.

The Progress in Mathematics and Astronomy: - In historic times, the earliest important steps were taken in the spheres of mathematics and astronomy by the Babylonians and later by the Greeks. In the seventeenth century, Galileo, Descartes, Newton, and Leibniz made great advances in the human understanding of Nature. Galileo unified the principles governing the earth and the heavens by his law of inertia.

Darwin's Theory of Evolution: - From the seventeenth century onwards, it has become increasingly clear that, in order to understand natural laws, we must get rid of every kind of ethical and aesthetic bias. It was geology and Darwin's theory of evolution that first upset the irrational religious beliefs of scientists.

The Idea of the Brotherhood of Man: - Scientific progress without a corresponding moral and political progress may only increase the magnitude of the disaster that the misuse of scientific skill and technique may bring about. Among moral ideas, the brotherhood of man is an ideal which owed its first force to political developments. Subsequently, this ideal received a great support from Buddhism and Christianity.

The Ideas of Liberty and Democracy: -The ideas of liberty, equality, and fraternity have religious origins. The concept of individual liberty within the State first entered practical politics in the form of religious toleration. Other ideas which have helped mankind in the sphere of politics are law and government. Democracy is a system of government which aims at reconciling government with liberty.

The Need for an International Government: - Orderly social life depends upon a balance of certain ideas and institutions which are: government, law, individual liberty, and democracy. But modern techniques have created a new crisis for mankind. In order to face this crisis, people must recognize the need of an international government. If an international government of some kind is not established, the next world war will destroy all civilization.

(10) "Ideas That Have Harmed Mankind"

The Harm Done by Evil Passions: - The misfortunes of human beings have their main source in evil passions rather than in ideas or beliefs. People in the past enjoyed the spectacles of cruelty such as the burning of heretics, and many people even today find the brutalities of war to be enjoyable. Men's cruel impulses can do tremendous harm to them.

The Harm Done by Christian Asceticism and by Political Asceticism: - As for ideas and beliefs, much harm has been done by religious superstitions. Even Christian saints, who practiced asceticism, found pleasure in the thought that sinners would be subjected to great tortures in the next life. Nowadays Christian asceticism has given way to political asceticism. Communism, for instance, teaches its followers to sacrifice all pleasures and to live a life of hard work and toil because those who do not do so have to be either liquidated or put in concentration camps.

Cruelty Resulting from the Belief in Witchcraft: - The feeling that much of our suffering is due to the ill-will of other people led to the belief in witchcraft, and this belief was responsible for much cruelty towards those who were accused of being witches.

Envy and War: - Envy is one of the most powerful sources of false belief. In the international sphere, envy has led to the philosophy of economic nationalism. And this false belief becomes a cause of war.

The Suffering Caused by Pride: - Another passion which gives rise to false beliefs that are politically harmful is pride—pride of nationality, pride of race, pride of sex, pride of class, and pride of creed. All these kinds of pride lead to tremendous injustice and suffering.

A Delusion: - Yet another harmful belief results from the delusion which men and nations sometimes have that they are the special instruments of the divine will.

The Need of Tolerance and of an International Government: - Russell closes this essay with some very useful advice. Both in public and in private life, says he, the important thing is tolerance and kindliness. Besides, the establishment of an international government has become very necessary for the survival of civilization and for the prevention of war. What the world needs today is (1) political, economic, and educational organization; and (2) certain moral qualities, especially charity and tolerance instead of some fanatical faith represented by an "ism".

(11) "Eminent Men I Have Known"

Eminent Men in Different Fields: - This essay is a brief record of the impressions that Russell formed of certain eminent personalities with whom he came into contact. These eminent personalities included poets, philosophers, scientists, and politicians.

Poets: - Among the poets whom Russell met, he mentions Browning, Tennyson, and Rupert Brooke. Russell found Browning to be a pleasant and kindly gentleman, very much at home at tea-parties, but without the divine fire that is generally expected of a

poet. For Tennyson, Russell developed an attitude of scorn. Rupert Brooke struck Russell as "beautiful and vital", but the total impression was marred by a touch of Byronic insincerity in the man.

Philosophers and Scientists: - As for philosophers, the most impressive in Russell's opinion was William James whom he found to be completely free from all consciousness of being a great man. Russell found Henry Sidgwick to be impressive through his quality of intellectual honesty. Among the scientists, Einstein impressed Russell as combining a powerful intellect with a childlike simplicity.

Politicians: Lenin and Gladstone: - As for politicians, Russell knew seven Prime Ministers of whom the most unforgettable was Mr. Gladstone. The only other man in public life as impressive as Mr. Gladstone was Lenin. Gladstone was an embodiment of Victorianism, and Lenin was an embodiment of Marxian formulas. Lenin was cruel while Gladstone was not. Lenin had no respect for tradition, while Gladstone had a great deal. Lenin considered all means legitimate for securing the victory of his party, whereas for Gladstone politics was a game with certain rules that must be observed. Both men derived their personal force from a firm conviction of their own Tightness.

A Simple and Good Man, though not Eminent: - At the end of this essay, Russell mentions a man who impressed him a good deal but who was not eminent in any sense. This man was a gardener who could neither read nor write, but who was a perfect type of simple goodness. Russell says that he could never forget this man because of his purity of mind. Worldly success seldom comes to such men, but they inspire love and admiration in those who know them.

(12) "Obituary" (1937)

An Obituary about Himself: - Here Russell shows his sense of humour by writing his own obituary. An obituary is the announcement of a death made by the relatives or friends of a deceased person, Here Russell imagines that he would die on June 1, 1962 and writes his own obituary in anticipation of his death.

Mathematical and Philosophical Works: - As an obituary is also expected to contain some of the important events of the life of a deceased person, Russell here mentions what he regards as some of the foremost incidents of his life. He tells us that in his youth he did work of importance in mathematical logic. He informs us that he did not enjoy the advantages of a public school education but that he was taught at home by tutors until the age of eighteen when he entered Trinity College, Cambridge, becoming seventh Wrangler in 1893 and a Fellow in 1895.

Among the books that he produced, Russell mentions The Foundations of Geometry, The Philosophy of Leibniz, The Principles of Mathematics, and Principia Mathematica (in collaboration with Dr. A.N. Whitehead).

His Pacifist Ideas: - Russell also refers here to his pacifist ideas and his staunch opposition to war. His opposition to war was regarded by some people as eccentric. As a

result of his campaign against war during the Great War of 1914-18, he lost his job as a Lecturer at Trinity College, and had to spend a few months in prison.

Other Ideas: - Then Russell talks of his visits to Russia and to China in 1920, and goes on to mention his advocacy of socialism, educational reform, and a less rigid code of morals as regards marriage. In World War II, Russell took no public part, having escaped to a neutral country just before its outbreak.

Russell as a Humanist: his Pacifism and his Championship of Democracy; His Moral Fervour

All these essays show Russell not only as a philosopher but also as a man of strong humanitarian views. He is opposed to war; and he is a great liberal and an ardent supporter of individual freedom and democracy. These essays also show his moral fervour which appears in his advocacy of such qualities as tolerance, kindliness, mutual helpfulness, and sympathy. Russell had a broad mind and an all-embracing outlook: as an internationalist he urges the establishment of a world-government because he finds that the continuance of sovereign states with their narrow, nationalistic outlook can no longer serve the common interest of mankind but are a divisive force. In short, Russell appears in these essays as a most progressive and enlightened thinker who has the good of mankind at heart.

The Style of these Essays: - Russell is one of the great prose-stylists of the twentieth century. Although a philosopher, he does not write in a distorted or obscure manner even when writing about philosophy as we see in the very first essay called Philosophy and Politics, and in another essay called Philosophy's Ulterior Motives. His style is characterized by intellectual brilliance, clarity and lucidity, and a catholicity of temper. In addition to these qualities his style also shows his use of irony and a gay wit. His writing exactly reflects his crystalline, scintillating mind. All these essays are illumined by the clarity and grace of expression which are the most striking virtues of his style. Russell also gives evidence here of his capacity for making condensed statements and generalizations having a ready appeal. Russell did not evolve a style according to any premeditated theory or doctrine. His style came to him naturally. In his case, as in the case of other great writers, it can be said with certitude that the style is the man. His is a style which makes use of all the resources of the English language, excluding nothing and attaching no undue importance to any particular ingredient. Parallelisms, antitheses, contrast, simile, metaphor, quotation, anecdote, simple words and difficult words, short sentences and long sentences—all these are utilized by him to express himself effectively. But there is nothing gaudy or ostentatious about this style. It uses no ornamental devices. It is a plain, unembellished style. It does not even employ rhetoric. In fact, we cannot use a simple formula for this style as we can, for instance, for Bacon's style (concise and epigrammatic), for Carlyle's style (erudite, cumbersome, eccentric), or for Ruskin's style (musical prose). This is a style in which a perfect synthesis has been achieved between a multitude of different ingredients. In its own way it is a unique style.

Bertrand Russell as a pacifist and a socialist

Introduction

Bertrand Arthur William Russell (1872-1970) was a British philosopher, mathematician, and Nobel laureate, whose emphasis on logical analysis influenced the course of 20th-century philosophy.

Born in Trelleck, Wales, on May 18, 1872, Russell was educated at Trinity College, University of Cambridge. After graduation in 1894, he traveled in France, Germany, and the United States and was then made a fellow of Trinity College. From an early age he developed a strong sense of social consciousness; at the same time, he involved himself in the study of logical and mathematical questions, which he had made his special fields and on which he was called to lecture at many institutions throughout the world. He achieved prominence with his first major work, The Principles of Mathematics (1902), in which he attempted to remove mathematics from the realm of abstract philosophical notions and to give it a precise scientific framework.

Russell then collaborated for eight years with the British philosopher and mathematician Alfred North Whitehead to produce the monumental work Principia Mathematica (3 volumes, 1910-1913). This work showed that mathematics can be stated in terms of the concepts of general logic, such as class and membership in a class. It became a masterpiece of rational thought. Russell and Whitehead proved that numbers can be defined as classes of a certain type, and in the process they developed logic concepts and a logic notation that established symbolic logic as an important specialization within the field of philosophy. In his next major work, The Problems of Philosophy (1912), Russell borrowed from the fields of sociology, psychology, physics, and mathematics to refute the tenets of idealism, the dominant philosophical school of the period, which held that all objects and experiences are the product of the intellect. Russell, a realist, believed that objects perceived by the senses have an inherent reality independent of the mind.

Pacifist and Socialist

Russell condemned both sides in World War I (1914-1918), and for his uncompromising stand he was fined, imprisoned, and deprived of his teaching post at Cambridge. In prison he wrote Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy (1919), combining the two areas of knowledge he regarded as inseparable. After the war he visited the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, and in his book Practice and Theory of Bolshevism (1920) he expressed his disappointment with the form of socialism practiced there. He felt that the methods used to achieve a Communist system were intolerable and that the results obtained were not worth the price paid.

Russell taught at Beijing University in China during 1921 and 1922. From 1928 to 1932, after he returned to England, he conducted the private, highly progressive Beacon Hill School for young children. From 1938 to 1944 he taught at various educational

institutions in the United States. He was barred, however, from teaching at the College of the City of New York (now City College of the City University of New York) by the state supreme court because of his attacks on religion in such works as What I Believe (1925) and his advocacy of sexual freedom, expressed in Manners and Morals (1929).

Russell returned to England in 1944 and was reinstated as a fellow of Trinity College. Although he abandoned pacifism to support the Allied cause in World War II (1939-1945), he became an ardent and active opponent of nuclear weapons. In 1949 he was awarded the Order of Merit by King George VI. Russell received the 1950 Nobel Prize for Literature and was cited as "the champion of humanity and freedom of thought." He led a movement in the late 1950s advocating unilateral nuclear disarmament by Britain, and at the age of 89 he was imprisoned after an antinuclear demonstration. He died on February 2, 1970.

Philosopher and Author

In addition to his earlier work, Russell also made a major contribution to the development of logical positivism, a strong philosophical movement of the 1930s and 1940s. The major Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, at one time Russell's student at Cambridge, was strongly influenced by his original concept of logical atomism. In his search for the nature and limits of knowledge, Russell was a leader in the revival of the philosophy of empiricism in the larger field of epistemology. In Our Knowledge of the External World (1926) and Inquiry into Meaning and Truth (1962), he attempted to explain all factual knowledge as constructed out of immediate experiences. Among his other books are The ABC of Relativity (1925), Education and the Social Order (1932), A History of Western Philosophy (1945), The Impact of Science upon Society (1952), My Philosophical Development (1959), War Crimes in Vietnam (1967), and The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell (3 volumes, 1967-1969).

Different Aspects of Russell's Personality

Bertrand Russell, whose name shines like a star in the world of philosophy and literature, was a great British philosopher of the 20th century. He was a multi-dimensional personality and his repute had many aspects. He was a scientist, philosopher, mathematician and a humanist. His thoughts and works have left indelible imprints on the intellectual history of the modern world. With his keen and sensitive vision, he observed every aspect and every color of life and practically took part in the affairs of life to know human problems and their solution. He was a lover of humanity. He tried to make man ponder over his status and station, and budge from victimizing and perishing his own species.

Russell was an outstanding mathematician and his contribution in mathematics is a milestone in this field. His Principa Mathatica written in collaboration with White-head, printed in 1913, in three volumes is a landmark in the history of mathematics. This glorious work by him has granted him a noble status among the scientists and mathematicians of world. His deep interest and proficiency in science and mathematics

developed a philosophic approach in his mind and he made a high-ranking philosopher of his time. He always insisted to solve all the enigmas and problems of life with the tool of logic. He relied on logic and believed that the light of logic could guide a person on all the paths of life.

Russell was a person who did not confine his feeling and endeavors to a certain field. He did not devote his life to the intricacies of science and complexities of mathematics. Rather he eyed the beauties of life and noticed the threats to this beauty. His mind studied the enigmas of science but his heart throbbed for the humans all around. It was his special inclination towards humanity that he came out of his scientific world to observe and feel the human problems. That is why he not only produced scientific work but also wrote on social, political, human, economic and moral issues of the modern world.

Russell as a Humanist

Russell was born with a scientific brain and human heart. He felt all the sentiments of life. According to him life was the unique phenomenon in the cosmos. He believed that universe was a collection of phenomena and among them life was most charming phenomenon. This most beautiful picture of the album of universe is vandalized and spoiled by the man himself. It is man who unnecessarily takes on his fellows. He commits blunders, makes excesses and slaughters his own fellow beings. His unwanted greed and lust leads to horrible wars, which swallow the human blood and engulf human flesh. So Russell appeals to the good nature of man to teach him not to harm others. They should not be enemy of each other. He wants to see this world a cradle of peace and love, in which man’s bosom is filled with love and affection, not hatred and venom for others.

Russell was strictly opposed to monarchy. He strongly flays on the monarchy system that binds humans in the chains of slavery. It is monarchy that humiliates and snatches the rights of humanity. At the same time, Russell also condemns the rule of church as it backs monarchy.

Being a philosopher, Russell does not believe in religion. In the history of Europe, the term humanism was introduced and propagated after Renaissance. He believed that humanism considered in the light of religion was limited and restricted. He defines humanism in a wider sense, without religious restrictions. According to him man is responsible for his good or bad deeds. There is no spiritual power to govern the human deeds. Russell strongly believes in reason and does not believe in some divine system to control human life.

Modern age is the age of democracy. Many countries of the world are running democratic system successfully. But, there is a presentiment that hostile nations may kick off war at any time. Russell believes that world is divided into groups based on race and creed. This difference has generated an antagonism among humans. In his book “New Hopes for a Changing World” he writes:

"One of the most obstinate and difficult of the problems to be resolved if a stable world government is to become possible is the hostility which is apt to arise between different races. When I speak of the races I mean genuine biological varieties of the human species, not the attitude of the Americans of English descent to the Red Indians was different from that of the English to the French, as is shown in the saying "The only good Red Indian is the Indian. (New Hopes)

Again he writes about slave trades:

"There has been one of the most shameful chapters in the history of the nominally Christian nations. The horrors of the slave trade are familiar. The life of a slave might or might not be one of hardships. As a rule household slaves were fairly well treated, but plantation slaves were cruelly exploited. The slave trade was stopped at the beginning of nineteenth century and slavery was ended by the civil war. But the color population remained and remains subject to intolerable hardships, injustices and cruelties."

At that time, the treatment meted out to Jews at the hands of Nazis was also outrageous. They were exterminated brutally, which was inhuman and condemnable.

Creeds and Ideologies

According to Russell creed and ideology are two words with the same meaning. Ideology is the system of ideas characterizing a party, while creed is a system of beliefs. Russell finds no difference in ideology and creed. Mankind is divided into different groups and sections due to difference of ideologies. The different ideologies or beliefs have created an unwanted antagonism among human beings. The poison of disparate beliefs is lethal to humanity. When this poison enters the blood of humans, it deprives them of their good nature and drives them on the paths of bigotry and violence. The big wars and bloody clashes between different nations have been due to difference of creeds or ideologies. A big example is the war of Crusade between the Muslims and the Christians fought for a long time. In the 20th century, two great wars were fought due communism and capitalism, extermination humanity in a dreadful way. Russell felt deeply this large-scale destruction of humanity and condemned it strongly. He was a propagator of peace, he was preacher of fraternity, so he deplored the annihilation and emphasized tolerance, forbearance and harmony. In this way Russell proved himself as the apostle of peace and lover of humanity.

As a Pacifist

Russell always detested wars. He criticizes and denounces the hostile nations who find solace in taking up arms and going to battlefields to solve their problems. Violence breeds violence. A war gives way to other wars. We cannot find the solutions to problems in human assassination. Russell wanted to see peace and harmony prevailing all over the world. He detested wars and bloody clashes engulfing the humans savagely. He vehemently protested against British government when it joined war against Germany in the First World War. He came on front as pacifist but was caught and

imprisoned by the government. But this imprisonment could not shake his resolve and commitment to humanity. He remained firm and did not succumb to any pressure or high handedness. He stuck to his ideas and maintained his point of view in the Second World War. To eliminate wars in the world forever he stressed on the presence of one super power in world. There must be a super state with no adversary. And it is possible if America overcomes Russia, or Russia topples the America to become supreme power in the world. However he prefers America on Russia because America is better state in every respect and has ability to rule the world. Russian domination shall drive the world into hell. He says:

"There are even more important reasons for preferring a victory of America. I am not contending that capitalism is better than communism. My reason for siding with America is that in that country there is more respect than in Russia for the things that I value in a civilized way of life. The things have in mind are such as freedom of thought, freedom of inquiry, freedom of discussion and human feeling. What a victory of Russia would mean is easily to be seen in Poland. There were flourishing Universities in Poland, containing men of great intellectual eminence. Some of these men, fortunately, escaped. The rest disappeared. Education is now reduced to learning the formula of Stalinist Orthodoxy."

(New Hopes for a Changing World. P. 94)

The above-described thoughts give an ample proof of Russell to be a strong believer of intellectual freedom. At the same time he is so firm in his favor of America that he holds right to use force against Russia by the Alliance powers of the free world.

In the Second World War, the mass destruction caused by atomic bombs was evident to the whole world. The unprecedented devastation caused by atomic devices shocked the whole human race. Russell strictly condemned this act, for which he had to suffer imprisonment. Again, in 1962, when nuclear war was to kick off between two super powers because of Cuba crisis, he played a memorable role as the world pioneer of peace. Through his convincing letter, written to the heads of both super powers, he succeeded to dissuade them from carrying out a horrible folly. He was able to convince them that nuclear war would annihilate mankind on a large scale on the planet and all the achievement attained by man would be wiped out. This glorious act of Russell grants him an unmatched glory of character. He appeared as prophet of peace and saved humanity from most horrible devastation. He appeared to be not only a prophet of peace but as benefactor of mankind too.

He showed the man a way to solve their problem without waging war. He proved that pen is more effective than a gun. He always diffused tension with his speech and fought against two worst enemies of humanity---- bigotry and narrow mindedness.

Russell's intellectual vision was fairly wide. He was convinced of the nobility of man. He said that man was the noblest creation and he was the real beauty of the universe. But this cosmos is infinite and our earth is just a speck in this huge system. The life appeared on the earth due to favorable environment. Earth was situated at a great

distance from the sun. The small heat reaching to earth from sun is conducive to life. The sun is source of energy to earth. If we cross O zone or go deep into the earth, life again becomes impossible. Earth is dependant on sun the gets energy and heat from it. If sun goes cold, life on earth will freeze. So life is subject to suitable environment and circumstances like other things, which cannot survive in non-favorable conditions. Russell negates the old traditional dogma that man is the center of Universe. Planets in the universe are countless like the specks of sand in a desert. Our earth is such a speck.

Russell wants man to crash out his self-styled shell of self and ego. He wants him to abandon self-glorification and cast a rational look on life and its wants. The idol of ego and self-centeredness has parted man from man. To bring men closer to men it calls for to leave obnoxious ethnic, racial and geographical prejudice.

Russell has praised the fortitude and stoicism of Boethius who wrote his great book "The Consolation of Philosophy" in the days of his imprisonment. In his writing he adopted a style, which had a majestic grandeur mingled with sweet reasonableness. He wrote the anthology with such nonchalance and content, as he was still a powerful prime minister. He described the pleasure of contemplation; the delight of world beauty and hopes of mankind, which did not, left him. Boethius had been in public administration but won a disfavor due to which he was sentenced to death. He was sure to be executed yet he did not loose courage. He completed his great book in jail, which according to Russell is more useful in the present age.

His War against Dogmatism and Superstition

Russell did not believe in religion. He was strictly against dogmatism. His deep scientific knowledge and high philosophic approach had given him a mindset to dispel traditional dogmas, which had been adopted by superstitious and narrow-minded people. In his "Unpopular Essays" under "An Outline of Intellectual Rubbish," he expresses his repulsion for the follies of man. He is not ready to admit the fact that man is a rational animal. Rather, in the light of his own experiences, he says:

"Through a long life I have looked diligently for evidence in favor of this statement, but so for I have not had the good fortune to come across it."

On the other side he says that he has seen great nation and formerly leaders of civilized nations, who were led astray by nonsensical declamatory speeches. Further, he says that he has sensed the bitterness and pain of cruelty, persecution and the follies superstition. All these ills are growing rapidly which is deplorable.

Russell regards the Age of Faith as the age of ignorance as the illogical and absurd teachings. They burnt many thousand hags alive for their deeds repugnant to Christianity. It was surprising for Russell to see men punished for their sins through calamities and famines. The narrow minded Clergy and their followers rejected every new discovery and invention as it was contrary to their faith. The Greek research that the earth is round was rejected due to the presence of antipodes. It was sacrilegious to

believe that there were men at the antipodes. Again, when Benjamin Franklin invented the lightening rod, the Clergy both in England and America condemned it as a wicked attempt to defeat the will of God. Clergy believed that lightening is the tool of God to punish the sinners, however, the whip of lightening is not for the pious. There for Benjamin Franklin was not justified to be against the will of God. For a long time people has been sacrificing their children to avoid the anger of Maloch, the god of sacrifice, which was strictly against the canons of humanity.

All these foolish and cruel acts, which were fruits of superstition and dogmatism, have tortured and damaged human civilization greatly. Russell vehemently condemns such dogmas, some of which are still prevalent. If man sticks to such superstitious beliefs and does not discards such irrational practices, he can never attain the absolute happiness and contentment.

Russell tells us that the best way of getting rid of the folly of dogmatism is to be well aware of the opinions rampant in social circles, different from your own and try to know their logical truth. Travel can bring you closer to the people and help diminish the intensity of prejudice. If traveling is not possible than make a liaison with the people with whom you disagree or read the newspaper belonging to the party you dislike. Using this way you can broaden you outlook. For the people who are psychologically imaginative, it is good to make an imaginary argument with a person having a different point of view. The great Hindu leader of India, Mahatma Gandhi was opposed to railways, steamboats and machinery. If you fell into an imaginary discussion with Gandhi, you can easily judge his viewpoint. Again to judge the conviction of your own arguments you can imagine what Gandhi might have said to negate you views.

The orthodox object to cremation as it burns the spiritless human body, which is to be reborn on the judgment day. This objection indicates an insufficient faith in the omnipotence of God. It was thought to be difficult for God to recreate a burnt body on the judgment day in its real shape. This thought touches the boundaries of blasphemy. Russell regards this objection as ridiculous and baseless. He contends if God created a human body with most complicated systems, He can rebuilt the burnt body and infuse psyche into it on the judgment day without a pinch of difficulty. To doubt the powers of God is nothing but a blasphemy.

The church was against the dissection of corpse to view the intricate body systems as it was for the study of medicine. Vesalims, the court physician was the pioneer of dissection. He was an accomplished physician and his medical skill protected the emperor against bodily ailments. But after the emperor’s death, he was sentenced to pilgrimage to the Holy Land, by the church.

Till the 18th century, the cause of insanity was attributed to devil. The only way to get rid of this ill was to beat the devil so that to beat the patient. So the persecuted the devil, (the patient) was beaten savagely. But sometimes, this treatment did not work and the patient had to suffer without any rhyme and reason. This treatment was given to King George III, who was insane, but was not cured at all. In that age, the fallacies and

discrimination of race and blood were common. The Nazis had adopted them as their creed. But all these were self-created myths. According to Russell there was no pure race in the world. In America, the colored races are considered inferior to the others in respect of intelligence. But those who measure intelligence are unable to know the reality of distinction.

Russell also discovered the causes of superstition. It is actually the influence of great fear, which makes the men superstitious. The sailors, who threw Jonah overboard, took his presence on boat as the cause of storm. When Maloch demanded the children of aristocrats to sacrifice to him, the Carthaginians deceived him by offering the children of lower strata for the sacrifice. This annoyed Maloch and he inflicted defeat on them. However they did not change their way and never offered their own children for the sacrifice. As a result they again met defeat at the hands of Romans.

When fear prevails over masses, they become nervous and disturbed and do anything to get rid of this fear. Fear generates the impulse of cruelty and they justify every nonsensical and fierce thing to discard this fear. This is actually superstition. During the French revolution people went desperate and it gave way to absurd cruelties in the beginning. Had this revolution met less hostility from outside, it would have been less fierce. So we can sum up that the human history has been full of intellectual rubbish. Russel, throughout his life, struggled to eliminate such follies from human mind. So he indicated the hidden causes of dogmas analyzed them on psychological basis with absolute ability.

Russell as a Prose Writer

Bertrand Russell is by all respects, a productive prose writer, who wrote abundantly. He is the prominent writer of present century who wrote on a variety of subjects of human interest, with great zeal and zest. He expressed his acumen and writing power in a forceful and logical style. He wrote almost on everything and there was hardly a human problem, which remained untouched by him.

Basically he was a mathematician and his grand, epoch-making contribution to his subject was published in three volumes. Principa Mathematica in collaboration with professor Whitehaed, which is verily a landmark in the history of mathematics. His scientific and mathematical skill together endowed him with approach to speak and write with perfect proficiency.

The fineness and beauty of his style depends mainly on clarity of his thoughts. There is no confusion or complexity. A rich coffer of knowledge made him upright and honest in his opinions.

Whenever Russell takes to writing on a subject, he adopts a systematic way for a successful production. About his own method of writing, he says:

"If I were to write upon some rather difficult topic, the best plan is to think about is with very great interest------ the great intensity of which I am capable----- for a few hours or days, and at the end of that time give orders, so to speak, that the work is to proceed under ground. After some months, I return consciously to the topic and find that the work has been done. Before I had discovered this technique, I used to spend the intervening months worrying because I was making no progress, I arrived at the solution none the sooner for this worry and the intervening months were wasted, whereas now I can devote to other pursuits.

(The Conquest of Happiness, page 50).

The above-mentioned reference indicates that Russell was convinced of clarity of thought and fluency of expression. His thoughts were always clear and his style always chaste, transparent and lucid. The clarity of thought and neatness of expression were the two things, out of which, he developed a charming style, which left indelible imprints on the reader's mind.

Unity of Thoughts

The second salient feature of Russell's style is the unity of thought. The discipline of logic and mathematics taught him the principle of unity of thought. Like a mathematical premise, his arguments start from a well-affirmed basic assumption and then he proceeds step by step to the logical conclusion of his arguments. A fine coherence exists in his arguments. Each argument is related to the preceding one like the anxious of Euclid. So the conclusion drawn is the logical outcome of his arguments.

The Exact Use of Words

Russell's ideal scientific inclination enables him to make an exact and perfect use of words. He uses words, which are rich, pure, clear and transparent. There is no ambiguity or obscurity. If some ambiguity occurs somewhere he clarifies it in the following sentences. He avoids excessive use of words. He words are small in number but rich in meaning. He avoids empty rhetoric, and produces a charm of writing with modest use of words.

Long Sentences

Russell usually uses lengthy and elaborate sentences to maintain his unity of thought. He is fully aware of this aspect of his style and therefore does not let the length of sentence harm the fluency of writing. From beginning to the end, his thoughts go steadily, and with pleasant rhythm and coherence. His style poses a medium though which his thoughts flow smoothly. There is not dullness, but sweetness in his writing, relished by the readers.

Simplicity of Language

Setting aside bombastic and pompous language, he insists on simplicity and effect of expression. He hardly uses excessive synonymous words to make the sentence tedious and tasteless. That is why his writing is not monotonous and dull, rather sweet and pleasant, relished interestingly by the readers. He adopts convincing and simple style which touch the core of reader's heart directly. He rarely uses excessive synonyms to make the sentence monotonous and boring. However his sentences are long and dilated. He unfurls his thoughts through the long sentences to preserve the unity of thought. Russell could not help it because he wrote on solemn and grave subjects, which demanded an interlinked unity of thoughts and arguments. It is not an easy job to dwell upon sober and grave subjects and maintaining the simplicity of description and clarity of thoughts. But Russell manipulated it with proficiency. He diminished the gravity of subject with simplicity and lucidity of words and produced a style, which was unique but familiar, scholarly and easy.

Seriousness

Almost all his writings retain the seriousness of the subject, but as we have pointed out earlier, his writing does not bear his personal emotional effect. He was among the greatest humanists of 20th century who deeply felt the pain and problems of humanity. He set forth a practical philosophy of human life and all his life preached for it. But again he was a not a traditional preacher like an old type dogmatic clergy. It was his intellectual vision, broadmindedness and impersonal attitude towards human problems, which made him a sober, prolific and high profile writer. The deepness of his outlook actually made his style heart-felt and effective. He was much concerned for the humanity surrounded by horrible problems. There was a possible danger of nuclear war after the invention of nuclear weapons, world population was growing at an alarming rate, natural resources were running out fast and the likelihood of calamities and famines was hanging like Damocles sword on the head of humanity.

Furthermore the endless ideological clash between the two great super powers of the world and its formidable effects on mankind, particularly on the developing countries did not let him attain a peace of mind. He sensed the danger of all these problems on and clamored for it through his writing. He also deplored the follies of man done in the past and showed his deep concern for the imminent calamities. His heart was teeming with sympathy and love for humanity. He contemplated on the human follies, problems and hardships and always thought of their solutions.

His Humor and Satire

A serious discussion, how much important it may be, makes a write-up dull and boring. In spite of high seriousness, Russell's style is tinged with cheerfulness and humor. His writing bears a highly intellectual and scholarly style, with a humorous touch. But his humor does not go outrageous or overboard. His writing never becomes disgusting rather is remains optimistic and lively with a ray of hope. This humor has a reformative aspect, which not only pinpoints human blunders, but also suggests a solution, with a hope for improvement in future. For example, when describing the opposition of the

clergy against the scientific inventions towards the end of nineteenth century, when Franklin invented the lightning rod, he writes:

"When Benjamin Franklin invented the lightning rod, the Clergy both in England and America, with enthusiastic support of God to punish impiety or some other grave sin---- the virtuous are never struck by lightning. Therefore if God wants to strike anyone, Benjamin Franklin ought not to defeat His design, indeed to do so is to help criminals to escape. But was equal to the occasion. If we are believe the eminent Dr. Price, one of the leading divines of Boston. Lightning having been rendered ineffectual by the iron points invented by the sagacious Dr. Franklin, Massachusetts was shaken by earthquakes, which Dr. Price perceived to be due to God's wrath at the Iron Point.' In a sermon on the subject he said, "In Boston are more erected than elsewhere in New England, and Boston seems to be of God Apparently, however, Providence gave up all hopes of curing Boston of its wickedness, for though lightning rods became more and more common, earthquakes in Massachusetts have remained rare. Nevertheless, Dr. Price's point of view, or something very like it, was still held by one of the most influential men of recent times. When there were several bad earthquakes in India, Mahatma Gandhi solemnly warned his compatriots that these disasters had been sent as punishment for their sins." (Unpopular Essay page 85-86) The above detailed account shows sharpness of his humor and satire using which, how beautifully he exposes the follies of dogmatism.

Ornate Style

Though Russell's style is generally marked with clarity and brevity, yet he a capable of writing florid and embellished language, to prove his artistic command on writing. His only celebrated essay "The Free Man "Worship" published in his book Mysticism and Logic is a nice expression of his flowery and ornate style, which is an ample proof of his nice taste and command on English language.

Most of his writings are thoughtful and argumentative in nature, but it does not mar his clarity and fluency. The unity of thoughts pours out of his pen with a symmetry and harmony to make his description weighty and chaste. The excellent example of Russell's descriptive style is seen in his own autobiography. It describes his life history narrated in an attractive, simple and appealing way, which is read by the readers with great interest.

In short: Russell can be regarded as one of the greatest prose-writers of 20th century, who wrote on a variety of subjects relating to human life with a great writing skill. Clarity, simplicity, fluency and harmony are the salient features of his style. He skillfully expresses unity of thought along with his unity of style.

Russell's use of irony in his Unpopular Essays.

The Meaning of Irony

Irony always arises from a contrast. It generally implies a contrast between the obvious or surface meaning of a statement and the real or the intended meaning of it. It may also imply a contrast between the incomplete, limited, or inaccurate knowledge of people and the writer's fuller, wider, and more exact knowledge of the facts. Irony is one of the principal sources of humour.

It is one of the most effective weapons of satire. Satire generally aims at ridiculing persons or institutions or customs or modes of thought, and it often employes irony as its tool. The great satirists have always been masters in the use of irony. Such were Chaucer, Samuel Butler, (the author of Hudibras), Dryden, Alexander Pope, and Swift. In modern times, Aldous Huxley and Bertrand Russell are among the great writers to make use of irony as a weapon of attack.

Russell's Use of Irony and Its Purpose

The Unpopular Essays show Russell's use of irony to a striking degree. Russell too employs irony to expose the absurdity or stupidity of certain ideas, beliefs, customs, and institutions. His irony is free from malice, spite and spleen. His irony is not prompted by ill-will or cynicism. Nor does he become furious or indignant in his unmasking of the follies and absurdities in people's thinking. His purpose is improvement and reform; he aims at correcting wrong modes of thought, and teaching people to become rational in their thinking and in taking decisions in the course of their political and social life.

The Use of Irony in "Philosophy and Politics"

Russell is a serious writer; he has always something important and weighty to say. The use of irony, apart from serving as a weapon of attack in his hands, serves also to lighten the gravity of the tone of his writing. For instance, in the essay Philosophy and Politics we feel greatly amused when Russell ironically points out the absurdity of Hegel's philosophy by reducing Hegel's definition of the Absolute Idea to the statement that it is "pure thought thinking about pure thought". Russell mocks at this philosophy by further pointing out what the general reaction of people to it would be. People, says Russell, would not think it worth their while to go through all the verbiage of Hegel and, after reading it, they would "say good-bye to philosophy and live happy ever after". In the same essay, Russell ironically says that people who oppose the philosopher are condemned as unphilosophic, and those who agree with him feel assured of victory, since the universe is on their side. And Russell here ironically adds: "At the same time the winning side, for reasons which remain somewhat obscure is represented as the side of virtue". In the course of the same essay, Russell quotes an ancient Greek writer who said that every beast was driven to the pasture with blows, and then makes the following ironical comment: "Let us, in any case, make sure of the blows; whether they lead to a pasture is a matter of minor importance—except, of course, to the beasts". Russell's criticism of Plato's Republic is also characterized by a use of irony. This recurrent use of irony makes the essay quite entertaining, serious though it is as regards its ideas. Indeed, Russell shows an exceptional capacity to ridicule what is false, fanciful or ill-founded.

An Extensive Use of Irony to Expose Certain Absurdities in "The Superior Virtue of the Oppressed"

Irony is all-pervasive in the essay, The Superior Virtue of the Oppressed. Here we have irony in the very title of the essay, because the superior virtue attributed to the oppressed sections of the population is purely imaginary; this superior virtue does not really exist: it is simply attributed to the oppressed class of people as a compensation for the exploitation to which they are subjected. Russell gives us various examples to illustrate his thesis, and a vein of irony runs through his analysis of the various cases with which he deals. For instance, he ironically observes that in the eighteenth century virtue was not to be found in courts but that court ladies could almost secure it by disguising themselves as shepherdesses because virtue was to be found among the poor. Russell quotes a couple of lines from a poem by Alexander Pope to show that Pope expressed a belief in the blessings of poverty; but then Russell ironically adds: "Nevertheless, for himself Pope preferred London and his villa at Twickenham". What Russell means is that Pope himself tasted the joys of a fashionable life in the city or near the city, while recommending a poor life to people living in the countryside. Russell also makes an ironical reference to the British domination of Ireland. In this context, Russell says that the Irish were regarded by the English as possessed of a special charm and mystical insight until 1921, when it was found that the expense of continuing to oppress them would be too heavy. Then Russell goes on to tell us in the same ironical vein that old English ladies still sentimentalize about the wisdom of the east, and American intellectuals about the "earth-consciousness" of the Negro. In dealing with men's attitude towards the female sex, Russell again makes use of irony. A combination of the Madonna and the lady of chivalry, says Russell, was created in the nineteenth century as the ideal of the ordinary married woman. For a long time, women were regarded as a spiritual force and as the angelic part of humanity, but as soon as women began to demand and acquire equal rights with men, the belief in their superiority over men on spiritual grounds vanished. Thus the belief in women's superiority was part and parcel of men's determination to keep women inferior economically and politically. Russell also mocks at the Freudian theory of the unconscious in so far as it encourages the belief that children are little devils because all kinds of sinful thoughts fill their unconscious minds. In this connection Russell ironically asks whether this theory states the objective truth at last or it is merely an adult imaginative compensation for being no longer allowed to victimize children. And Russell ironically adds: "Let the Freudians answer, such for the others". Thus Russell pokes fun at the Freudians. Again, there is much irony in the way Russell ridicules the communists who tend to discover a superior virtue in the proletariat. The communist intellectuals find the proletariat more amiable than other people. In other words, the tendency of the communist intellectuals is to idealize the proletariat, just as Wordsworth idealized children. It would be more rational, Russell wants to say, for intellectuals to advocate an improvement in the conditions of life of the proletariat to enable them to enjoy all the advantages of a good life; there is no point in building up fanciful theories such as the view that the proletariat is more amiable than other classes of people. Thus Russell gives evidence of his fertile and ready wit. In attacking what seems false or absurd to him, Russell never loses his temper and never becomes

abusive; he makes use of his ironical wit and his talent for satire to expose the falseness and the absurdity

The Use of Irony to Ridicule "Modernity"

In the essay, On Being Modern-Minded, the very opening passage contains examples of Russell's use of irony. Russell makes fun of the modern man who thinks that he stands at the apex of human intelligence and that the customs and beliefs of his ancestor have lost all their validity and value. And then, in the same ironical vein, Russell says that, if Hamlet is to be made interesting for a really modern reader, it must first be translated into the language of Marx or of Freud or, better still, into a jargon inconsistently combining both. Russell then refers to a review according to which what had been written about Hamlet in the past had lost its critical value, and makes fun of the author of that review by pointing out that the review itself would, by the reviewer's own standards, soon become out of date. And then Russell ironically adds that the reviewer concerned would be quite happy to find his review becoming obsolete because the reviewer himself would soon have adopted the new fashion in critical opinions. Russell concludes this part of the argument by the following ironical remark: "Any other ideal for a writer could seem absurd and old-fashioned to the modern-minded man". In the same essay Russell goes on to tell us ironically how fashion dominates opinion in modem times. Fashion makes thinking unnecessary and puts the highest intelligence within the reach of every one. It is not difficult to learn the correct use of such words as "complex", "Oedipus", "bourgeoise" and "deviation"; and nothing more is needed to make a brilliant writer or talker. Thus Russell exposes the shallowness of the modern-minded man who pretends to be a brilliant writer or talker by having learnt the use of certain words introduced into the language by modem thinkers. A man has merely to parade his knowledge of these words in order to be thought modern and up-to-date.

An Example of Irony from "The Future of Mankind"

An amusing example of irony occurs in the essay, The Future of Mankind, when Russell pokes fun at Stalin who then alive. In this connection Russell makes the following ironical remark: "Stalin at all times knows the truth about metaphysics, but you must not suppose that the truth this year is the same as it was last year".

The Use of Irony to Expose the Absurdity of Certain Religious Beliefs

There are several examples of the use of irony in the essay, An Outline of Intellectual Rubbish. There is ironical humour in the statement that, if pious men are to be believed, God's mercies are curiously selective. Russell here refers to the case of a priest who moved from one residence to another and who thanked God for his mercy when the house he had vacated caught fire and was burnt down. The implication here is that, if God was merciful to this particular priest, He must have been merciless towards the next priest who had occupied the house vacated by the first. A similar absurdity is pointed out in the case of George Borrow. Borrow thanked God for God's mercy when he escaped being attacked by bandits who attacked and murdered some other travellers crossing a

particular mountain after Borrow had crossed it. There is also ironical humour in Russell's statement that religious persons conceive of God as a peeping Tom, whose omnipotence enables him to see through bath-room walls but who is foiled by bath-robes. Russell makes this statement in the context of the practice of nuns who never take a bath without wearing a bath-robe even when they are inside a bath-room where no man can see them. The plea of the nuns is that they wear bath-robes not against the eyes of men but against the eyes of God. When Russell says that the whole conception of sin is puzzling to him, he ironically adds: "doubtless, owing to my sinful nature". In the same context, he says that, if God is capable of wanton cruelty, he should certainly not think Him worthy of worship, and then adds ironically: "But that only proves how sunk I am in moral depravity". In connection with the initial opposition to the dissection of corpses, Russell ironically tells us that a French surgeon's demand for dead bodies for purposes of dissection was received with horror by the Chinese, but that the surgeon was offered an unlimited supply of living criminals whom he could dissect. Again, Russell writes in an ironical vein: "One would suppose that God sees everything, but apparently this is a mistake. He does not see Reno, for you cannot be divorced in the sight of God". (Reno is an American city where divorce is easy to obtain. The implication is that either God is not present at Reno or that God does not see Reno.) Speaking of Mr. Homo, Russell ironically says: "If he is a Yugoslav, he boasts of his nation's pigs; if a native of Monaco, he boasts of leading the world in the matter of gambling". Next, Russell refers ironically to the Biblical doctrine that God made man in His own image and that everything was created for man's convenience. Here Russell ironically adds: "Even the white tails of rabbits, according to some theologians, have a purpose, namely to make it easier for sportsmen to shoot them". Commenting on Adam's eating the apple, Russell ironically says that originally all animals were vegetarians, and the season was always spring. And, in the same ironical tone, Russell goes on to say: If only Adam had been content with peaches, nectarines, grapes, pears,, and pineapples, mankind would not have lost some of the original blessings. It is noteworthy that all these ironical remarks have been made by Russell in order to expose the absurdities of certain religious beliefs which have for centuries been dominating the minds of human, beings.

The Use of Irony in the Essay "Ideas That Have Helped Mankind"

In the essay, Ideas That Have Helped Mankind, we have an example of what is known as devastating irony. Speaking of international disputes and the possibility of the next world war completely destroying the human race, Russell points out that narrow nationalistic ideas often blind the politicians to the disastrous consequences which can result from their squabbles. Russell in this context refers to the disputes about Persian oil, the disagreement as to Chinese trade, the quarrels between the Jews and the Muslims for the control of Palestine; and he then makes the following ironical and sarcastic remark: "Any patriotic person can see that these issues are of such importance as to make the extermination of mankind preferable to cowardly conciliation". Another example of irony in this essay occurs when, after mentioning the brutalities committed by the Germans and the Russians, he writes: "And how about our noble selves? We would not do such deeds. Oh no! But we enjoy our juicy steaks and our hot rolls while German children die

of hunger." This ironical remark is intended to bring out the cruel impulses lurking at the bottom of the apparently generous mind of the British and the American people.

The Use of Irony in the Essay, "Ideas That Have Harmed Mankind"

In the essay, Ideas That Have Harmed Mankind, Russell gives us an ironical picture of the minds of the Christian saints. These saints abstained from all the pleasures of the senses. Well and good. But these saints were not so kind and humane as we might think. Even they sought the gratification of their cruel impulses. They experienced the pleasure of contemplating the eternal tortures to which the pagans and heretics would be subjected to in the next life. Again, the two parables or fables offered by Russell in this essay are ironical in tone and intention. One of the parables pertains to a cow grazing in a field, and the other relates to the sense of rivalry among butchers and bakers By means of these fables, Russell makes us laugh at the absurdity of human beings who create certain myths to explain their misfortunes and the absurdity also of those who indulge in competitive practices with the object of making larger profits. There is irony too in the manner in which Russell describes the feelings of national, racial, and religious pride.

Irony to Demolish Obsolete Ideas and Beliefs

In all these cases, it is clear, Russell uses irony in order to attack superstitions, false notions, ridiculous beliefs, and fanciful suppositions. The use of irony makes these essays interesting, and lends them a spicy flavour. The use of irony is an important ingredient of Russell's prose-style. His style would have been so much less entertaining without the use of this weapon which is so effective in demolishing ideas that have become obsolete and creeds that have become outworn. The use of irony greatly contributes to making these essays an intellectual treat for the reader.

To what extent and in what way do the Unpopular Essays show Bertrand Russell to be an opponent of dogmatism and an apostle of liberalism?

The Meaning of Dogmatism and of Liberalism

Dogmatism implies a stubborn holding of beliefs and opinions, and a refusal to subject them to the scrutiny of reason or verify them by evidence. Liberalism, on the contrary, means keeping an open mind, a mind receptive to the fresh evidence which may become available. Liberalism, in other words, implies a readiness to modify, alter, or discard the views which one holds if fresh evidence so dictates. Russell is a determined opponent of dogmatism of all kinds, dogmatism in the philosophical sphere, dogmatism in the religious sphere, dogmatism in the political and social spheres, and dogmatism in educational theories. He is truly an apostle of liberalism. The Unpopular-Essays provide ample evidence to show Russell as a relentless critic of all kinds of dogmatic beliefs, and an ardent upholder of the liberal attitude in all fields of thinking.

The Dogmatism of the Catholics, the Nazis, and the Communists

Russell's opposition to dogmatism in the philosophical and religious spheres, and in the political sphere, is evident in the very first essay, Philosophy and Politics. He here points out that the Catholic Church is connected to the philosophy of Aquinas, and that the Soviet government is connected to the philosophy of Karl Marx. The Nazis upheld German idealism, though the degree of allegiance which they offered to Kant, Fitchte, or Hegel respectively was not clearly laid down. All these three classes of people: Catholics, Communists, and Nazis, are dogmatists, Russell rightly tells us. John Locke is mentioned by Russell as an example of the liberal thinker who showed himself to be a powerful opponent of Hegel and the Hegelian philosophy. Even Plato was a dogmatist, though his dogmatism was not realized until his disciples, Lenin and Hitler, had committed their worst excesses in the persecution of those who did not accept their political ideologies. The political consequences of Hegel's philosophy, like those of the philosophy of Plato, proved to be disastrous. It follows from Hegel's philosophy that true liberty consists in obedience to arbitrary authority, that free speech is an evil, that absolute monarchy is good, that war is desirable, and that there is no need at all for an international organization to bring about a peaceful settlement of disputes. Hegel's philosophy had a great influence on Karl Marx who took over some of Hegel's most fanciful tenets, more particularly the belief that history develops according to a logical plan and is concerned to find ways of avoiding self-contradiction. According to the philosophy of Hegel, and according to the disciples of Marx, any degree of coercion is justified if it leads to the goals stated by them. Both Hegel and Marx thus justify autocracy or despotism or tyranny on the basis of their dogmas.

Locke's Liberalism

Locke's philosophy of empiricism, on the contrary, lends support to an attitude of liberalism and to the democratic values. Locke's empiricism is intimately connected with his views on liberty and toleration, and with his opposition to absolute monarchy. Locke preached religious toleration, representative institutions, and the limitation of governmental power by the system of checks and balances.

The Need of Tentativeness and Tolerance

An examination of these two philosophies makes Russell come to the conclusion that "only through a revival of liberal tentativeness and tolerance can our world survive". Russell condemns dictatorships, concentration camps, and world wars, and mentions the brutal treatment of the Jews at Auschwitz as an example of persecution resulting from dogmatic beliefs. Russell advocates a rational outlook or a scientific attitude: "Science is empirical, tentative and undogmatic; all immutable dogma is unscientific".

The Advantages of Dogmatism Purely Illusory

Russell also rebuts the argument that in a war between liberals and dogmatists (or fanatics), the dogmatists are sure to win. Russell points out that dogmatists or fanatics

have failed over and over again because they were too unscientific to adopt the right means even when their aims were good. In every important war since 1700, the more democratic side has been victorious, and the dogmatists have been defeated. Nor does Russell accept the view that systems of dogma, such as Marxism and fascism are capable of producing a greater degree of social unity. During World War II, no nation showed greater social unity than England with its democratic system.

Empiricist Liberalism, the Need of the Times

Russell closes this essay with the statement that dogma demands authority rather than intelligent thought as the source of opinion, that dogma requires the persecution of those who disagree, and that empiricist liberalism is the only philosophy that can serve the purpose in the modern world.

Political Dogmatism in Soviet Russia

In the essay, The Future of Mankind, Russell condemns the political dogmatism which holds the field in Soviet Russia and in countries under Soviet control. In Poland, for instance, education has been reduced to learning the formulas of Stalinist orthodoxy. From such an educational system nothing of intellectual value can result, says Russell. Russell advocates the freedom of thought, the freedom of inquiry, the freedom of discussion, and humane feeling which are found in the U.S.A. A Russian victory in any future world war would be an appalling disaster. Russell gives several examples of the way in which the government in Soviet Russia tries to control the minds of the people with its dogmatic teaching. To take only one example, in America one may write a book debunking Lincoln if one feels so inclined; in Russia, if one writes a book debunking Lenin, the book would not be published, and the writer would be liquidated. Only democracy and free publicity, says Russell, can prevent the holders of power from establishing a servile State.

Religious Dogmatism

In the essay, An Outline of Intellectual Rubbish, Russell first of all condemns the dogmatism of priests. Daring the ages of faith, the priests taught that man’s sins were punished by pestilence, by famine, by earthquakes, by floods etc.; and many thousands of witches were burnt at the stake. So dogmatic were the men of religion that they put up a stiff resistance against Darwin’s theory of evolution; and so dogmatic are they still that they are now fighting in the same fanatical manner against scientific theories of psychology and education. Another example of religious dogmatism is that, although the Copernican astronomy is taught in schools and colleges, it has yet not produced any great influence on people’s religious beliefs and their morals; in fact, this astronomy has not even succeeded in destroying the belief in astrology, so that people still believe in the influence of stars upon human life. Russell’s liberalism also compels him to question the whole conception of sin. Russell feels puzzled by what the religious people consider sinful and by what they do not consider sinful. He exposes the absurdity of such dogmatic beliefs as that human beings will one day rise from their graves, that sexual

intercourse is sinful, that there is no need to show any sympathy for the lower animals, that mercy-killing is wicked. In this context, Russell ridicules the puritanical ideas of Tolstoy, Mahatma Gandhi, and the Manichaeans. One of the most amusing examples of the absurdity of such beliefs is a Catholic theologian's view that a priest may fondle a nun's breasts provided he does so without any evil intention.

Other Dogmas and their Consequences

Russell also dwells in the same essay upon the fallacious ideas which result from the dogmas about race and blood. A dogma which causes much mischief is the view that human nature cannot be changed. As a consequence of this belief is the dogmatic assertion that there will always be wars because human nature is so constituted that wars will always be needed. Opposition to birth control is the result of another dogmatic belief on the part of theologians. In short, dogmatic beliefs have done tremendous harm to mankind, and so Russell suggests certain simple rules by which human beings can rid themselves of at least certain kinds of dogmatism, the general rule in this connection being that one should freely discuss one's ideas and opinions with those who hold different views and opinions. Russell advocates complete freedom of discussion and exchange of views.

The Dangers of Dogmatic Education

The Functions of a Teacher is another essay in which Russell appears as a champion of liberalism and a foe of dogmatism. He here deplores the fact that institutions such as universities largely remained in the grip of the dogmatists for many centuries. Russell refers to the dangers of State education which seeks to control the minds of people by instilling certain dogmatic beliefs among them. The evils to be feared as a result of State education were seen in their full magnitude in Nazi Germany, and are still seen in Russia. State education in such countries produces fanatical bigots, who are ignorant of the world outside their own countries, and who are totally unaccustomed to free discussion. The modern dogmatists, says Russell, are preaching one creed in Germany, another in Italy, another in Russia, and yet another in Japan. This kind of thing does great damage to the concept of cultural internationalism which has rapidly been declining ever since the First World War. The inculcation of different dogmatic beliefs in different countries can only lead to another world war, because each set of dogmatists thinks itself to be in the right and all others to be in the wrong. Russell pleads for complete freedom to the teacher who should feel himself to be an individual directed by an inner creative impulse, not dominated and fettered by an outside authority. He strongly disapproves of the system of education by which nationalistic feeling is encouraged in every country and school-children are taught that the inhabitants of other countries are inferior to the inhabitants of their own country. In this way, Russell upholds the liberal ideal in the field of education.

Liberalism: Brotherhood of Man; Individual Liberty; Democracy

In the essay, Ideas That Have Helped Mankind, Russell lends a strong support to such liberal ideas as the brotherhood of man and the freedom of the individual. He traces the development of the concept of the brotherhood of man which was invented by the Stoics, and he dwells upon the meaning of individual liberty. The greatest of the theoretical advocates of liberty was John Locke whose philosophy Russell has discussed in the very first essay in our collection. In this context, Russell refers to the feeling of perplexity which Stalin experienced when, in compliance with the democratic traditions, Winston Churchill resigned as the British Prime Minister when his party was defeated in the general election. The dogmatist Stalin could not understand why Churchill should have given up his control of the government because of the result of a popular vote. In this context, Russell writes: "I am a firm believer in democratic representative government as the best form for those who have the tolerance and self-restraint that is required to make it workable." But Russell is opposed to dogmatism even in supporting democracy as a form of government. He is a believer in democracy, but not a fanatical believer in democracy. He thinks democracy to be an excellent form of government, but it is not a desirable form of government for every country, because some countries are not mentally and morally fit for this system.

Further Condemnation by Russell of Dogmatic Beliefs

Dogmatic beliefs are also condemned and ridiculed by Russell in the companion-essay called Ideas That Have Harmed Mankind. Russell mocks at the dogmatism of the Christian saints who, abstaining from the pleasures of senses, yet enjoyed thinking that pagans and heretics would suffer eternal tortures in hell. This is described by Russell as a fierce form of Christian dogma, an ascetic form of cruelty. The modern political scene shows somewhat similar beliefs. The German Nazis and the Russian communists have given a political twist to the Christian dogma; they have replaced hell with concentration camps and they teach that the best life is a life of hard work in the service of the government. Another dogma in modern times is the philosophy of economic nationalism which is based on the false belief that the economic interest of one nation is necessarily opposed to that of another. Still more examples of dogmatic beliefs are the beliefs in the superiority of the nation, or the race, or the sex, or the class, or the creed to which one belongs. All these dogmatic beliefs lead only to conflicts and persecution. And Russell's recipe is that "in public as in private life, the important thing is tolerance and kindliness". Once again Russell asserts that democracy is an excellent form of government, and once again he points out that the believers in democracy should not assume a fanatical tone, because democracy is not the best system of government always and everywhere.

One of the important liberal ideas of Russell is that only the establishment of an international government can now save the world.

How will you account for Bertrand Russell's appeal to the modern reader? Illustrate your answer from the essays prescribed for you.

The Continuing Validity of Russell's Ideas

The ideas which Russell preached and which he tried to popularize have not lost their validity even today. The problems which he wanted to solve and the dangers against which he warned the readers of his own day continue almost unabated, and in some cases the dangers have actually increased. The value of the suggestions and remedies offered by Russell also continues undiminished. We can still greatly benefit by Russell's exhortations. The relevance of Russell's thought to our times is very great, indeed.

Russell's Opposition to Dogmatism, and his Advocacy of Liberalism

In the preface to the Unpopular Essays, Russell tells us of his purpose to combat the growth of dogmatism, whether of the Right or of the Left, which has hitherto characterized our tragic century. This purpose becomes perfectly clear as we go through these essays. In Philosophy and Politics, for instance, he tells us that dogma demands authority, rather than intelligent thought, as the source of opinion; dogma requires the persecution of those who disagree; dogma calls upon its followers to suppress their natural sympathy and kindness in favour of systematic hatreds. The conflicts that occur between rival dogmatists are bound to lead to war; and war, in our scientific age, means universal death. As against dogmatism, Russell advocates liberalism which means keeping an open mind and a readiness to change one's opinions when fresh evidence becomes available. The liberal creed is one of "live and let live", of toleration and freedom, of moderation and absence of fanaticism in political programmes. In the essay, The Future of Mankind, Russell points out that Russian control over Poland led to education in that country losing its liberal character; education was there reduced to learning the formulas of communist theory; and from such an educational system nothing of intellectual value can result. He also speaks of the absence of intellectual freedom in the Soviet Union itself where, if a man writes a book debunking Lenin, he would be liquidated. In the essay The Functions of a Teacher, Russell points out that the young in Nazi Germany became, and in Russia still become, fanatical bigots, ignorant of the world outside their own country. In An Outline of Intellectual Rubbish Russell suggests that a good way of ridding yourself of certain kinds of dogmatism is to become aware of opinions held in social circles different from your own.

The Value of Russell's Campaign Against Dogmatism

The value of Russell's campaign against political dogmatism is very great even today. If anything, this dogmatism has further hardened in communist countries like Russia and China. Countries like Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia continue to be under the rigid control of Russian communist ideology. All these countries have a totalitarian system of government which is opposed to individual freedom in any form. A citizen in any one of these is a slave to the ideas and doctrines which the government there constantly instils among the people. The writings of a man like Russell would not, for instance, find their way into any of the communist countries for fear lest his ideas should sow rebellion or discontent in the minds of the people there. By going through Russell's ideas we realize

how fortunate we are in living in a country where the government does not indoctrinate its citizens and does not try to bring about a regimentation or uniformity of thought.

Russell's Emphasis on Rationalism

The essay called An Outline of Intellectual Rubbish places much emphasis on the need of a rational attitude towards life. Unfortunately, says Russell, cruelty, persecution and superstition have been increasing in this world by leaps and bounds, and rationality has been pushed into the background. Russell then points out the irrationality which characterizes the religious beliefs that have for centuries been held by priests and propagated by them. The belief in witchcraft, the belief that people's sins are punished by pestilence or earthquake or famine, the whole conception of sin, the view that all sexual intercourse is wicked—all these are examples of irrational beliefs. Then there ate the irrational ideas about the superiority of particular races. Irrational also is the view that human nature cannot be changed and that there will always be wars. Science has always tried to fight against all such irrational beliefs, and today science is fighting one of its most difficult battles in the sphere of psychology. What is worse even than holding irrational beliefs is to become dogmatic in holding them, and that is the general tendency where religious beliefs are concerned.

The Value of Russell's Gospel of Rationalism Today

All this is applicable even to present-day conditions in which we find ourselves. Russell's gospel of rationalism is of the utmost importance for our own country if we want to accelerate the pace of our progress. Our people still remain extremely orthodox and conservative in holding certain beliefs in the spheres of religion and morals. Superstitions still reign supreme in our country. The worship of all kinds of deities goes on here with the greatest possible fervour. The exploitation of people by the priests of various religions in this country continues to be as great as ever it was, and the number of the so-called "god-men" is on the increase. People still believe that they can wash away their sins by visiting temples, shrines, and similar other places of pilgrimage. The same orthodox attitudes govern our notions of morality. In view of all this, if we were to follow the teaching of of Russell, we could cleanse our society of many social ills.

The Value in Our Times of Russell's Emphasis on Liberty and Democracy

Russell is a great advocate, as has already been indicated above, of individual liberty and of democracy as a form of government. In the essay The Future of Mankind, he expresses his preference for the American way of life which shows more respect for civilization than we find in Soviet Russia. The Americans have a genuine respect for the freedom of thought, the freedom of inquiry, the freedom of discussion, and humane feeling. In America, one may hold any views on the subject of genetics; and there one may even write a book debunking such a great man as Abraham Lincoln. Only democracy and free publicity can prevent the holders of power from establishing a servile State. In the essay, Ideas That Have Helped Mankind, Russell points out that democracy was invented as a device for reconciling government with liberty. Democracy

makes men's tenure of power temporary and dependent upon popular approval. In doing so, democracy prevents the worst abuses of power. In a democracy a man cannot be punished except by due process of law. Furthermore, democracy means free speech, a free press, and the freedom of religion. The value of the emphasis that Russell puts upon democracy and individual liberty is again evident to us. When we look at the kind of dictatorship that now prevails in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran, not to speak of the countries under communist influence, we realize again how fortunate we ourselves are. We have not forgotten how, during two years or so of the Emergency that was declared in this country, all kinds of excesses and injustices were perpetrated, and how freedom of all kinds was completely crushed. We can only hope that the democratic form of government with all its advantages and in spite of all its disadvantages, will continue in our country. These essays by Russell serve to strengthen our democratic beliefs and our love of freedom. And yet we must not forget that Russell does not approve of fanaticism or dogmatism in our holding democratic views. As he points out in the essay, Ideas That Have Harmed Mankind, democracy is not the best system always and everywhere: there are many nations which are not yet morally and politically well-equipped for the success of parliamentary institutions. In the essay Philosophy and Politics also, Russell says much the same thing. There he points out that a fanatical belief in democracy makes democratic institutions impossible, as appeared in England under Cromwell and in France during the French Revolution.

Russell's Suggestion About a World-government

Russell is a great believer in a single government for the whole world. In the essay The Future of Mankind, he insists that the world can be saved only through the establishment of a world-government. The hope of a world-government, he says, might be realized by the victory of the United States in the next world war, or by the victory of the Soviet Union, or by agreement among the leading nations. A world-government is essential if world wars are to be prevented and the total extinction of the human race is to be avoided. In the essay, Ideas That Have Harmed Mankind, he again advocates the establishment of an international government to prevent wars. In the essay, Ideas That Have Helped Mankind, he says that either man must revert to primitive conditions or we must learn to submit to an international government. An international government, whether good, or bad, or indifferent, will make the continuation of the human species possible. He also says that an international government is at least as important to mankind as national government.

The Relevance of this Suggestion to Our Times

Now, we do not doubt the value and importance of an international government which can prevent armed conflicts between nations and especially worldwide conflicts. However, we do doubt the feasibility of such an idea. The idea is great and noble, but it is, to use Russell's own phraseology, "Utopian and impossible". Every nation today has a sense of its own importance, and even small nations have learnt to assert themselves in international affairs. We cannot therefore imagine that the nations of the world, and especially the super-powers, will surrender their individual sovereignty in favour of a

world-government. Nor can a world-government be established by means of a war which Russell suggests in The Future of Mankind, because any world war now will destroy all civilization. World peace can now be preserved only through a universal recognition by all nations that the next world war will mean either the end of the world or the reversion of mankind to a state of barbarism, Still the ideal of a world-government should not be dismissed summarily; ideals have their own value even when they cannot be given a practical shape.

Russell's Ideas on Education and their Value Today

In the essay The Functions of a Teacher, Russell offers certain suggestions which appeal to us even today. Teachers are, says Russell, the custodians of civilization. But, in order to perform their functions well, teachers should be allowed the freedom to teach what they please and how they please. Russell strongly disapproves of bureaucratic control over education. Teachers should be protected from intellectual bondage. A teacher should feel himself to be an individual directed by an inner creative impulse, not dominated and fettered by an outside authority. Russell also points out that it is the duty of a teacher to produce in pupils the feeling of tolerance which is necessary for the survival of democracy. Furthermore, a good teacher, according to Russell, does not try to conceal the truth; nor does a good teacher allow himself to become a propagandist. All these ideas and suggestions show Russell to be a great educational reformer. His suggestions are still needed in the sphere of education not only in other countries but in our own. The teacher in our country is a man of mercenary motives without any missionary zeal; he is generally a shirker; he is also an intriguer. For the Indian teacher, therefore, this particular essay should be an eye-opener.

Russell's Appeal to Philosophic Readers

One of Russell's great achievements was to explain philosophical theories and doctrines for the benefit of laymen having some interest in philosophy. Philosophy and Politics is an essay in which we find a lucid exposition of the philosophical systems of Plato, Hegel, and Locke. This is a highly illuminating essay for the layman. It teaches us how political ideas and systems are derived from philosophical doctrines. For instance, Hegel's philosophical theory or dialectic led him to his belief in an obedience to an arbitrary authority and to the view that free speech was an evil and that war was good. Similarly from the philosophy of empiricism expounded by Locke, the liberal creed in politics was derived. In this essay, Russell comes to a most valuable conclusion which is valid for us even today. That conclusion is that empiricist liberalism is the only philosophy that can be adopted by rational human beings who want mankind to be happy.

The Appeal of Russell's Prose Style

Finally, the appeal of Russell to the modern reader is due, in no small measure, to the charm of his prose style. Russell writes in a style which is characterized by lucidity, clarity, elegance, and a grace of expression. It is a plain, unembellished style which the layman easily understands, and yet it is a style which abounds in all the literary graces.

"Russell's prose is characterized by clarity, intellectual brilliance, and a catholicity of temper." Discuss with reference to the Unpopular Essays.

Russell, a Great Prose-stylist

Russell is one of the great prose-stylists of the twentieth century. Although a philosopher, he does not write in a distorted or obscure manner as most philosophers do. His style is characterized by intellectual brilliance, clarity and lucidity, a certain frivolity and gaiety, and a catholicity of temper.

As a matter of fact, the phrase "intellectual brilliance" is itself very wide in its scope, and it includes most of the other qualities. After all clarity, wit, and catholicity of temper are different manifestations of intellectual brilliance. Russell is incapable of being dull in his writing just as he is incapable of being shallow. In the Unpopular Essays he deals with various subjects—philosophical, political, sociological, psychological, educational, historical, and so on—and his expositions of all the ideas are illumined by clarity and a grace of expression. His writing exactly reflects his crystalline, scintillating mind. These essays are, of course, far from being unpopular; in fact, they have a ready appeal for the average mind, and there can be no doubt at all about their popularity. One reason for the popularity of these essays is certainly the simplicity and charm of Russell's prose-style.

Clarity, Lucidity, Grace and Elegance

The most conspicuous characteristics of this style are clarity, lucidity, grace, and elegance. Even when Russell is dealing with ideas which are philosophical and technical, he succeeds in conveying them to the reader by the manner in which he expresses them. He takes great pains to make ideas clear to the reader, and yet his style is not at all forced or laborious. It is a sign of his intellectual brilliance that he writes effortlessly and spontaneously in a style that is singularly free from all kinds of obscurity and ambiguity. Such an effect is achieved by him by means of his method of logical reasoning and by his habit of offering homely examples to clarify ideas. Every thesis, every proposition, every theory, every suggestion that he offers in the course of his Unpopular Essays is well-argued, well-reasoned, and supported with appropriate examples, illustrations, and analogies, most of which are drawn from either well-known facts of history or everyday life,

Ideas, Intelligible and Coherently Presented

The essay, Philosophy and Politics, is not meant for everybody; but it is thoroughly intelligible to well-educated men who may not have made a special study of philosophy. This essay is an attack on the philosophy of Hegel with its destructive political implications, and a strong defence of Locke's philosophy of empiricism with its liberal political consequences. The argument in this essay proceeds in a most logical and

coherent manner. The ideas are so presented that we have no difficulty in grasping them. And the essay ends with a conclusion which is really a brief summing-up of what Russell has said in the course of the essay. His conclusion is that empiricist liberalism is the only philosophy which can yield the desired results in the world of today. In the essay, The Superior Virtue of the Oppressed, Russell's thesis is that writers, and especially moralists, have a tendency to admire certain sections of the population, which are oppressed, on the supposed ground that these sections of the population possess certain superior virtues. This thesis is also developed in a logical manner by means of several examples. In the essay, On Being Modern-Minded, the central idea is that the modem-minded man tends to fall under the sway of current opinions and shrinks from independent thinking; one of the consequences of this trend being that a mentally solitary life seems pointless according to modern standards. This essay, though slightly difficult as regards its ideas, is yet not perplexing or obscure in any way; all that it demands is a greater degree of concentration than such essays as An Outline of Intellectual Rubbish, Ideas That Have Helped Mankind and The Functions of a Teacher. The three last-named essays are extremely easy, as regards both the ideas and the expression. The same is true of Ideas That Have Harmed Mankind. In these essays we have a transparency of thought, and a perfect simplicity of expression. A noteworthy feature of the style in all these essays is a complete absence of digressions or any other form of superfluity. Russell is never prolix or diffuse, even when an essay is somewhat long as is An Outline of Intellectual Rubbish. Nor does he create an impression of copiousness or over-abundance in the matter of expression. Every essay is compact and well-knit, even when somewhat long.

An Unadorned but Effective Style

Russell's style is free from embellishments and ornamental effects. It is a plain, unadorned style. It is rarely charged even with emotion, being mainly addressed to the intelligence or the intellect as distinguished from the heart or the feelings. And yet it is not uninteresting, dull, tedious or monotonous in its effect. As has been indicated above, it is an elegant style with a charm of its own. Here, for instance, is a specimen of his writing, showing an excellent combination of lucidity, clarity, and the grace of expression:

Upon our collective wisdom during the next twenty years depends the question whether mankind shall be plunged into unparalleled disaster, or shall achieve a new level of happiness, security, well-being, and intelligence. I do know which mankind will choose. There is grave reason for fear, but there is enough possibility of a good solution to make hope not irrational. And it is on this hope that we must act. (Ideas That Have Helped Mankind)

In these lines an important idea has been expressed in utterly unembellished language which, however, does not fail to produce the desired effect upon us. Here is another example of this combination, which is very frequent in Russell's writing, of simplicity and elegance:

Education, which was at first made universal in order that all might be able to read and write, has been found capable of serving quite other purposes. By instilling nonsense it unifies populations and generates collective enthusiasm. If all governments taught the same nonsense, the harm would not be so great. Unfortunately each has its own brand, and the diversity serves to produce hostility between the devotees of different creeds. (An Outline of Intellectual Rubbish)

There are no rhetorical flourishes here, nothing theatrical. A weighty idea finds expression in the plainest words which do not, however, fail to produce an effect.

Suited to Exposition and Argument

Russell has a style of writing which is admirably suited to exposition and argument. While reading through these essays, we do not get entangled or enmeshed in the intricacies of thought. In the essay, The Future of Mankind, Russell visualises three possibilities which are in store for mankind. And, after discussing them, comes the following irresistible conclusion: "There are now only two fully independent States, America and Russia. The next step in this long historical process should reduce the two to one, and thus put an end to the period of organized wars, which began in Egypt some six thousand years ago." In the essay, The Functions of a Teacher, Russell makes the distinction between a true teacher and a propagandist in a masterly manner. In the same essay the way in which he explains the meaning of civilization is remarkable for its cogency and clarity.

Examples and Illustrations

Russell's intellectual brilliance is also seen in the abundance of examples and illustrations which he provides in the course of his essays, as also in the wealth of allusions that we find in them. In order to bring out the difference between the freedom that exists in America and the absence of it in Russia, he gives us as many as three examples in his essay, The Future of Mankind. In America one may hold whatever view of Mendelism one may like to hold on the basis of available evidence; one may write a book debunking Lincoln; one may hold or not hold that America is heading for an economic slump. In Russia one can hold only those views which are officially sponsored. In the essay, An Outline of Intellectual Rubbish, Russell gives us a host of examples to show how people's minds have been dominated for centuries by superstitious beliefs. In the essay, Ideas That Have Helped Mankind, he makes a statement that man is morally a mixture of good and evil, and then goes on to illustrate this statement with reference to the brutal treatment of the Jews by the German Nazis, the expulsions of the Germans ordered by the Russians, and the attitude of the British and the Americans towards German children, all these being concrete cases to show the evil in man. Russell is never content with abstract statements and ideas; everywhere we find concrete examples. Sometimes he offers parables or fables to illustrate his point: for instance, he gives us the fable of the butchers and the bakers, and the fable of a cow grazing in a field and running away in fright from a passing railway train, (in the essay Ideas That Have Harmed Mankind)

The Abundance of Condensed Statements and Generalisations

Russell's intellectual brilliance shows itself also in his capacity for making condensed statements and generalisations which in most cases produce a striking effect. The following examples, chosen at random, illustrate this point:

(1) Change is scientific, progress is ethical; change is indubitable, whereas progress is a matter of controversy. (Philosophy and Politics)

(2) Science is empirical, tentative, and undogmatic; all immutable dogma is unscientific. (Philosophy and Politics)

(3) Children were idealized by Wordsworth and unidealized by Freud. Marx was the Wordsworth of the proletariat; its Freud is still to come. (The Superior Virtue of the Oppressed)

(4) We are suffering not from the decay of theological beliefs but from the loss of solitude. (On Being Modern-Minded)

(5) Fear is the main source of superstition, and one of the main sources of cruelty. To conquer fear is the beginning of wisdom, in the pursuit of truth as in the endeavour after a worthy manner of life. (An Outline of Intellectual Rubbish)

(6) Fear generates impulses of cruelty, and therefore promotes such superstitious beliefs as seem to justify cruelty. (An Outline of Intellectual Rubbish)

(7) To the propagandist his pupils are potential soldiers in an army. (The Functions of a Teacher)

(8) Selfishness beyond a point, whether individual or national, is not wise. It may with luck succeed, but if it fails failure is terrible. (Ideas That Have Harmed Mankind)

Irony, Wit, and Gaiety

Although Russell has always something serious to say in his essays, yet he is not too grave or solemn a writer. His essays are interspersed with witty observations and comments. Irony and sarcasm are often employed by him as weapons of attack. However, his wit is generally dry, though occasionally also gay. (Wit is gay when an author really seems to enjoy his witty remark, but wit is dry when the author makes a witty remark somewhat scornfully or with a sense of great superiority.) We have a striking example of gay wit towards the close of An Outline of Intellectual Rubbish when he points that out superstitions are often interesting and enjoyable. Once, he says, he received a communication from the god Osiris, giving his telephone number. He frequently receives letters from men announcing themselves as the Messiah. During prohibition in America there was a sect which maintained that the communion service ought to be celebrated in whisky, not in wine because this belief gave them a legal right to drink some hard liquor. Then there was the prophetess who duped her followers into

believing that she could walk on water. Another example of gay wit in the same essay occurs when Russell says that Aristotle could have avoided the mistake of thinking that women had fewer teeth than men, by the simple device of asking Mrs. Aristotle to keep her mouth open while he counted. Examples of irony and sarcasm are many. In Philosophy and Politics, Russell mocks at Hegel by defining Hegel's "Absolute Idea" as "pure thought thinking about pure thought". In The Future of Man, Russell makes the following ironical observation about Stalin: "Stalin at all times knows the truth about metaphysics, but you must not suppose that the truth this year is the same as it was last year". In The Superior Virtue of the Oppressed viz have plenty of irony; for instance, Russell here pokes fun at the Freudian theory of the unconscious mind in relation to children.

Catholicity of Temper

Russell is a liberal philosopher. He suffers from no prejudices and no pet aversions. He has no crotchets or fads. A philosopher who is never tired of preaching a scientific temper of mind could never be narrow-minded in any sense of the word. His mind was large enough to take in its sweep all issues pertaining to human welfare. He has expressed his opinions in the Unpopular Essays on many subjects—politics, economics, psychology, ethics, education, morality, science, scepticism, communism, civilization, war, peace, world-government, and so on. And he has dealt with these matters in a style which reflects his catholic temper and his wide-ranging mind. He did not evolve a style according to any premeditated theory or doctrine. His style came to him naturally. In his case, as in the cases of other great writers, it can be said with confidence that the style is the man. His is a style which is rich in such devices as parallelisms, antitheses, contrasts, similes, metaphors, quotations, allusions, anecdotes, simple words and difficult words, short sentences and long ones. He attaches no undue importance to any particular ingredient of style, his only concern being clarity of expression. We cannot use a single formula for this style as we can, for instance, for Bacon's style (concise and epigrammatic), for Carlyle's style (erudite, cumbersome, and eccentric), or for Ruskin's style (mellifluous, musical prose). This is a style in which a perfect synthesis has been achieved between its various ingredients. In its own way, it is a unique style, even as the man himself was unique.

The Cruicible

Arthur Miller; 1915-2005

Arthur Miller was born on 17th October 1915 in Harlem. He was the son of Polish immigrants and his parents enjoyed good prosperity up until the Wall Street Crash of 1929. Financial hardship forced the Miller family to move to Brooklyn in 1929. He was not a good student and in fact he failed to graduate from High School, and his initial working career involved a mixture of labouring jobs either in the country or on the New York Waterfront. Miller learned much about life at the sharp end, and this was to stand him in good stead when he commenced his literary career. In fact, his work 'A View from the Bridge' dealt with life on the waterfront.

His work in the countryside gave him the inspiration for the movie, 'The Misfits' which starred his late wife Marilyn Monroe. It was whilst he was earning a meagre wage from menial work that he started to read extensively, and he decided that a literary career should be the goal to aim for. He was able to convince the University of Michigan to take him on as a student although he had never graduated from High School.

He supported himself at University by working on a Newspaper and entering literary competitions. He graduated in 1938 and returned to New York. He soon became involved in writing scripts for radio and the theatre. Much of his work has the common thread of dealing with the problems faced by the man in the street.

His first major success was the play, 'All My Sons' published in 1947. This was followed by 'Death of a Salesman' published in 1949 and which won the Pulitzer Prize.Many misinterpreted Miller's views regarding the common man as being sympathetic with communism, and he was subsequently investigated in 1947 by the House Un-American Activities Committee, but was completed cleared by the Committee.

'The Crucible' was published in 1953 and there is no doubt that Miller is making a direct comparison in this book of the Salem Witch Trials with the McCarthy Hunt for Communists. However, it is to do the work injustice by viewing it as merely a swipe against the McCarthy era, and there is a far deeper message in this work concerning human nature and mass hysteria.

Miller was married to Marilyn Monroe in 1955 and he wrote the screenplay of 'The Misfits' for her in 1961. 'After the fall' was published in 1964, and is a fictionalised account of his relationship with Marilyn.Also in 1964, he wrote 'Incident at Vichy'. Other works include 'Fame' 1970, 'The American Clock' 1980, 'Elegy for a Lady' 1982, and in the same year 'Some Kind of Love Story'.

Miller wrote the screenplay for the movie version of 'The Crucible', which was released in 1996.In addition to the Pulitzer Prize, Miller has received numerous awards over the years, including The Gold Medal for Drama, by the National Institutes of Arts and Letters. In 1965 he was elected President of Poets, Essayists and Novelists.

Background to the Crucible

Before the Crucible:

The playwright Arthur Miller was born in New York on 17 October 1915, to a non-Orthodox Jewish family. Miller had a comfortable childhood, but when his father was ruined in the Depression of 1929, the family moved to Brooklyn, at that time almost a country suburb. Arthur Miller's school career was unpromising; he worked briefly in his father's business and then took a variety of casual jobs, some of them manual, which provided the background for several plays.

Miller began to read extensively, and applied for a place at the University of Michigan to study journalism. As a student, he wrote award-winning dramas and began to think of playwriting as a career. After graduating in 1938 he returned to New York, where he worked on various theatre projects, but was eventually forced to return to manual work. In 1940, he married an old college friend. When the USA entered World War II in 1941, he was rejected for military service because of an old sports' injury.

Miller was beginning to be successful in other forms of writing, but his main interest was in live theatre. His first Broadway play won the Theatre Guild National Award but was not a commercial success. During this long apprenticeship, Miller was hammering out the themes central to his best-known work - the link between social commitment and personal integrity, the individual's need to confront his past, and conflict within the family. A chance conversation provided the idea for his first widely acclaimed play, All My Sons (1947). Death of a Salesman (1949) had an even longer run, and was performed worldwide.

The Cold War and Senator McCarthy

After the end of the World War II, America became locked in political rivalry with Communist Russia. This was the so-called Cold War. The threat of nuclear weapons hung over the two superpowers' struggle for dominance. In June 1950, when Russia's ally, Communist China, began to expand into South-East Asia, America embarked on the Korean War. This conflict had an enormous effect on the political climate at home. Fear that Communists were infiltrating Government led to the rise of Senator Joseph McCarthy, the most prominent figure in a committee that scrutinized possible suspects. His investigations were aimed particularly at university teachers, trade unionists, and artists of all kinds—anyone suspected of left-wing sympathies. Those called before the Un-American Activities Committee were asked to prove their innocence by naming others. Some witnesses caved in; others lost their jobs. There were many suicides.

It was against this background that Miller wrote The Crucible. The Salem witch trials had fascinated him long before he saw their possibility as an allegory for McCarthyism. The play opened in January 1953, and won two prestigious awards, but the critics were distracted by the obvious parallel with contemporary events.

In 1956 Miller found himself in the same dilemma as his hero, John Proctor. He was refused a passport to visit Brussels for a production of his play. The committee called on him to testify. When Miller refused to mention names, he was fined and given a suspended prison sentence. The Supreme Court acquitted him a year and a half later. By then McCarthy himself was dead.

The Crucible

The Crucible is Miller's most frequently produced work. As the McCarthy era receded, it became easier to assess the merits of the play and realize that it has a universal significance outside the context of a particular crisis in American history. Miller himself is pleased at his development.

A crucible is a melting pot or vessel in which crude ore is heated to a temperature that makes it release the pure metal. The metaphor applies most of all to the hero, John Proctor, who finds his true self by enduring a different kind of purification; but it is almost as apt for several other characters as well as for the whole community that suffered from these tragic events.

Historical Background to "The Crucible"

Puritans in North America

In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, some English trading companies started to send settlers to North America. Among them were the Pilgrim Fathers, who crossed the Atlantic in the Mayflower and landed in Massachusetts on 21 November 1620. Ten years later, about a thousand Puritans settled around Massachusetts Bay, in the area later known as New England. They brought with them a royal charter to set up a colony ruled by a Governor and General Court. A Puritan elite of politicians and clergymen imposed a strict administration on the new colony. As well as reclaiming land from the forest, the settlers had to come to terms with the Native American tribes and periodic outbreaks of smallpox.

By 1692, there were marked differences between the various centres of population. Trade and education flourished in towns like Boston; inland areas were much less safe and prosperous. Several other factors caused unrest. While the colony awaited the arrival of a new charter from England, its laws, including those on land tenure, were technically suspended. The rulers felt their grasp slipping.

Salem

The village had developed as the agricultural hinterland of Salem, a thriving trading town on the coast five miles away. Rivers and sea inlets lay between the town and the village, which was in reality a collection of scattered farmsteads. Farmers living further inland had to grow their produce on much less fertile terrain. Added to jealousies about land were disputes over appointing a minister. The town continued to demand taxes to exercise authority over the villagers.

Puritanism

Although officially part of the Church of England, the 1630 Puritans were closer in belief and practice to Presbyterian Calvinism. They believed that every soul was predestined for Heaven or Hell. Old Testament law applied to every area of life. The Puritans blamed any temptations to break their stern code on the Devil and other evil spirits. Those who broke the rules had to confess in public and suffer severe punishment. To work on Sunday was a serious offence. The Puritans disapproved of most forms of relaxation. They confined private reading to the Bible and other religious texts. Children had to live up to this code of behaviour from their earliest years and take their share of adult work from the age of seven.Miller discusses the effects of this highly demanding self-discipline in his notes to Act I of The Crucible.

Witchcraft

Like most people in the seventeenth century, the Puritans believed in witches. The idea of witchcraft existed long before the Christian era. The Old Testament states, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live". This was the basis of the witchcraft laws. In prehistoric societies, magic and sorcery were a feature of religion; the early Christian Church regarded them as the remains of paganism. There were laws against the practice of witchcraft, but no systematic persecution.

Anxieties began to increase when the Church declared (1320) that magic and witchcraft involved a pact with the Devil. From then on they were classed as heresy, carrying the penalty of eternal damnation. The reformed Protestant Church shared these views. Whereas ordinary people worried about the harm witches might do them, the Church regarded every lost soul as a defeat in the war between God and the Devil. A reader can notice this difference in The Crucible.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, thousands were put to death for witchcraft. When medicine and veterinary science were at such a primitive stage, disease and sudden death could seem to result from a spell cast by a spiteful neighbour. Those thought to be witches were male and female, of all ages and social ranks, but most of them were elderly women.

The most famous handbook on witchcraft was Malleus Maleficarum ("The Witches' Hammer"). This might have been one of the books weighted with authority that Reverend Hale brings to Salem.

The Salem Witch-Hunt

There were several witchcraft trials in Massachusetts before 1692. Two involved adolescent girls suffering hysterical fits similar to those seen in Salem. In January 1692, the daughter and niece of the village parson, Reverend Parris, having experimented with fortune-telling began to gabble nonsense and twist their limbs into grotesque positions. They claimed that the spirit of Parris's West Indian slave Tituba was tormenting them. Soon more young girls began to display the same symptoms. Tituba and two other women were arrested on the charge of bewitching them.

Over the following months the number of hysterical girls increased, as did the people they accused. The youngest victim was a child aged four. The defendants were jailed, but not tried until June, when the new governor set up his official court, which decided to allow 'spectral evidence'; that is, the girls' allegation that the witches were sending out their invisible spirits. The witch-hunt spread and scores of people went to prison. Those that confessed were reprieved. Six men and thirteen women were hanged. Since prisoners had to pay for their keep, many families went bankrupt. Doubts arose about the 'spectral evidence', particularly when the girls began naming prominent people. The Governor intervened, and in May, 1693, the remaining accused were set free, apart from those who could not pay their prison charges.

How Historically Correct is The Crucible?

The Crucible keeps close to what we know about events in 1692. Much of the dialogue repeats the enquiry documents word for word. Miller made changes for practical dramatic reasons or to emphasize the themes of the play. Here are some reasons for Miller's attempt to make some alterations.

All characters in The Crucible are taken from official documents, but the number of persons involved in the witch-hunt is greatly reduced. The fortune telling becomes a more dramatic expedition into the Devil-haunted forest. The date when the hysteria began is advanced from winter to spring. Several execution dates are altered; for example, John Proctor did not die with Rebecca Nurse. Miller also standardizes the ages of the girls; apart from Betty Parris, they are all teenagers. In reality, they spanned a much wider age range and included several adults.

The only piece of pure invention is the relationship between Abigail Williams and John Proctor. In 1692 he was a man in his sixties and she was a girl of 11. However, the invented relationship rings true to the repression of Puritan society and forms a dynamic centre around which the whole story develops.

Such discrepancies are less important than the themes developed in the text. Like all great plays, The Crucible speaks to us about universal human issues. The details of place and time are merely the playwright's way of creating his ideas in flesh and blood.

Introduction to the Crucible by Arthur Miller

Introduction

A "crucible" is a severe test, or a trial. It is also a container that can withstand great heat. As it passes through a furnace, the metals and ores within it are transformed in some way. For the characters in The Crucible, the Salem witch hunt is the trial from which they emerge utterly changed. As each character passes through the furnace of lies, vengeance, greed and tor-ture, he is either purified or corrupted. For John Proctor, the heat is especially intense, and the struggle toward goodness is laden with many traps and obstacles.

All the characters in The Crucible are based on real persons who lived in Salem in 1692. For dramatic purposes, several characters have sometimes been fused into one and small details have been changed. In general, however, the actions of the char-acters are closely matched to the actions of their historical counterparts. Miller researched the period exhaustively and wanted his play to be as true to the historical records as possible. See Appendix I for some of these records.

Although The Crucible offers many parallels with our own time, it also makes use of many ideas and attitudes that were unique to Salem, Massachusetts, in 1692. Some knowledge of life in Salem is needed to fully understand the play. The follow-ing material, therefore, explains basic Puritan customs and beliefs, and offers a summary of the actual Salem witch hunt. In addition, this introduction looks at Miller's use of the witch hunt to comment on the McCarthy hearings of the 1950s.

The Puritans

In 1620, the Puritans landed at Plymouth Rock in Massa-chusetts and founded the first permanent settlement in New England. They had left England to escape religious persecution and to establish a New Jerusalem in the New World. This Pro-mised Land, however, contained many new dangers. In the face of a harsh climate, fierce animals, hostile Indians and a vast, godless wilderness, the Puritans drew together in a tightly unified group with extremely strict rules and an autocratic leadership. Through a combination of bitterly hard work, rigid discipline and harsh justice, the Puritans succeeded in taming the land that no one before them could conquer.

The Puritan government was a theocracy; that is, it was completely controlled by the Puritan church. The ministers of the church were also the town officers and administrators. Because the Puritans believed that they were the new Chosen People, they did not permit members of any other religion to corrupt their pure society. Those who did not belong to the church could not hold property or vote. In addition, those who did not attend church regularly or follow the church regulations could be excommunicated, thereby losing all their property and rights.

In The Crucible, Deputy Governor Danforth is the perfect example of a theocratic ruler. Because he believes that he speaks for God, he cannot accept the possibility that he has been wrong. In his ruthless judgments, he holds to the strict letter of the law, for "While I speak God's law, I will not crack its voice with whimpering."

"God's law" for the Puritans was certainly strict. Any-thing that distracted them from hard work was part of the Devil's plan to destroy them. There were no celebrations or holidays, no theaters or novels and no children's games or enter-tainments. Dancing was considered a serious sin. It was natural, then, that Abigail and the other girls felt a need to dance in the woods. Their youthful high spirits had no other outlet. It was also natural that they should lie to cover up their "sin." If they had been found out, they would probably have been whipped.

In addition to viewing pleasure as sinful, the Puritans saw sex as a necessary evil, to be practised joylessly only between a man and his wife. As John Proctor knew only too well, adultery was considered a hideous crime and could easily result in excom-munication and the loss of one's property. Some historical analysts believe that this sexual repression was directly respon-sible for the mass hysteria that produced the witch hunt. In The Crucible, Abigail's dislike for the people of Salem is largely based on her contempt for this repression.

The Puritans believed that everything stated in the Bible was literally true. The Devil was very real to them, always trying to tempt them away from their work and God's laws. Moreover, the Devil was a cunning and extremely powerful opponent. Once he set out to destroy a soul, there was almost nothing the person could do to prevent it. As Abigail angrily tells Deputy Governor Danforth: "Think you to be so mighty that the power of Hell may not turn your wits? Beware of it!"

This grim sense of man's powerlessness was also found in other aspects of Puritan life. The Puritans believed in the doc-trine of the elect. According to this fatalistic belief, only a few people would be chosen by God to be saved from Hell. There was nothing a person could do to earn a place among the elect. No amount of good works or righteous living could help. All a person could do was live an upright life in the blind hope that he might be one of the few who were chosen.

A major reason why salvation was so difficult to attain is found in the Puritans' adaptation of the doctrine of original sin. According to the Puritans, each person at birth is already evil and on the verge of eternal damnation. As Jonathan Edwards, a famed Puritan minister, once preached, "The God that holds you over the pit of Hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect, over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked; his wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the fire . . . ." In The Crucible, Parris also preached "hellfire and bloody damnation" in his sermons, much to Proctor's disgust.

Not only was man born an evil sinner, but his sins could not be washed away. Therefore, every person concealed guilt in his heart from which he could never be free. In The Crucible, John Proctor is deeply troubled with guilt as a result of his adulterous affair with Abigail. He tries to bury this guilt by pretending it doesn't exist. Nonetheless, as Elizabeth tells him, "The magistrate sits in your heart that judges you."

Although their guilt could never be entirely removed, it was sometimes possible for Puritans who sinned to regain the path of righteousness. First, however, they had to publicly confess their sins and perform some act of penance. This policy of open confession was carried to absurd lengths during the witch hunt. Those accused of witchcraft could either confess to lies or hang. Not surprisingly, most chose to confess.

Because the Puritans' legal system was used to uphold religious laws, many such absurdities were possible. Over the cen-turies, Western society has developed "due process of law" so that the truth can be uncovered. This due process uses witnesses and other hard evidence to prove whether a person is innocent or guilty. The accused is also granted certain rights so that he can defend himself. The Puritans, however, could not rely on due process to get at the truth. Because religious crimes involved magic and invisibility, there could be no witnesses or hard evidence.

In The Crucible, Deputy Governor Danforth sums up the absurdity of the Puritan court when he explains that witchcraft is an invisible crime. Only the witch and her victim can possibly witness this crime, and the witch would never accuse herself. Therefore, the victim's testimony must always be accurate. As a result of this absurd reasoning, the Puritans had no way of objectively finding out the truth. When the lack of due process was combined with the false confessions, the door was opened to a reign of terror in which rumors, lies and superstitions ruled the courts.

In summary, then, virtually every aspect of a Puritan's life fell under the strict control of the church. Rigid discipline was enforced, and pleasures were forbidden. Personal rights were few and could be suspended at any time. Personal freedoms were virtually non-existent. Life for the early Puritans was a constant battle against the harsh climate, the vast wilderness and the temptations of Satan. Even for those who won that bat-tle, divine salvation was by no means guaranteed.

By 1692, however, the land had been partly tamed and the surrounding wilderness was no longer so terrifying. The need for rigid discipline, hard work and tight unity was no longer as great as it had been. To the great concern of the church, many Puritans began to feel the need for more personal rights and freedoms. Ultimately, the church's struggle to maintain its auth-ority against ever-increasing opposition erupted into the full--blown hysteria of the Salem witch hunt.

Witchcraft among the Puritans

The persecution of witches was by no means limited to the Puritans in New England. During the 17th and early 18th cen-turies, tens of thousands of people were executed as witches throughout Europe and the Americas. The Roman Catholic Inquisition was especially bloodthirsty in its relentless pursuit of those who practised the black arts.

It is not surprising that the fear of witchcraft took so deep a hold among the New England Puritans. As fundamentalists, they believed every word that was written in the Bible. Moses' statement, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," was well known by almost every member of the colony. In The Crucible, when Elizabeth Proctor suggests that witches do not exist, Reverend Hale scolds her, "You surely do not fly against the Gospel, the Gospel —."

The Puritans deeply believed in evil as a tangible force in the world. The Devil was a real being, the lord of the angels cast out of heaven for betraying God. Since his fall, the Devil had worked constantly to destroy God's kingdom on earth by temp-ting God's subjects away from Him.

Because the Puritans believed that their colony was the center of God's earthly kingdom, they believed that the Devil was focusing all his attention on their destruction. The vast wilderness around them provided the Devil with many hiding places, as well as many heathen savages who willingly did his work. According to Puritan belief, once the colony was perfected the Devil would be banished forever. Because he knew this, he was attacking them now with all his power and might.

The Puritans, then, considered themselves soldiers in the midst of a great war against evil. The enemy was powerful, and capable of infinite deception. As Reverend Hale claims, "Until an hour before the Devil fell, God thought him beautiful in Heaven." Human beings, on the other hand, were weak, born in sin and likely destined for damnation. To make matters even worse, the Devil had recruited many helpers among the Puritans themselves. These helpers were known as witches.

The belief in witchcraft is very ancient and can be found in almost all cultures. In general, a witch is a person who is believed to have supernatural powers. In many cultures, witches have been revered as wisewomen or healers. In others, they have been persecuted and killed.

As modern feminists point out, almost all of those who have been killed as witches have been women. Often these women directly challenged male authority. Many had become influential in their villages through the practice of midwifery or herbal medicine. Witchcraft has always been associated with the dark, irrational side of human nature, a side traditionally seen as female. In addition, many of the rituals associated with witchcraft are highly sexual in nature. Feminists argue that female sexuality is considered most threatening by male-dominated, sexually-repressed societies. Certainly, no more sexually-repressed a society has ever existed than that of the Puritans.

The Puritans were never really clear on exactly how witches helped the Devil in his battle for human souls. Apparently, a person became a witch by making an agreement with the Devil. The witch then "sent out" her invisible spirit to harm innocent people. Sometimes a witch entered an innocent person's body and controlled his thoughts. A witch could also assume the shape of an innocent person while tormenting others, thereby framing the innocent person for crimes he didn't commit.

Needless to say, all this resulted in a fair amount of legal confusion when charges against witches were laid. As Danforth pointed out, witchcraft was impossible to prove even with witnesses or hard evidence. In general, the word of the victim was taken, even though it was recognized that the Devil's trickery may have caused an innocent person to be accused.

The absurdities do not end there. Any witch could end her contract with Satan simply by confessing to witchcraft. Since hanging was generally the alternative, many witches did indeed confess. Yet, presumably, a real witch would have no qualms about lying while pretending to confess. Meanwhile, a truly devout Puritan, such as Rebecca Nurse, would be unable to make a dishonest confession, and would therefore hang. In other words, the laws on witchcraft were such that the least devout Puritans lived while the most devout, who refused to lie, were hung.

In 1692, the Puritans believed that they had found the Devil's center of attack in Salem, Massachusetts. As a result of the legal absurdities outlined above, the courts were turned over to hysteria, private vengeance and land greed. In what was to become known as "the delusion," hundreds were arrested for witchcraft, and 20 innocent people lost their lives.

The Salem Witch Hunt

Salem does not seem to have ever been a very peaceful village. Long before the witch hunt, the people in the town had split into opposing factions as a result of land feuds and political disagreement. Because boundaries were somewhat unsettled, different claims were often made to the same tract of land.

In particular, a longstanding quarrel had developed between the Nurses and the Putnams, two of the largest and wealthiest families in the district. Various wills and deeds were contested in court through a long series of lawsuits. Over time, the quarrel grew as friends and distant relatives of both families took sides against one another.

This conflict was made more intense when Reverend Parris defeated the Putnams' candidate to be elected as minister of Salem. Because Parris did not have a clear majority, his election was contested. Parris also angered many members of his con-gregation with his requests for free firewood, expensive church additions and the deed to the minister's home.

Reverend Parris had a black servant, named Tituba, whom he had found in Barbados. Tituba's customs were considered strange and dangerous by the solemn Puritan townspeople. Eventually, she was caught teaching Parris' daughter, Betty, and niece, Abigail Williams, how to tell the future by reading palms. Tituba was punished, but the suspicion of witchcraft was firmly planted in the minds of the Salemites.

In February, 1692, Betty Parris began to suffer from some sort of fit. The doctors were baffled by her illness and suggested that it had a supernatural cause. Reverend Parris sent for the help of other ministers, and he tried to keep his daughter's ill-ness hidden from the town. Word spread, however, and before long rumors of witchcraft were flying through Salem.

No one knows precisely what happened next. However, on February 29, 1692, the first three arrests for witchcraft were made. At this stage, the accused were all social outcasts. Tituba was a black servant from another country. Sarah Good was an old beggar woman. And Sarah Osborne seldom attended church and was considered immoral.

These three women were ordered to either confess to witch-craft or hang. Not surprisingly, they confessed. In their confes-sions, they were forced to accuse other Salemites of doing Satan's work. Before long, the jails were full of prisoners accused of witchcraft.

The role of Abigail Williams, Betty Parris, Mary Warren and others in these events is not quite clear. Quite possibly, Abigail and Betty made the first accusations against Tituba, Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne. Certainly, they made a number of later accusations, and many innocent people were found guilty as a result of the girls' testimony.

The witchcraft trials took place in Salem while the governor of Massachusetts was absent on a campaign against the Indians. In his place, Lieutenant Governor William Stroughton acted as chief justice. Stroughton was a strict Puritan who followed the law to the letter, and he totally believed in the existence of witch-craft. Like Danforth in The Crucible, he could not bear to have his authority questioned. Stroughton issued the first death war-rant in Salem and personally witnessed the hanging that resulted.

The Salem trials began in March, 1692. For evidence, the court relied on the testimony of the young girls and on the con-fessions of those who were threatened with hanging. During the trials, 55 people confessed to being witches. The first hanging took place in June. Five others were hung on July 19, five on August 19, and eight on September 22. During this time, Giles Corey was pressed to death for refusing to plead guilty or not guilty. In addition, two dogs were hung as witches.

By October, 150 prisoners were still awaiting trial, and others had already been condemned to die. Many of these prisoners were highly respectable men and women whose arrests had raised a public outcry. The public had also been enraged by rumors

that some important men had used their influence to prevent their wives' arrests, while others had bribed the court to find their wives innocent. Salemites began to doubt the testi-mony of the young girls and question the false confessions.

Governor Phips ordered the court to find a more trust-worthy method of testing for witchcraft than the testimony of the girls. A series of meetings resulted with some ministers pro-testing the lack of hard evidence and rejecting the use of the forced confessions. Finally, on October 29, 1692, Governor Phips yielded to public pressure and put an end to the trials and executions.

The witch hunt continued to affect the lives of the people of Salem long after the last trial was over. Twenty Salemites were dead and their property confiscated. Many others had been excommunicated, and had lost their property and rights as a result.

Not until 1709, 17 years after the trials, did the survivors and the heirs of the victims feel free to ask the government for restitution. In 1711, some money was awarded as compensa-tion. However, much of this money was given to informers rather than to victims or their heirs. The reputations of the accused were reinstated and, in 1712, the excommunications were reversed by government order.

As Miller notes at the end of The Crucible, some of the farms that had belonged to the accused witches were left to ruin for more than a century before anyone would dare to live in them again.

The Crucible : Summary

The Crucible, a historical play based on events of the Salem witchcraft trials, takes place in a small Puritan village in the colony of Massachusetts in 1692. The witchcraft trials, as Miller explains in a prose prologue to the play, grew out of the particular moral system of the Puritans, which promoted interference in others' affairs as well as a repressive code of conduct that frowned on any diversion from norms of behavior.

The play begins in the home of Reverend Samuel Parris, whose daughter, Betty, lays ill. Parris lives with his daughter and his seventeen-year old niece, Abigail Williams, an orphan who witnessed her parents' murder by the Indians. Parris has sent for Reverend Hale of Beverly, believing his daughter's illness stems from supernatural explanations. Betty became ill when her father discovered her dancing in the woods with Abigail, Tituba (the Parris' slave from Barbados) and several other local girls. Already there are rumors that Betty's illness is due to witchcraft, but Parris tells Abigail that he cannot admit that he found his daughter and niece dancing like heathens in the forest. Abigail says that she will admit to dancing and accept the punishment, but will not admit to witchcraft. Abigail and Parris discuss rumors about the girls: when they were dancing one of the girls was naked, and Tituba was screeching gibberish. Parris also brings up rumors that Abigail's former employer, Elizabeth Proctor, believes that Abby is immoral.

Thomas and Ann Putnam arrive and tell Parris that their daughter, Ruth, is sick. Ann Putnam admits that she sent Ruth to Tituba, for Tituba knows how to speak to the dead and could find out who murdered her seven children, each of whom died during infancy. When the adults leave, Abigail discusses Betty's illness with Mercy Lewis and Mary Warren, the servants of the Putnams and the Proctors, respectively. Abigail threatens them, warning them not to say anything more than that they danced and Tituba conjured Ruth's sisters. John Proctor arrives to find Mary and send her home. He speaks with Abigail alone, and she admits to him about the dancing. In the past, John and Abigail had an affair, which is the reason why Elizabeth Proctor fired her. Abigail propositions John, but he sternly refuses her. When Betty hears people singing psalms from outside, she begins to shriek. Reverend Parris returns, and realizes that Betty cannot bear to hear the Lord's name.

Giles Corey and Rebecca Nurse are the next to visit. The former is a contentious old man, while the latter is a well-respected old woman. Rebecca claims that Betty's illness is nothing serious, but merely a childish phase. Parris confronts Proctor because he has not been in church recently, but Proctor claims that Parris is too obsessed with damnation and never mentions God.

Reverend John Hale arrives from Beverly, a scholarly man who looks for precise signs of the supernatural. Parris tells him about the dancing and the conjuring, while Giles Corey asks if there is any significance to his wife's reading strange books. Hale questions Abigail, asking if she sold her soul to Lucifer. Finally Abigail blames Tituba, claiming that Tituba made Abigail and Betty drink blood and that Tituba sends her spirit out to make mischief. Putnam declares that Tituba must be hanged, but Hale confronts her. Upon realizing that the only way to save herself is to admit to the charge, Tituba claims that the devil came to her and promised to return her to Barbados. She says that several women were with him, including Sarah Good and Sarah Osburn, and the girls join in the chorus of accusations, name more people they claim to have seen with the devil.

The second act takes place a week later in the Proctor's home. John Proctor returns home late after a long day planting in the fields, and Elizabeth suspects that he has been in the village. Mary Warren has been there as an official of the court for the witchcraft trials, even after Elizabeth forbade her. Elizabeth tells John that she must tell Ezekiel Cheever, the constable that Abigail admitted that Betty's sickness has nothing to do with witchcraft, but Proctor admits that nobody will believe him because he was alone with Abigail at the time. Elizabeth is disturbed by this, but Proctor reprimands her for her suspicion. Mary Warren arrives and gives Elizabeth a poppet that she made in court. Mary tells them that thirty-nine people have been arrested and Sarah Osburn will hang, but not Sarah Good, who confessed. When Proctor becomes angry at Mary, she tells him that she saved Elizabeth's life today, for her name was mentioned in court.

John Hale arrives. He tells the Proctors that Rebecca Nurse was charged, then questions Proctor on his churchgoing habits. Finally he makes Proctor state the Ten Commandments; he can remember nine of the ten, but Elizabeth must remind him of

adultery. Proctor tells Hale what Abigail admitted about Parris discovering her in the woods, but Hale says that it must be nonsense, for so many have confessed to witchcraft. Proctor reminds him that these people would certainly confess, if denying it means that they be hanged. Hale asks Proctor whether he believes in witches, and he says that he does, but not those in Salem. Elizabeth denies all belief in witchcraft, for she believes that the devil cannot take a woman's soul if she is truly upright.

Ezekiel Cheever arrives to arrest Elizabeth on the charge that she sent her spirit out to Abigail and stuck a needle in her. Cheever finds the poppet, which has a needle in it, but Mary Warren says that she made the poppet in court that day, although Abigail witnessed her making it. Upon hearing the charge, Elizabeth claims that Abigail is a murderer who must be ripped out of the world. Proctor rips up the warrant and tells Cheever that he will not give his wife to vengeance. When Hale insists that the court is just, Proctor calls him a Pontius Pilate. He finally demands that Mary Warren come to court and testify against Abigail, but she sobs that she cannot.

The third act takes place in the vestry room of the Salem meeting house, which serves the court. Giles Corey arrives with Francis Nurse and tells Deputy Governor Danforth, who presides over the trials, that Thomas Putnam is charging people with witchcraft in order to gain their land. He also says that he meant nothing when he said that his wife read strange books.

John Proctor arrives with Mary Warren, and presents a deposition signed by Mary that asserts that she never saw any spirits. Parris thinks that they are there to overthrow the court, and Danforth questions whether Proctor has any ulterior motive, and tells Proctor that his wife is pregnant and thus will live at least one more year, even if convicted. Proctor also presents a petition signed by ninety-one people attesting to the good character of Elizabeth Proctor, Rebecca Nurse and Martha Corey. Parris claims that this is an attack upon the court, but Hale asks Parris if every defense is an attack on it.

Putnam arrives at the court, and Giles Corey charges him with murder. Giles tells Danforth that someone told him that Putnam prompted his daughter to accuse George Jacobs so that he could buy his land. Giles refuses to name this person, and so is arrested for contempt. Abigail then arrives with the other girls, and Proctor tells Danforth how Abigail means to murder his wife. Abigail pretends that she feels a sharp wind threatening her. Proctor grabs her by the hair and calls her a whore, finally admitting his affair.

Danforth orders that Elizabeth be brought to the court. If Elizabeth admits to firing Abigail for her affair, Danforth will charge Abigail with murder. Elizabeth, thinking that she is defending her husband, only claims that she fired Abigail because of poor work habits. Proctor cries out for Elizabeth to tell the truth, and Hale admits that Elizabeth's lie is a natural one to tell. Abigail then claims that Mary Warren's spirit is attacking her in the form of a bird. Although Mary claims that the girls are lying, she soon breaks down and tells Danforth that Proctor is in league with Satan and wants to pull down the court.

Proctor cries out that God is dead, and that a fire is burning in Hell because the court is pulling Heaven down and raising up a whore. Hale denounces the proceedings and quits the court.

The fourth act takes places several months later in the autumn at the Salem jail cell. Cheever details how the town is in shambles because so many people are in jail. Hale has been begging Rebecca Nurse to admit to witchcraft. Parris arrives and tells Danforth how Abigail has vanished with Mercy Lewis and stolen his money. Parris worries about the rumors of rebellion against the witchcraft proceedings in Andover, but Hathorne reminds Parris how there has only been great satisfaction in all of the Salem executions. Parris reminds him that Rebecca Nurse is no immoral woman like the others executed and there will be consequences to her execution. Still, Danforth refuses to postpone any of the executions.

Danforth calls for Elizabeth Proctor, and Hale tells her that he does not want Proctor to die, for he would feel responsible for the murder. He tells Elizabeth that God may damn a liar less than a person who throws one's life away, but Elizabeth claims that this may be the Devil's argument. Finally Elizabeth agrees to speak with Proctor, who is brought in bearded and filthy. Proctor and Elizabeth discuss their children, and Elizabeth tells him how Giles Corey died: when he refused to answer yes or no to his indictment, and was thus pressed with stones until he would answer. He only gave the words "more weight" before they crushed him.

Proctor says that he cannot mount the gibbet as a saint, for it would be a fraud to claim that he has never lied. Elizabeth says that she has her own sins, for only a cold wife would prompt lechery. Finally Proctor decides that he will confess himself. Danforth demands a written confession and, to prove the purity of his soul, he demands that Proctor accuse others. Hale suggests that it is sufficient for Proctor to confess to God, but Danforth still requires a written statement. Proctor refuses, because he wishes only to keep his good name for the respectability of his children. Danforth refuses to accept his confession, and orders that he be hanged. Hale begs Elizabeth to plead with Proctor to sign a confession, but Elizabeth claims that Proctor now has his goodness, and nobody should take it away from him.

Literary Analysis the Crucible by Arthur Miller

We are least likely tempted to think that McCarthyism is something that happened when Senator McCarthy was in parliament. When we look around, we see some similar events happening, probably not witch hunting, but some similar chasing where people end up in frames for murder, in isolation charged up with treason and terrorism, or treated differently because of their race, sex, weight, colour, religious and educational background. With punishments ranging from being denied basic human rights and privileges common to other citizens to death, these differential treatments in many ways resemble McCarthyism. In Miller's "The Crucible", one political status or choice was superior to another, and, relativism in shambles. At this time in the US history, those

who allegedly became Communists or connived with Communists were labelled Un-American and thus exposed to harsh treatment. The Crucible was indeed an extremely hot furnace that collected molten undesirable ones at the bottom. The result is we are compelled to investigate why Un-Americans deserved the furnace.

During McCarthyism, there seemed to be fear for wickedness linked with alleged witches and supposed un-Americans. Senator McCarthy felt that citizens who aligned with Communist Party deserved verile treatment. Because there was only circumstantial evidence in these charges, we want to believe that witchcraft and Communism were at least not directly linked with the said accusations. Looking at the Mona Lisa we sense darkness which we may associate with Mona Lisa, or with the artist, Leonardo da Vinci. Yet the laws of Physics make it possible for us to understand that shadows do not necessarily come from the objects closest to them. With the witches, Un-Americans and Communists, their seeming wickedness is like a shadow in Lisa's background.

Since time immemorial, we have not reached a consensus about things we claim to know. There are views that we are born with the knowledge, views that we acquire knowledge later on, and views that knowledge is both innate and acquired isnpite of which there is still lack on consensus on what we claim to know and on who is the witch or communist. Those who have absolute knowledge seem to be in a better position to prosecute witches, un-Americans, Jews, Black, Gays and, etc, etc and that is none of us. This is not to say we should get rid of punishment altogether, but, it is we shall find out as we read along, to be careful about severity of punishment we exercise on others because we do not raise the dead.

In the Crucible, Proctor's perspective of the then justice systems seems diminutive. The double-edgedness of the courthouse is the court in paradox, a conflict in the legal system. Of course Elizabeth is satirically paradoxical about the justice system, poking fun at its character and Miller makes the whole thing sound even more comical by speaking through Elizabeth's point of view. The comedy is in the irony about a witch and a woman being a mouthpiece when women were chief engineers of the well-wished witchcraft. Miller sees contradiction in what the government of the time purported to do and what it actually did. A government that preached freedom of choice concomitantly advocated for limited freedom in certain areas, those in opposition with the desires of the rulers. The government supposedly works hard to rid itself of the oppressive communism. Miller projects the conflicting nature of this set up through Elizabeth who sees contradiction in the legal system. According to Elizabeth, a magistrate can only judge is he "is" in someone's heart. YET this magistrate who is not even "sitting" in the victim's heart can judge about the same heart he is not sitting in. Evidently, Elizabeth not only seems to think that the justice system is not a serious issue, but also a laughing matter. Hence Miller infuses the story with sarcasm and laughter, shocking us into realities about events of the time through over dramatisation. Straight facts would probably not arouse much interest in us and Miller was aware of this.

Most of us like carton and comic book characters and therefore this overdramatisation becomes a perfect psychological trap for readers. His intention is therefore possibly not so much to draw us to the outward appearance of the realities, the physical condition of a building or of a flying witch. This would be too common an alert. The inner "reality" of the building, its ambience, would probably be much more exciting to explore as would be the trajectory laws that explain a flight of a woman is accused through a window.

The impressionist that he is, Miller strategically, caricatures the magistrate, the justice system, so that he ironically does not get in trouble with the law by openly condemning the government. Yet the image he paints of the legal system creates alienation of the superstructure both in and outside the text. Amazingly, Miller manages to engage us in a reactionary state where we unceasingly question and demand answers about crookedness in administration of justice. Metaphorically speaking we ask: just how little is this magistrate to fit in a heart? The idea of a little magistrate not only reduces the magistrate's stature but also his intelligence. We are drawn to the magistrate's stupidity in which he appears to put himself into a position he cannot actually fill because literally speaking, he cannot sit in a heart.

The magistrates and those who subject others to these blast furnaces purportedly hold some real standard of what ought to be done or what ought to happen over those who are seemingly astray. Such seem to consider themselves authors of standard truth. Ultimately those who have and who have no standard of truth are viewed in terms of good and evil. For those who believe in some source of all things, there is a dichotomy of moral and amoral. For those who do not think in these terms, things just are. Even in the last case where things just are, some kind of plane or planes of originality for just being is assumed. Yet we must be aware that this latter faction is not an argument in for persecution of Un-Americans where the tension was between two distinct states of Un-American and American. Thus our proposition to treat our argument under the common, least understood notions of good and evil is valid.

Steven Wallace in his The High Toned Christian Woman introduces in the form of hierarchy, an allegory of where morality lies. In the title, "A High-Toned Old Christian Woman" high could reference a place removed form the normal and also in the first line where he talks to madame'. Here he says that the fundamental principles of morality lie in part of the extension', our palms. Even principles opposing morality lie in the same extension. The poem says that this morality is our conscience. It is ethics, which, like the "nave" in the church, is integral to knowledge. Those lacking in moral decency are so impure and taken in by moral wrecklessness that they cannot even be summoned by the call for death, just as those with good morals haunt heaven. Both actions unite in their source, a yearning for something as does our conscience or ethics in the extension.

We see clearly from this poem that we may only speculate about where morality and immorality originate from, but that both appear to be of some abstract origin. As a result it seems a little too farfetched to claim to have some portable yardstick to measure things that are both so intangible. In actual fact we will see that McCarthyism a

sophisticated reference for UnAmericannes shares similar philosophies with Americannes in that both are founded on intangible commonalities. The former purportedly evil, and the latter, not evil, both emanate from some abstract commonness that creates a contrast for us to distinguish between the two.

Yet we often speak of evil as though it becomes evil on its own, as though it stems from its own root, forgetting that we learn that evil is what it is by comparison with what it is not, good. What in part makes the two levels of morality comparable is that they are opposites. That is, besides being reverted in the ways that they are, there is still a feel of similarity between the two components of ethics. For example, with palms facing the same direction, we can slide one hand under the other to create opposites. We cannot speak of one hand being good without having the evil hand to compare it with. In the same fashion the immoral McCarthyism and moral anti-McCarthyism both have something that unites them, some common existence that makes the comparison feasible. With palms, the commonality is our hands, the stems for palms, with McCarthyism and anti-McCarthyism, their ethereal foundations. We agree that we cannot say for certain where our hands, our moral ethics, originate from. That is, without fully understanding the difference between these extremes of morality, it should be almost impossible to substantiate our prejudice against either extreme.

One might argue that this example of palms does not quiet represents the situation with good and evil and hence with Americannes and UnAmericannes. Alright. Let us say it does not. Now we create a different organisation of fingers, juggled around in all sorts of possible orders, something like a permutation. We can do this arrangement with one or both hands; in the end it shall not matter. The newly formed hands continue to be the same, even when the arrangement of one is not the same. Their handness shall abide with both. This is to us, at least as far us our imagination may take us, their tentative originality. The same applies to the origin of moral ethics of Un-Americans and those of Americans. We may never know what or how precisely the two diverge before transition but what we know for certain is that something about the genesis of their moral ethics is inherently similar. What gives us this assurance is that Un-Americans were once Americans and their reverting to a different status should not remove whatever elements that persist in both groups. Even if we want to argue that by reverting to a different state, Un-Americans were completely transformed, there is no doubt that both groups are human. But this supposed transformation, then perceived most akin to irrecoverable mental illness, is not mentioned in the accounts about those who were persecuted for their Un-Americanness. In any case the accused would still at least qualify them as human like the rest of the Americans, which is more. Thus there is that element that makes Americans and Un-American the same, and another, which is labels that makes them different. This is the exact difference between a normal person and a "witch" in Salem, and a normal person and a "gay one" in the heart of the current affairs today.

Authors of old have made the same cries about this moral absurdity - we must investigate punishments that we base on amorality and morality, whose foundations we barely comprehend. In the Victorian Hardy's The Mayor of Casterbridge where the

adoption of Elizabeth-Jane by Lucetta brings Farfrae and Hanchard together, the good and the bad, moral or immoral are glued together by necessity, and us with a moral dilemma about making judgments and punishing on them. When nature is itself so intertwined, entangled with the so-called moral and amoral, to punish people who are innately part of the universe can indeed be a laughing stock.

Later on in puritan Salem history, Hawthorne addresses the same dilemma. In his The Scarlet Letter. Hester becomes the necessary evil by which we can understand the customs of the Puritan society. How could we gauge the weight of Hester's immorality without her being set apart as evil? When we destroy Hester, what kind of measurement do we achieve by comparing something that would be good with what is not there, with the destroyed evil? Thus on examination we are happy with the contrast darkness or evil against light or good because that is the easiest way for us to learn about ourselves. Even though we may chose not to openly admit become appreciative of Hester's role as the dirty model, we actually do in private appreciate enjoy her being naughty, our two-way nature.

What Miller is doing here is not essentially condemning either end. He seems to be alerting the audience to the diametric opposition that governs the justice system, calling our attention to the elixir that Dr. Jekyll drinks to become Mr. Hyde when opportunity suits him. And now we have become smart to know that McCarthyism in whatever thinkable style: communism, republicanism, democratism, or any McDemo-communo-replicanism or vice versa will be like any of the corruptible, double-pointed human designs.

Major Themes of the Play

A crucible is a vessel in which metal is heated to a high temperature and melted for the purposes of casting. It can also refer, metaphorically, to a time in history when great political, social, and cultural changes are in force, where society is seemingly being melted down and recast into a new mold. The word is also remarkably similar to crucifixion, which Miller certainly intended in choosing it as the title of his play. The picture of a man and a society bubbling in a crucible and the crucifixion of Christ interweave to form the main themes of the play: the problem of making the right moral choice and the necessity of sacrifice as a means of redemption. Both these themes, of course, take place in the context of the larger struggle of good versus evil.

The choice John Proctor must make is between saving either himself or society. His failure to do well initially allows events to get out of hand and eventually forces him into a position where he must make a choice. Reverend Hale, while not subject to the same moral quandary as Proctor, also suffers a crisis of consciousness for his failure to strive hard enough to stop the proceedings of the court. In contrast to them both are Rebecca Nurse and Elizabeth Proctor, whose moral and emotional steadfastness represents society at its best.

In a society at odds with itself and where reason and faith in the society has been replaced with irrationality and self-doubt, a clever manipulator can cause chaos. The Reverend Parris, Danforth, Hathorne, and Putnam represent the corruption of society by self-interested parties preying on society's fears. Through them, Miller highlights the destruction that manipulation and weak-mindedness can thrust upon society.

Miller suggests that in such times good can only triumph through a sacrifice upon the altar of society, that the crisis might only be able to be rectified by the death of those who struggle to uphold society's values. The death of John Proctor, though it might seem a tragic waste, is necessary, both for his own personal redemption and that of his society. The sacrifice of Proctor, Rebecca Nurse, Giles Corey and others, recalls the sacrifice of Christ for the sake of humankind. In the end, The Crucible focuses on a historical event to drive home issues that essentially characterize all societies at all times, which makes the play both universal and enduring.

The Individual Vs Authority

Miller's concept of the parallel between 1950s America and seventeenth-century Salem emerges most clearly in the Themes of his plays. In both cases, Government assumed the right to control citizens' beliefs as well as their actions; in both, the consequences were the same.

The reality of Communism and the generally accepted non-reality of witchcraft are beside the point. In The Crucible, John and Rebecca are not standing up for individual rights in the modern sense. Salem villagers all believe in witches and infallibility of the Bible. What the victims oppose is the abuse of power. This is relevant to any age or culture. In late seventeenth-century New England, the balance began to turn to greater individual freedom. This did not please the rulers.

Until the eighteenth century, religion played a large part in the running of most European states or colonies. In particular, those affected by the protestant Reformation conformed to some form of theocratic (god-ruled) system. Laws were based on the authority of the Bible, and the Church used them to control every aspect of people's lives. The modern idea that religious belief is a matter of private conscience would have been considered blasphemous. Nevertheless, even in seventeenth-century New England, a more tolerant and diversified society was emerging. This movement towards change stirred up great social tensions.

The Reformation had made people more responsible for their own salvation. It substituted public disapproval for the penances of the Catholic Church. Yet the wealthier frequently escaped punishment.

In Act I, 'I have trouble enough… He says there's a party' John Proctor shows his resentment when Parris criticizes his infrequent church attendance. He is absent for practical reasons—Elizabeth's illness, his own work, and no doubt the ten-mile walk. He

feels Parris does not deserve respect. Rebecca, more obedient, knows that Parris is unworthy, but is still shocked by John's remarks. Reverend hale later reprimands him for daring to question Parris's God-given authority.

Act II demonstrates the helplessness of people who try to stand up for their rights in a theocratic state. Once the witch-hunt has started, the potential for conflict escalates. Anyone who doubts the so-called evidence is questioning God's will. The judges' handling of the trial relates more to corruption of justice. They cling so inflexibly to their point of view that law-abiding characters like Rebecca and Francis Nurse are pushed into defiance. Even Hale, an establishment figure, finds he is unable to ignore his conscience. He finally denounces the court. Those whose honesty is stronger than their fear of death inevitably destroy themselves. Rebecca refuses to damn her soul with a lie; Giles values his land more than his life, and willingly accepts a horrible death.

The Effects of Fear

Fear is a dominant emotion in The Crucible. Mr. Parris is afraid that his rebellious Parishioners will use Betty's strange illness to oust him from his position; Abigail fears that Reverend Hale will find out what she did in the forest; so she embarks on an elaborate hoax that almost destroys the village. Ashamed to confess his affair with Abigail, John Proctor speaks up too late. This is only to say that the villagers of Salem are like people everywhere - they have secrets to hide and worry about their reputations.

The unique feature that drew Miller to Salem was the fear that erupted there in 1692. Puritans believed that the Devil was constantly working to tempt human beings away from God. At the end of the play, Tituba is waiting for Satan to transport her to the singin' and dancin' in Barbados. All other references to witchcraft are connected with fear, suspicion, and the collapse of normal social values. The stricken community can no longer defend itself or protect vulnerable individuals.

There are two types of accusation in the play. The first comes from characters seeking revenge or exploiting the panic for personal gain. Others pass on the blame for their misfortunes, but they are not necessarily malicious. Irrational fear deludes them into believing whatever they are told. (No one ever stops to ask why Rebecca should want to harm Mrs. Putnam's babies.)

In both the McCarthy trials and the Salem witch-hunt victims could escape punishment if they denounced others. Supplying names would of course imply that the accused were guilty themselves. In both episodes, only the strongest stood up to their judges. In his autobiography, Time bends, Miller describes his reaction to friends who were called up before the McCarthy tribunal and saved themselves by denouncing others. Similarly, in The Crucible, we meet characters that confess to practising witchcraft and accuse others of doing the same. This is the second type of accusation.

Tituba is the first to be interrogated. Mr. Putnam's threat of hanging produces the desired answer, and thereafter the demoralized slave repeats any names suggested to her. Miller builds a prolonged scene around this minor character to show exactly how the prosecutors went about their business. Tituba represents all that were terrified into naming the 'witches'.

The pressures of irrational fear are most vividly illustrated in their effects on Mary Warren. Mary is terrified from the moment she steps inside the court, but she bears up well under cross-examination; Encouraged by Proctor, she refuses to withdraw her claim that the girls are fraudulent even when bullied by judge Hathorne. Yet she begins to crumple as soon as Abigail sets the girls loose on her within minutes, Mary is caught up in their hysteria and she disintegrates. In her final moments on stage, she rushes for protection to the very person responsible for her ordeal.

Integrity

John Proctor's progress to self-awareness represents a major theme running throughout Miller's work. Miller wrote: I understand the symbolic meaning of a character and his career to consist of the kind of commitment he makes to life or refuses to make (Introduction to Collected Plays). In Miller's thinking, moral honesty cannot be separated from a commitment to society.

In Act 4, the hero cries out, 'God in Heaven, what is John Proctor?' He finds his answer during his final moments on earth. As in several other Miller plays, the central figure must come to terms with the consequences of past actions. In The Crucible's opening scenes, Proctor takes little interest in the outbreak of hysteria at Salem. He is a busy farmer living five miles from the meeting house, and his irritation with Parris has kept him away from church services. Perhaps we should also give him credit for trying to keep away from Abigail, even if his efforts are not successful.

We see him next in his domestic surroundings, ashamed of his adultery, but also resentful that his wife will not accept his sincere repentance. His refusal to meddle in village affairs follows from a very natural reluctance to publicize his adultery. (It later turns out that at least one of Abigail's friends knows about it.) At this stage, John's practical reasons for standing aloof also give him a pretext for evading social responsibility. When the witch-hunters invade his home and arrest his wife, he is forced to become involved. In the court scenes, John rises above his own fears and resentment to argue as well as he can for common sense and reason. We see his growing social involvement when he turns down the chance to save Elizabeth by abandoning his friends and their wives. Yet his plan of action still depends on making someone else take responsibility - Mary Warren. Only when this hope collapses does he tell the full truth, regardless of consequences.

Act 4 concentrates almost wholly on this current theme. John faces a final temptation to retreat into dishonesty and save his life. His newfound closeness with Elizabeth increases

his agony. At first he uses his own guilt to escape the gallows, but under Danforth's relentless pressure he arrives at a clear view of what his choice must be. He manages to accept and forgive his own imperfections. Discovering his 'core' and identity, John can at last take charge of his life, neither rejecting social involvement nor handing over his conscience to someone else.

Irony is often used in The Crucible to emphasize the irrationality of the witch-hunt. That John Proctor's life-affirming choice should lead to death is the greatest irony of the play.

Two other characters, Reverend Hale and Elizabeth, take a similar path to self-awareness. Elizabeth perceives that her own physical coldness was partly responsible for the affair between Abigail and her husband. However, this is a dramatic device to allow John Proctor to come to terms with himself. We have no clue as to how Elizabeth will deal with her knowledge after John's death.

In the final Act, Hale is full of remorse for supporting the witch-hunt. Preaching a doctrine that is the exact opposite of his former beliefs, he urges the prisoners to lie in order to save themselves. This desperate attempt to appease his conscience brings him no comfort. He is a man broken by guilt; there is no indication that he will ever recover.

Mass Hysteria

Mass hysteria does not have to involve hysterical behaviour in the ordinary sense. The phrase describes what happens when the same strong emotion grips a large group of people. Most of us have experienced it in milder forms. When we cheer on our favourite team, or go 'clubbing', feeling part of the crowd intensifies our emotion. This can apply to any situation, even when people are not physically assembled in the same place.

There is another side to the phenomenon. When fear and prejudice spread through a community, they become self-reinforcing and their effect on individuals is enormously magnified. In The Crucible, the behaviour of both adolescents and adults is a powerful demonstration of this reality. Everything happens against a background of on going quarrels that have never been spilled. In Act 1, several random circumstances combine to provoke the disaster. The girls' reaction when their expedition to the forest is found out leads to the suspicion of witchcraft; Mr. Hale is eager to try out his skills; Mrs. Putnam has never stopped grieving for her dead babies, and uses the crisis to find a scapegoat.

By the end of Act 1, the adults have succumbed to their fear that the Devil and his witches are trying to destroy Salem. The only two strong enough to resist - Rebecca and John Proctor -have left the stage. This is the first of the play's biting ironies: the true model of Satanic possession is not the innocent victims, but the accusers (and later, the judges), who hand themselves over to the little crazy children.

Once the hysteria is established, it triggers almost every incident in the play. Through the Proctors' servant, Mary Warren, it invades the quiet domesticity of their home. Tragically, the quarrel between John and Elizabeth has a direct effect on their ability to resist. Their dispute prevents John from taking steps that might have changed the course of events.

We know that common sense has lost when we hear about the arrest of so widely respected a person as Rebecca Nurse.The girls' unpredictable behaviour is both a symbol of the hysteria infecting society and a dramatization of that hysteria in action. So, too, is the gullibility of adults who swallow the girls' accusations. Notice how skilfully Miller leads up to his two scenes of 'possession', the first engineered by Abigail to save her own skin, and the second a full-blown demonstration of mass hysteria in action.

At the end of Act 1, we see Abigail whipping Betty Parris into a state of hysteria as she begins a campaign to save her own skin and, later, to destroy Elizabeth Proctor. In Act 2 we hear about the girls' increasing power, but only through description. Wherever Abigail walks, the crowd would part like the sea for Israel, and if her followers scream and howl and (all to the floor - the person's clapped in the jail for bewitchin' them. At some point - Miller does not say when - the girls' fraud takes them over and they can no longer help their behaviour. The playwright skilfully holds back the second scene of possession until the moment of maximum impact -the terrifying climax to Act 3.

There have been several attempts to explain the behaviour of the girls at Salem. One theory relates it to Sigmund Freud's work on clinical hysteria. Freud concluded that buried emotions were responsible for symptoms in his patients that appeared to have no physical cause. What he described came very close to what happened at Salem. The symptoms were catching; and Freud's patients were often in a state of 'dual consciousness'. They knew what was happening to them, but had virtually no control over themselves.

Miller leaves open the question of how many girls were similarly affected and when this happened. Abigail alone knows exactly what she is doing; she controls the court officials as tightly as she controls her followers. She is confident enough to threaten Judge Danforth, the Deputy-Governor. Danforth thunders at Mary, 'You will confess yourself or you will hang', but Abigail instinctively moves on to something far more sinister. Mary ceases to exist in human form when Abigail 'sees' her in the yellow bird perched on a roof beam. Psychological torture works by alienating victims from their own identity. In the horrifying climax, Abigail hypnotizes the girls into a single mass consciousness, and uses them to destroy Mary's personality and will-power.

The Corruption of Justice

It is hard for anyone today to regard a trial for witchcraft as anything other than a mockery of justice. To pick out what goes wrong in The Crucible we have to put aside disbelief and look at the details of charging, arrest and trial.

Reverend Hale discovers the first 'witch' - Tituba - without any judicial enquiry at all. The first barrier against an unbiased examination of evidence is the close association of Church and State. Those who interpret God's laws do not imagine themselves capable of human error. As a clergyman in a theocratic society, Mr. Hale is allowed to speak on behalf of the state, although he has no legal training. It is through him that Abigail and her followers become linked to the court as official witch-finders. 'The entire contention of the state ... is that the voice of Heaven is speaking through the children', Danforth tells Proctor. Yet the haphazard nature of the accusations leaves them wide open to abuse by people like Thomas Putnam.

The process of arrest is chaotic as well as brutal, as we see when Cheever and Herrick arrive at the Proctors' farmhouse to take Elizabeth to jail. Cheever will not tell her why he is looking for 'puppets'. During the trials, Danforth manipulates both defendants and legal procedure to suit his purpose. He never attempts to look at probabilities, or weigh the defendants' motives. Despite his authority and experience, he presides over an unruly court. He allows Hathorne to score points based on sheer verbal trickery - 'How do you know, then, that you are not a witch?' Danforth does the same himself when he entraps Elizabeth into lying to save her husband's reputation. He also uses leading questions to get the answers that suit him (though not always successfully):

'Might it be that here we have no afflicting spirit loose; but in the court there were some?'

> 'You deny every scrap and tittles of this?'
>
> 'You have seen the Devil, have you not?'

The greatest injustice in the whole conduct of the witch trials is that the inquisitors offer a reprieve to those that confess, provided they name other suspects. Proctor points out the obvious consequences to Hale, but the minister refuses to face the truth. So the witch-hunt swells to an enormous size and infects other parts of the province. The nightmare only ends when the whole community is on the brink of revolt.

Conformity, Imbalance of Power, And Social Injustice

Conformity has plagued mankind for ages. It is a strong theme in The Crucible, and Miller's audience can draw parallels to it in their own lives. In The Crucible, the need to conform to the church's views and that of its minister is quite evident. The characters in the play find themselves in a very difficult situation. They must either turn their backs on what they believe in or lie by admitting to having had "relations with the devil", thereby conforming with the church's wishes, or they must follow their individualistic beliefs and refuse to lie. The Crucible should be considered a great drama just because of itsall-encompassing theme of conformity.

The Crucible has so much more to it that it needn't be considered great drama on the basis of a good theme alone. It also attacks the poor balance of power that we can see around us every day. Miller shows us how much power a sole individual can have when that person defines the ideologies or beliefs by which we live. During the Salem Witch Trials religion was, much more so than now, the answer to what people didn't understand. So as a result, ministers and priests were extremely powerful because they were the only people that were "qualified" to interpret the rules of their religion. They were considered to be the voice of God. Back in Salem, how could anything have been more powerful than that? Nobody could question the priests because they would then be questioning God. Which of course was completely taboo. So a person in such a position of power could say nearly anything they wanted, such as deciding that "cleansing" was needed in Salem. And, as a result, people would listen and it would be done, but not necessarily deemed to be right.

In the 1950's the idea of an imbalance of power was still an issue. After just starting to recover from the Holocaust, which was fueled by the very same need for "cleansing" as in Salem but on a larger scale, Americans were bewildered as to how easily people could be manipulated by those in a position of great power. Hitler had just basically accused a few million people of being witches. Americans could see how weak they were. One could not question the government, the military, or the church. To this very day, a huge amount of people are still afraid of questioning the church - look at the issue of abortion and the Catholic Church's position upon it for example.

Miller portrayed the priests and judges in The Crucible as that certain type of people that Americans will always be up against in the struggle for power. While the Church and its' ministers isn't quite as powerful now because people can openly admit having no belief in God without fear of being hung, we now have a new group of people that decide what is true and what is not. Science is the new religion and scientists the new priests. Scientists are the only people capable of interpreting what all of the math and formulas mean. And as a result, the rest of us openly accept their conclusions to be the true. This is the same kind of reliance that people put on the church two hundred years ago. And at that time, you didn't question it. The church was always right. The Crucible is a great drama because it addresses the issue of conformity in American culture and questions the amount of power that we allow those to have whom are supposedly more educated than the majority of the population and are responsible for defining the ideologies and beliefs by which we live.

At the time when The Crucible was first being performed something was taking place that was very alike the Salem Witch Trials. In Hollywood, the House Un-American Activities Committee was investigating the film industry for communist activities. Actors, writers, and directors were interrogated as to whether or not they had involved themselves in any kind of relations with the Communist Party. If people didn't readily conform to the HUAC's line of questioning, and answer their questions regardless of whether or not they were deemed intrusive or not, it was assumed that they had been involved with the Communist Party. It was thought that the Communists were trying to

gain control of the American film industry for propaganda purposes. As a result, those individuals that were thought to be in any way associated with the Communists were blacklisted in Hollywood and could no longer work there.

As history has shown us, the injustices that occurred during the Salem Witch Trials continue to go on. Most obviously by the HUAC in America at the time of Miller's The Crucible. We see parallels between the Salem Witch Trials and other issues even today. Most recently, the military wanted to discharge any gay men in service. These kind of injustices will always exist. The Crucible addresses the idea of a group of select people choosing another group for a scapegoat to a supposedly determined "problem" that exists. This is yet another reason why The Crucible should be considered to be great drama.

Arthur Miller's, The Crucible, addressed issues which were as important to Americans in the 1950's as they are today. The idea of conformity is one which any given individual will always face. People who define the ideologies and beliefs by which we live will also always exist. As will the accusations made by one group of select individuals towards groups of others in order to support their cause, or solve their problem. The House Un-American Activities Committee was doing exactly that in the 1950's which was why the idea of "cleansing" in The Crucible was so relevant to Americans. Arthur Miller's play took on very strong themes and took a stand against issues that are still pertinent to date. Great drama is something in which an audience can find relevance and relation. Great drama is drama that will always be important. The Crucible is a play that no one will ever be able to ignore because of Miller's ability to touch issues and themes that have plagued mankind throughout history and will continue to do so in the future.

The Crucible – The Title

Arthur Miller cleverly picked the title "The Crucible" for his play about the Salem witch hunts of the 1660's because of the word's many meanings. Throughout the play, Miller has characters face severe tests that make them question their own self. A crucible is also an earthen pot that is used for melting metals. In a way the town of Salem was a crucible as people were brought before the court and blasted with allegations from others as being witches. They were either forced to give in and live a lie or be hanged.

The term crucible could also be used to describe the heat of the situation. Innocent people were caught up in the witch hunt were thrown into an overheated situation that had been blown completely out of proportion. The crucible may also symbolize Hell. As substances in a crucible melt and disintegrate they form a completely different substance. This could symbolize the society of Salem disintegrating and forming into a completely new one. After the situation had been heated what you are left with are the remnants of society that once existed.

By the end of this play, the true meaning of the word crucible was a severe test. John Proctor underwent the most severe test and as a result his character underwent a drastic

change throughout the play. The ultimate test that John Proctor undergoes is the final decision that he makes before he dies. The town of Salem was deeply religious and they were willing to believe the word of a deceitful young girl rather than believe in the integrity of people like John Proctor, Reverend Hale, and Rebecca Nurse.

Throughout the play John Proctor was an honest man, as was his wife, Elizabeth until she was asked to testify against her husband about his affair. One thing that never changed about Proctor throughout the whole play was his willingness to stand for his beliefs. Time after time, he was bombarded with questions about why he didn't regularly attend church or why he didn't have one of his sons baptized. He answered these questions with integrity and questioned the ministry of Parris. No one in the town of Salem had done that before.

Proctor was also undergoing a difficult time in his marriage with Elizabeth and at the beginning he seemed timid to deal with it. The first time that Elizabeth and John are in a scene together the mood is extremely awkward. There is hardly any eye contact or communication between the two. This had been going on for seven months, since Proctor's affair with Abigail Williams.

By the end of the play, the soreness of the subject seemed to disappear and any timidness that Proctor felt also disappeared. In the final two scenes, John Proctor was willing to ruin his name by stating that he did in fact have an affair with Abigail in order to prove the accusers wrong. Before this time, Proctor would not even discuss the issue especially when Abigail approached him in the first scene about it. Abigail claimed that she thought about him and that one night she had with him constantly. Proctor would not reply and wanted nothing to do with the conversation. Proctor wanted to wish that whole night away, as if never happened. He even said that was ashamed of his act. When it came to restoring credibility to the people accused by Abigail he was willing to set aside his personal problems and admit to his adultery.

The ultimate test came at the end when Proctor must decide between confessing and living or dying alongside the wrongly accused people of Salem. He chose the latter, but I do not think the Proctor from Act I would have done this. The Salem Witch Trials changed the man drastically as he appeared to be a stubborn man in the beginning. By the end, Proctor chose to die in the most righteous way, with dignity. In the beginning, Proctor could be described as stubborn and selfish, but by the end of he was anything but these qualities. He was willing to die alongside those that were accused and he refused to take the easy way out the situation by confessing to something he never did. Proctor and the others were unwilling to confess. Instead they stood for the principles of honesty and integrity in order to die noble deaths.

"The Crucible" was a good name for this play because of its originality and how its various meanings seemingly fit into the plot and the various sub-plots of the play. Salem was the perfect setting for the "the Crucible" as the settlers had no place to turn away from the heat, the mayhem, and the severe tests that faced them in the town. The heat

of the situation forced the change of John Proctor and the town was forever changed as a result of the trials and the false the accusations.

Symbolic importance of the Title

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McCarthyism and “The Crucible”

After World War II, America and Russia began to view one another uneasily. The two countries were based on opposing ideologies, namely capitalism and communism. In addition, each country was rapidly expanding its political influence throughout Europe and the Third World. In 1947, the Cold War began, and the two powers began to treat one another as deadly enemies. In America, anyone who had ever flirted with socialist or communist beliefs was suddenly seen as a traitor to the American way of life.

Although the persecution of leftists took its name from the McCarthy hearings of the early 1950s, it actually began with the publication of the Attorney-General’s List in 1947 by the House Committee of Un-American Activities (HUAC). This list con-tained names of people with ties to subversive or communist organizations. Later, this list expanded to become the notorious Black List, by which thousands of people were forbidden to work in their professions. In addition, HUAC held hearings to investigate charges of “Un-Americanism.” These hearings con-tinued through the McCarthy era and were often more damag-ing than the McCarthy hearings themselves.

In 1950, the Chinese Revolution had just been won, the Russians had exploded their first atomic bomb and the Korean War had just begun. The time was ripe for an explosion of

anti-communist feeling. Overnight, Senator Joseph McCarthy became famous with his accusation that, for 20 years, the Democratic government had been nurturing the growth of com-munism in America. Under McCarthy, Senate hearings were set up and the wholesale persecution of leftists began.

It should be remembered that during the Spanish Civil War and World War II, many people had worked with socialists and leftists to fight fascism. Indeed, only a few years before, America and Russia had been allies. Under McCarthyism, however, anti-communist hysteria became so intense and so irrational that even moderate liberals referred to it as a witch hunt. As Miller states in his notes to The Crucible, "in America any man who is not reactionary in his views is open to the charge of alliance with the Red hell-a political policy is equated with moral right, and opposition to it with diabolical malevolence."

The McCarthy and HUAC hearings followed a similar pat-tern. As each "witness" took the stand, he would be asked whether he had ever had any dealings with communists. If he refused to answer, he could be arrested. If he denied the charge, he would be asked to prove his innocence by giving the names of those who did have communist connections. If he confessed to having once attended a leftist meeting or contributed to a leftist cause, then he was asked to show that he had reformed by naming others who had attended that meeting or worked for that cause. Those who were named were then called to the hear-ings as new witnesses.

Unfortunately, few witnesses had the courage to stand up to the McCarthy and HUAC committees. Most willingly gave the names of friends and colleagues who had at some time been associated with leftist causes. If they didn't know any names, they often repeated rumors or simply lied. And, as one critic commented in disgust, "they lied, not to save their lives, but to save their swimming pools."

The McCarthy hearings particularly focused on the arts in America. Between 1950 and 1954, several artists and intellec-tuals were imprisoned for refusing to testify, including Dashiell Hammett and the famous "Hollywood Ten." In addition, thousands of writers, musicians, actors and directors were "blacklisted" and forbidden to work. Some left the country, others changed professions, and still others changed their names. Some resumed their careers when the blacklist was lifted in the 1960s, but for most the damage was permanent.

Eventually, McCarthy's power collapsed under its own weight. As the government and the arts were purged over and over, the old lists became tired and worn. McCarthy became wilder and wilder in his accusations, claiming that the American army had become disloyal and that powerful generals were traitors. The public became increasingly skeptical of McCarthy's charges and began to press for the truth. Public opposition increased as a number of well-known witnesses, including Arthur Miller, challenged the authority of the HUAC and McCarthy hearings.

The Crucible was first performed in January of 1953. It must have seemed like a slap in the face to McCarthy by a leading American playwright. McCarthyism had been called a witch hunt, and here was a play about the real witch hunt. Parallels between the Salem court and the McCarthy and HUAC hearings were clearly drawn.

During the hearings, as in Salem, due process of law was abandoned and hysteria was spread through lies and rumors. Witnesses were trapped into dishonest confessions and forced to falsely accuse their friends and neighbors. Those who opposed the hearings were accused of working for the Red devil, rather than simply the Devil, as in Salem. In Washington, as in Salem, many innocent people suffered. As Miller says of the victims of the witch hunt, "one can only pity them all, just as we will be pitied someday."

Today, the Salem witch hunt is far behind us and the McCarthy era too is history. Nonetheless, The Crucible still has political meaning for our time. In his notes to The Crucible, Miller points out that "the balance has yet to be struck between order and freedom." Every age and every society has its repres-sions. In the past few years, members of the "Moral Majority" have increasingly tried to limit various freedoms in the United States. Quite possibly, Americans will soon have to choose once more between authority of the state and freedom of the indiv-idual.

The Crucible's themes, then, are timeless. As long as governments continue to distort the truth, individuals with courage and integrity will continue to challenge them. The choice between freedom and repression is always with us.

The Crucible - Weakness, Jealousy, and Manipulation

In every conflict there always seems to be at least one person to blame. In The Crucible by Arthur Miller, many problems arise that deal with live and death. Many innocent people in this play were hanged during the Salem Witch Trials. Of course, there are many people that may be blamed. In The Crucible, one may find Abigail Williams, The Putnams, and Mary Warren to blame. Abigail was manipulative, The Putnams were very jealous, and Mary Warren was weak-willed.

Although she was a smart girl, Abigail was only out for herself and her own reputation. Abigail Williams didn't only lie about witchcraft, but she forced others to join in. She was Reverend Parris's niece and believed she could get away with whatever she wanted. Abigail did not want to have to damage her reputation by having a different testimony as all the other girls, so she forced them to lie as well. While alone with the girls she said, "Let either of you breathe a word, or the edge of a word about the other things, and I will come to you in the black of some terrible night and I will bring a pointy reckoning that will shudder you. And you know I can do it..." (Miller 1044). Abigail also stuck a needle in herself because she knew Goody Proctor had a poppet at her home with a needle in it. While talking to John Proctor about Abigail, Cheever remarked, "...and, stuck two inches in the flesh of her belly, she draw a needle out. And demandin' of her how she come to be so stabbed, she testify it were your wife's familiar spirit pushed it

in," (Miller 1077). Abigail may have been the most prominent person to lay the blame on, but other people were guilty as well.

Jealousy also played a big role in who was to blame for the deaths in Salem. The Putnams were a small family, whose seven children out of eight did not survive. Mrs. Putnam was a very jealous person when it came to families, and Mr. Putnam was a very jealous person when it came to land. Goody Putnam wanted more children and was jealous of Rebecca Nurse and her large family, so she blamed her for witchcraft. Mr. Putnam wanted more and more land and was very greedy. He accused many people of witchcraft, and once they were hanged, he would buy their land. Mental weakness is as much to blame for these deaths as much as jealousy and manipulation.

Some people may have good intentions, but still cause harm by the things they do. Mary Warren was the servant for the Proctors. In her case, sewing a poppet for Elizabeth Proctor caused a lot of problems for her. During the trials, Mary sewed a poppet to give to Elizabeth as a gift. However innocent it was, it still was the underlying reason that she got accused of witchcraft. Also, during the trials Mary didn't want to tell the judge that all the girls were lying, even though she did tell Proctor. She made him look bad by lying and saying, "My name, he want my name. `I'll murder you,' he says, `if my wife hangs! We must go and overthrow the court,' he says!" (Miller 1102). Proctor was so aggravated by this that he said some things about God that he shouldn't have, and there was no tolerance for that in Salem.

The people in this play may have had different motives for accusing other people, and practically sentencing them to death, but the outcome of all the accusations were basically the same. Innocent people died and there was more than one person to lay the blame on. In almost every conflict there is someone, or some people, to blame. In this case, it was Abigail, the Putnams, and Mary Warren.

The Witch-Hunting and Historical Scenes in the Time of "The Crucible"

"The Crucible" is a political play pertaining to the backdrop midst of twentieth century in general history of the world. In 1951, America was passing through difficult circumstances. After the 2nd World War Communism was having its impact on the world. Most of the countries and nations were becoming communist e.g. Korea, Vietnam and Algeria. Capitalism was in its defence.

There was a rivalry in nuclear fields and conquering to star world. Russia was in escort in this respect. Russia first sent Spuntink-1, China was expanding but America was trying to stop China. There was a cold war in Loascom. It was not an open armed conflict between U.S.A and Union of Soviet. State of Republic, both super power U.S.A and U.S.S.R were trying to destroy each other though in cold manners. America wanted to

check the growing interest of communists. Intellectuals of the world started to appreciate the communism e.g. B. Russell.

Early kings of the Russia were called "Czar". In their period, they occupied many territories of Iran. But when Communism dominated Russia, they returned these areas. This thing brought Muslims in favour of communism. There started a great movement of "Islamic Socialism". There is no difference between Islam and Socialism. Both want equality.

In 1936, in Spain, came the Government of France, as the leaders of Fascists. They were against communism. So he started to crush communists in Spain. Intellectuals from the entire world started together in Spain to participate in war. There was a war between rightist and leftist. America and Britain support France to stop communism.

Under American instructions, there started Islamic movements from Turkey to Indonesia and they say that communists are heathen and are not like Muslims. So most of Islamic movements are the creation of them. Mujahedeen were produced in order to encounter the communists. In this way the influence of communism was tried to break. In this regard there started the search of communists in America and the whole world.

American feels that communist had entered in their Government. In the area from Turkey to Indonesia, communists were banned by America and Islamic religious parties were brought to front. U.S, Senate created a committee called Un American Activities Committee. They arrested everyone whom they suspected to be communist by declaring them witches. This was called witch hunting. There was no way for agents of communism. They either, punished them or put into prisons or sent into madhouses. If one wanted to escape from the charge of communism. There is only one way, to name other one. Many were killed, many went underworld, and many committed suicide. Everyone felt unsafe

.Miller, the great artist, wrote his play in this context. He found an artistic way of bringing up the political issue in aesthetic style. He picked up, from the history of U.S.A, a well-known case of witch hunting in seventeenth century in a town of Salem. He wrote about the incidents of the seventeenth century. There were rumours that witches were in this town and they picked up children. People started to use these rumours for their personal interest. The play was very successive but the reference to 19thcentury witch hunting was too obvious. The chairman of Un American Activities Committee was Senator Joseph McCarthy investigated particularly university teachers, trade unionists and artists of all kinds. That's why Miller was restricted to go to foreign countries.

Arthur Miller's play, The Crucible, is based upon actual events in Salem, Massachusetts in 1692. Some facts, as Miller admits in the introduction, have been changed. Abigail, for instance was only 11 at the time of the trials and John Proctor was 60. An affair between the two of them is a somewhat far-fetched idea. Betty Parris, who was six at the time,

became strangely ill sometime after February 1692. She complained of a fever and crashed about the house in pain.

There is much speculation about the actual cause of her symptoms. A man named Cotton Mather had recently published a book called Memorable Providences describing the suspected witchcraft of a woman in Boston. Betty's behaviour in many ways mirrored that described in the book. Closer attention was paid when Abigail Williams, eleven-year-old Ann Putnam Jr. (called Ruth in Miller's play), seventeen-year-old Mercy Lewis and Mary Walcott (Susanna) began to exhibit similar symptoms. When Dr. Griggs could not cure the children, he naturally suggested that some supernatural force must be at work. An increasingly larger group, which also grew to include adults, began to complain of afflictions. Sometime after February 25, Betty and Abigail named their tormentors with such consistent stories that it seems that the girls must have been working their stories out together. The first people to be accused of witchcraft (Tituba, Sarah Osborn, and Sarah Good) were outsiders.

It was easy for the pious townspeople to believe that those who differed from them were influenced by the devil. The antics in the court proceedings went much as Miller portrayed. Displays of the victim's apparent affliction when in the presence of the witch were considered valid evidence of guilt. The fervour may have died down at that point but Tituba, who had been adamantly denying involvement in witchcraft, proclaimed that she had been approached by a tall man who asked her to sign his book. She stated that she and four others, including Sarah Good and Sarah Osborn, were in fact witches and flew through the air on poles. At this point, the witch hunting took off. Even the four-year old daughter of Sarah Good, Dorcas, was accused and jailed. Bridget Bishop, the sixty-year-old owner of a house of ill repute was the first brought to trial. She was the most likely of the prisoners to be convicted considering her deviant behaviour (in terms of the standards at the time). After her conviction however, one of the judges, Saltonstall, resigned in disgust. (It is interesting to know that the author Nathaniel Hawthorne was a descendant of Judge Hawthorne. That was added to distinguish future generations from the shameful actions of the Salem judge.) Bridget Bishop was hanged on June 10, 1692.

As time went on the accused were not as disreputable as Bishop. Rebecca Nurse was actually found not guilty but Chief Justice Stoughton urged the jury to reconsider and she was condemned. John Proctor was actually a tavern owner (not a farmer as in the play) and was openly critical of the witch-hunts. He was an example of what would happen to those who spoke out against the proceedings. Proctor was hanged August 19, 1692.Doubt in the validity of the accusations finally began when the Ex-Reverend George Burroughs was hung. He recited the Lord's Prayer perfectly, which was thought impossible for one in league with the Devil. Cotton Mather, the author, was in attendance that day and it was his intervention that brought the people back to supporting the trials.

After all, an innocent person would not be convicted. Giles Corey was as the play reports, pressed to death for refusing to enter a plea to the charge of witchcraft against him. His wife Martha was hanged three days later with7 other convicted witches. Her group would be the last to die. Salem was regaining its senses. Reverend John Hale and the villagers found it increasingly harder to believe that so many respectable people would turn to the Devil all at once. Increase Mather, the father of Cotton, began to argue against the use of spectral evidence (Cotton had been a strong force in allowing its use). Without spectral evidence, most of the remaining trials ended in acquittals. Reverend Parris was replaced though he tried to blame those around him. Many of those involved also tried to place the blame on others. Those still in prison were released and in later years, the families of the executed were compensated. The people of Salem still remember the terrible events of their history. The Salem Witch Museum is an integral part of the town as is a stone wall with jutting slabs bearing the names of the dead.

When John Proctor is asked to recall his Ten Commandments (a witch could not), he forgets adultery just as he literally forgot when he chose to have an affair with Abigail.

Proctor calls Hale Pontius Pilate. Hale sees the injustice being done yet he is willing to go along with the will of the people (the court) in order to protect himself as the biblical figure allowed the crucifixion of Jesus. Hale is not acting in a just manner. By the time he changes his ways, it is too late for him to have any influence. If Hale is Pontius Pilate, the innocent victims of the tragedy are like Jesus. Christians believe that Jesus died to save future generations. Those who learn from the deaths in Salem are also saved. They are saved from repeating history and suffering another great loss of life.

"The Crucible" Presents the Real Characters from Real American Society

In a sense, The Crucible has the structure of a classical tragedy, with John Proctor as the play's tragic hero. Honest, upright, and blunt-spoken, Proctor is a good man, but one with a secret, fatal flaw. His lust for Abigail Williams led to their affair (which occurs before the play begins), and created Abigail's jealousy of his wife, Elizabeth, which sets the entire witch hysteria in motion.

Once the trials begin, Proctor realizes that he can stop Abigail's rampage through Salem but only if he confesses to his adultery. Such an admission would ruin his good name, and Proctor is, above all, a proud man who places great emphasis on his reputation. He eventually makes an attempt, through Mary warren's testimony, to name Abigail as a fraud without revealing the crucial information. When this attempt fails, he finally bursts out with a confession, calling Abigail a "whore" and proclaiming his guilt publicly.

Only then does he realize that it is too late, that matters have gone too far, and that not even the truth can break the powerful frenzy that he has allowed Abigail to whip up. Proctor's confession succeeds only in leading to his arrest and conviction as a witch, and

though he lambastes the court and its proceedings, he is also aware of his terrible role in allowing this fervour to grow unchecked

Proctor redeems himself and provides a final denunciation of the witch trials in his final act. Offered the opportunity to make a public confession of his guilt and live, he almost succumbs, even signing a written confession. His immense pride and fear of public opinion compelled him to withhold his adultery from the court, but by the end of the play he is more concerned with his personal integrity than his public reputation. He, still, wants to save his name, but for personal and religious reasons rather than public reasons.

Proctor's refusal to provide a false confession is a true religious and personal stand. Such a confession would dishonour his fellow prisoners, who are brave enough to die as testimony to the truth. Perhaps more relevantly, a false admission would also dishonour him, staining not just his public reputation, but also his soul. By refusing to give up his personal integrity Proctor implicitly proclaims his conviction that such integrity will bring him to heaven. He goes to the gallows redeemed for his earlier sins. As Elizabeth says to end the play, responding to Hale's plea that she convince Proctor to publicly confess:

"He has his goodness now. God forbid I take it from him!"

Of the major characters, Abigail is the least complex. She is clearly the villain of the play, more so than Parris or Danforth: she tells lies, manipulates her friends and the entire town, and eventually sends nineteen innocent people to their deaths. Throughout the hysteria, Abigail's motivations never seem more complex than simple jealousy and a desire to have revenge on Elizabeth Proctor. The language of the play is almost Biblical, and Abigail seems like a Biblical character—a Jezebel figure, driven only by sexual desire and a lust for power. Nevertheless, it is worth pointing out a few background details that, though they don't mitigate Abigail's guilt, make her actions more understandable.

Abigail is an orphan and an unmarried girl; she thus occupies a low rung on the Puritan Salem social ladder (the only people below her are the slaves, like Tituba, and social outcasts). For young girls in Salem, the minister and the other male adults are God's earthly representatives, their authority derived from on high. The trials, then, in which the girls are allowed to act as though they have a direct connection to God, empower the previously powerless Abigail. Once shunned and scorned by the respectable townsfolk who had heard rumours of her affair with John Proctor, Abigail now finds that she has clout, and she takes full advantage of it. A mere accusation from one of Abigail's troop is enough to incarcerate and convict even the well-respected inhabitant of Salem. Whereas others once reproached her for her adultery, she now has the opportunity to accuse them of the worst sin of all: devil-worship.

John Hale, the intellectual, naïve witch-hunter, enters the play in Act I when Parris summons him to examine his daughter, Betty. In an extended commentary on Hale in Act I, Miller describes him as "a tight-skinned, eager-eyed intellectual. This is a beloved

errand for him; on being called here to ascertain witchcraft he has felt the pride of the specialist whose unique knowledge has at last been publicly called for." Hale enters in a flurry of activity, carrying large books and projecting an air of great knowledge. In the early going, he is the force behind the witch trials, probing for confessions and encouraging people to testify.

Over the course of the play, however, he experiences a transformation, one more remarkable than that of any other character. Listening to John Proctor and Mary Warren, he becomes convinced that they, not Abigail, are telling the truth. In the climactic scene in the court in Act III, he throws his lot in with those opposing the witch trials. In tragic fashion, his about-face comes too late—the trials are no longer in his hands but rather in those of Danforth and the theocracy, which has no interest in seeing its proceedings exposed as a sham.

The failure of his attempts to turn the tide renders the once-confident Hale a broken man. As his belief in witchcraft falters, so does his faith in the law. In Act IV, it is he who counsels the accused witches to lie, to confess their supposed sins in order to save their own lives. In his change of heart and subsequent despair, Hale gains the audience's sympathy but not its respect, since he lacks the moral fibre of Rebecca Nurse or, as it turns out, John Proctor. Although Hale recognizes the evil of the witch trials, his response is not defiance but surrender. He insists that survival is the highest good, even if it means accommodating oneself to injustice—something that the truly heroic characters can never accept.

"The Crucible" As a Modern Tragedy

"The crucible" is a modern tragedy written in the perspective of ahistorical incident of Salem's witchcraft (17th century) but, the play highlights the vindictiveness of McCarthyism and Communists trails in America in 20th century.

The play contains almost all the elements of a modern tragedy. Though it is quite different from other tragedies as it brings forth a story of historical importance, yet the protagonist of the play, John Proctor, shares a lot with a modern man. Miller has blended intellectual, social, moral and psychological problems of a modern man in the character of Proctor.

There are many arguments whether this play is a tragedy or not. The left hand critics declare "The Crucible" is not a tragedy as it does not fulfil all the conditions set by Aristotle, that the protagonist should be a royal birth and the centre of attention of everyone as it is common in the plays of Sophocles and Shakespeare to be able to arouse the feelings of pity and fear associated to a tragedy. But this accusation does not hold much strength, as in the world of today kings and princes are not present with similar pomp and show. So, the presentation of a royal figure would be unrealistic and fictitious.

Moreover, modern man is not confronted with supernatural elements like the heroes of classical plays. Rather today man is at war with society to have a dignified and a respectable position in it. Now everyman is a centre of his own attention. The basic problem of modern man is to determine his place in his surroundings. So, the concept of tragedy should be changed according to the requirements of time and age. Thus, a modern tragedy is a tragedy of a layman because a modern man is a layman. So, modern tragedy is a tragedy of everyman.

Arthur Miller stands head and shoulders above the modern American dramatists. He keenly observes the conflict between the aims and objectives of an individual and his social surroundings, and beautifully presents these conflicts in his plays. In this play he presents the image of a "guilt-ridden man"

.John Proctor is a common countryman, a farmer by profession. He is respected for his uprightness and fear for his sharp dealing with hypocrites. The writer says that in his presence "A fool felt his foolishness instantly". But Proctor also holds guilt on his name. He has been sexually involved with a girl, Abigail. Proctor is deeply repentant on his sin of adultery and on betraying his wife, Elizabeth. He cannot came out of this guilt till the end and feels that his salvation is not possible and that he cannot climb up the altar steps with the dignity of righteous people. Consider his statement to Elizabeth:

"Let them that never lie, die now to keep their souls. It is a pretence for me, a vanity that will not blind God nor keep my children out of the wind".

But he reaches a dignified position through proper decision in the end. Thus the attention of the playwright is on the moral choice of Proctor. Though he is a sinner, yet he is a man of good conscience.

It is also to be noted that in Miller's plays, the catastrophe rises from some sexual sin. In fact, he wants to enhance the importance of family life, if the rules of marriage are not abided by the downfall in sure to come in one or the other way. Miller says:

"I cannot live apart from society".

He thinks that moral honesty cannot be separated from a commitment to the society. Though a man and the environment do not merely interact, yet they are the part of each other "a fish is in water and the water is in fish". Miller implies this dictum to every human being and proves it through his protagonist that every person has to live in harmony with his surroundings.

Proctor has been presented as a rebel of society. He leads a life of isolation –partly because of his shame and partly of his stubborn manner and this isolation and inactivity becomes his flaw. At first, Proctor denies the importance of society stays away from the trails of witch hunt and even during his trail takes selfish decision to save his life. But later, he has to accept that he is nothing without his surroundings. He realizes what he

owes to his neighbours. He knows that his acceptance of being a witch would greatly demoralize the people and they would not fight against this brutal act.

“I blacken all of them when this (my confession) is nailed to the church the very day they hang for silence”.

Miller presents self-discovery of his protagonist within all the action of the play. The self-quest of Proctor begins when Elizabeth repeatedly pleads him to judge him. He has lost faith in his goodness and needs some outer action to invoke him to a certain decision. But Elizabeth pushes him to take his decision and then he asks for divine help and cries out:

“God in Heaven! What is John Proctor?”

And soon he gets the answer. In the final moments of his life, he realizes that he has not yet lost tall of his virtue, for at least he knows his responsibility towards his neighbours. He utters:

“I do think I see shred of goodness in John Proctor”.

On a broader level, “The Crucible”, is also a social tragedy. Miller describes now innocent people are mercilessly convicted and murdered only to save an ideology. By the time of the settings of the play, Puritan’s church and government is losing control over individuals. This is because of the corruption of priests, presented by Parris in the play. The weirdly vanity and hellish sermons of such priests take people away from the church. So church has an ever increasing fear of losing authority over the masses of people and this fear actually becomes the root cause of such wide spread blood-shed. Thus Puritan church and government make desperate attempt to hold the people in their grip by using a quotation of Bible which says:

“Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live”.

However, this attempt proves futile but deadly, which rather than shifting the minds of people towards the Puritan church causes their death and destruction.

Miller’s play is taken on an allegorical level, for though today subjects have changed so far but the subject matter is ever the same. The individual is bound to society in the same way, as John Proctor is in the play, while the authorities are as furious and anxious to hold their power as the Puritan church and government in Salem.

The Character and Role of John Proctor

In a sense, The Crucible has the structure of a classical tragedy, with John Proctor as the play’s tragic hero. Honest, upright, and blunt-spoken, Proctor is a good man, but one with a secret, fatal flaw. His lust for Abigail Williams led to their affair (which occurs

before the play begins), and created Abigail's jealousy of his wife, Elizabeth, which sets the entire witch hysteria in motion.

Once the trials begin, Proctor realizes that he can stop Abigail's rampage through Salem but only if he confesses to his adultery. Such an admission would ruin his good name, and Proctor is, above all, a proud man who places great emphasis on his reputation. He eventually makes an attempt, through Mary warren's testimony, to name Abigail as a fraud without revealing the crucial information. When this attempt fails, he finally bursts out with a confession, calling Abigail a "whore" and proclaiming his guilt publicly.

Only then does he realize that it is too late, that matters have gone too far, and that not even the truth can break the powerful frenzy that he has allowed Abigail to whip up. Proctor's confession succeeds only in leading to his arrest and conviction as a witch, and though he lambastes the court and its proceedings, he is also aware of his terrible role in allowing this fervour to grow unchecked.

Proctor redeems himself and provides a final denunciation of the witch trials in his final act. Offered the opportunity to make a public confession of his guilt and live, he almost succumbs, even signing a written confession. His immense pride and fear of public opinion compelled him to withhold his adultery from the court, but by the end of the play he is more concerned with his personal integrity than his public reputation. He still wants to save his name, but for personal and religious, rather than public, reasons. Proctor's refusal to provide a false confession is a true religious and personal stand. Such a confession would dishonour his fellow prisoners, who are brave enough to die as testimony to the truth. Perhaps more relevantly, a false admission would also dishonour him, staining not just his public reputation, but also his soul.

By refusing to give up his personal integrity Proctor implicitly proclaims his conviction that such integrity will bring him to heaven. He goes to the gallows redeemed for his earlier sins. As Elizabeth says to end the play, responding to Hale's plea that she convince Proctor to publicly confess: "He have his goodness now. God forbid I take it from him!"

John Proctor is the central character and the protagonist of the play. He, as a character reflects Miller's mastery in portraying his characters. Miller gives very delicate touches in digging the subtleties of Proctor's relationship with his wife, Elizabeth, and Abigail. Miller also shows very skilfully Proctor's attitude towards Puritans, Witchcraft, Parris, Hale and court and towards his friends in the end when he was going to be punished for being a witch. Miller also highlights the conflict and the moral choice, which Proctor had to face at the cost of his life. Although, Proctor is the central figure yet he has not been idealized as a hero. He is a blunt, stubborn countryman, though not excessively sensitive yet capable of being tender, especially towards woman. According to John Mahoney:

"The attention of the playwright is on Proctor's moral choice".

Miller, himself, says in his introduction of the play that he wants to draw the image of "a guilt ridden man" who has a sense of guilt that he has betrayed his wife, Elizabeth by playing adultery with Abigail, who is a very cunning and fraudulent girl. And this shame holds him from taking positive action at the right moment and consequently suffers a great loss of his life.

Then Proctor is a practical farmer, struggling to win a living for his family but he still finds time to take a sensuous delight in his surroundings. He is a strong man, physically strong, cool tempered and not easily provoked. He emerges as a down-to-earth man who speaks his mind and is not afraid of confronting those in authority –the authority of society, priest and that of court. Only his guilt of all with Elizabeth makes him indecisive until very last.

John Proctor is also good independent minded Christian who is fed-up from dogmatic and the strict values of the church only in order to maintain their authority. He also does not care about his infrequent presence in church. He openly condemns Parris and his greedy and hellish sermons. It is Parris hellish preaching, which prompt John Proctor to stay away from church and explain his absence as follows:

"I have troubled enough, I come five mile to hear him preach only hellfire and bloody damnation … others stay away from church these days because you (Parris) hardly ever mention God anymore".

He is an honest man and sees himself as a sinner and unworthy to follow the martyrs like Rebecca and Giles.

Proctor never interferes with the affairs of others. Miller gives his social views that man can't isolate himself from the trials of community and the man, who refuses to be committed to some cause, will face tragic result. If a man is to be a part of society, he must function and participate in all the aspects of society.

Proctor tries to avoid any involvement in Salem witchcraft trails. He is afraid of the disclosure of his secrets of adultery with Abigail which was probably no more than a moment of passion prompted by the impetuosity and it also characterizes many of his other actions speeches.

John Proctor retains a very strict attitude towards witchcraft. He does not believe in it and takes it as an irrational act. He does not want to be involved in the court probe about witchcraft but in the end he has to do so. When he learns that Elizabeth has been accused, he says:

"Is the accuser always holy now? Where they born his morning as clean as God's fingers? I'll tell you what's walking Salem –vengeance is Salem. We are what we always were in Salem but now the little crazy children are jangling the keys of the kingdom, and comfort vengeance writes the law!"

But in the end, we see that Proctor is accused of being a witch because of his rebellion against the church and the court. He wants to prove the fraudulent behaviour of the girls but he is accused in return. He is sentenced to death if he does not confess to be a witch. As first, because of the pressure on him he becomes agree to confess and signs it but his innocence and soul does not let him to confess, therefore, he tears out the confessions. He says:

"Because it is my name! Because I cannot have another in my life! Because I am not worth the dust on the feet of them that hang! How may I live without my name? I have given you my soul; leave me my name".

He does not want to lose his true identity and to be called a witch. Therefore, he sacrifices his body and saves his soul.

Once he abandons the society at its own, but society does not let him maintain himself in the critical junctures of his life. He remains in critical and complex situation of hope and fear and life and death. He remains caught up in a web of moral dilemmas woven by society. He requires an enormous moral courage to make right choice, the choice, which makes all the difference, and we see that Proctor chooses for his soul. This is what Miller wants to tell us. He says:

"My central impulse for writing at all was not the social but the interior psychological question"

Theme of Relationship between Individual & Society

No person can completely steer clear of the trials and tribulations of his or her society. He who does may be vulnerable to serious allegations. If a man is to work well in his surroundings, he must partake in all aspects of his society or he is leaving himself open to unfavorable charges. In Arthur Miller's, The Crucible, John Proctor's lack of involvement in the Salem witch trials ultimately leads to his execution. John Proctor tries to avoid any involvement in the Salem witch trials. His reason for this attempt is motivated by his past fault of committing adultery with Abigail Williams.

The guilt connected with his lechery makes Proctor hesitant to speak openly because he would condemn himself as an adulterer. Basically, then, in the first act he attempts to isolate himself from the primary proceedings, saying to Reverend Hale:

"I've heard you to be a sensible man, Mr. Hale. I hope you'll leave some of it in Salem"

Proctor tries to wash his hands of the entire affair, than to instead deal with his own personal problems. His wife Elizabeth constantly badgers him about his adulterous affair and he retorts with "Let you look sometimes for the goodness in me, and judge me not". Rather than interfering in the witch trials he is still trying to defend himself in the dangerous love triangle. In Act I, Proctor attempts to retire to the private world of his

farm and remain completely oblivious to the events arising in Salem. This refusal to become involved is brought to an end when his servant, Mary Warren, announces that she is an official of the court and that Elizabeth Proctor has been “somewhat mentioned” by the woman who with whom he had copulated. Proctor still wishes to dismiss the hearings, but his wife uses his guilt about infidelity to extract a covenant that he will expose Abigail as being an impostor. Proctor is being coerced by his wife to become involved, it is not his free and open decision. Indirect characterization can be surmised in the aforesaid situation that Elizabeth is very influential upon Proctor’s character. Harold Bloom avers that this demonstrates that “Proctor’s sense of guilt is central to any understanding of him as a dramatic character”. Before Proctor is forced to take the next step, Reverend Hale arrives and then, Herrick with a warrant for Elizabeth’s arrest. In anger over his wife’s conviction and arrest, Proctor accuses Hale of being a “Pontius Pilate” and later tells him that he is a coward by saying:

“though you be ordained in God’s own tears, you are a coward now!”

The significant self-laceration which John Proctor undergoes while struggling to make his choice is finally convincing because it is perfectly in character, Harold Bloom says: “Miller uses Proctor as a vehicle for the play’s major moral questions”. Proctor is weak, like most men, but he has the potential for greatness likewise common to all men. When John Proctor shouted: ‘’I am no saint”. He asserted his human frailty and vulnerability. As the tragic hero of Miller’s drama, Proctor faces his downfall due to his lack of commitment to humanity. Proctor feels guilty about his relationship with Abigail when he is visited by Hale and asked about his commitment to the church and his knowledge of the Ten Commandments. Proctor inadvertently forgets one commandment: “Thou shalt not commit adultery”. Proctor accounts for his lack of attendance at church in Act 1 by proclaiming that he will not listen to the “hellfire and bloody damnation”, preached by Parris. In Act 2 he states:

“I like it not that Mr. Parris should lay his hand upon my baby, I see no light of God in that man”

An act the town’s people and the court view as a revolt against the supremacy of God. This quote also highlights Proctors’ otherwise principled approval to his life, he is not prepared to do something just because it is expected by the rest of the community. Proctor’s relationship with other characters highlight aspects of his personality. In Act 2 Giles Corey and Francis Nurse come to him for help following the arrest of Rebecca Nurse and Martha Corey. It is apparent from this that he is respected by them. Proctor’s character is also highlighted through how he is seen by his wife. Elizabeth is cooking for him and it is clear that she is wanting to please him. This shows that Proctor is obviously making an effort to please and be loving towards Elizabeth, but she is finding it hard to forgive him for his behaviour. “Spare me! You forget nothin’ and forgive nothin’. Learn charity woman. I have gone tiptoe in this house all seven month since she is gone. I have not moved from there to there without think to please you, and still an ever-lasting funeral marches round your heart”.

It is important to Proctor how he is seen by other people in the community and for this reason he is reluctant to go to Salem's court early on, as he would have to admit to the affair with Abigail. He eventually acts correctly, in order to show his love for Elizabeth who risks condemnation from the court on evidence from Abigail. The outraged court officials summon Elizabeth Proctor to find out the truth about Proctor and Abigail. When asked about her husband, Elizabeth's soul is twisted, for reporting the truth could destroy her husband's reputation, but lying means breaking the solemn oath to God. As she is selfless, Elizabeth choose to lie and save her husband, but perhaps condemn herself to hell for such a sin. This scene indicates dramatic irony, for Proctor knows that which Elizabeth is not aware of, and this is that he has already "confessed it".

In Act 3, Proctor remains loyal to his friends whose wives have been accused. He is tempted to withdraw his charges against Abigail when he is told his wife is pregnant and in no immediate danger of being hung, but he goes ahead to support his friends. Despite Proctor's lack of integrity in his relationship with Abigail, Proctor is initially tempted to save his own life by confessing, but he eventually decides to die rather than lose his good name, Proctor's recognition is his discovery that he contains goodness. "for now I do think I see some shred of goodness in me" . Elizabeth supports him through her confidence that he is a "good" man. "he have his goodness now. God forbid I take it from him". John Proctor is not a perfect man, but his beliefs and values are in the right place. Proctor listens to his soul, a lesson the whole world should learn to follow. John Proctor is a "good" man.

The Crucible : Arthur Miller's Style

Arthur Miller had a reputation for being pedantic. He maintained, and his estate continues to maintain artistic control over his plays. Miller never ever let anyone else have more creative input than himself. He was a visually descriptive playwright both in his stage directions and settings. Miller's plays, including The Crucible include pages of detailed information addressing the concerns of both the actors and the audience.

In preparation for writing The Crucible, he studied pages and pages of court transcripts of the Salem witch hunts in order to develop ideas and to create an authentic dialect. He took small ideas from the testimonies given in the courts and fleshed them out into stories. In fact, the basis for John Proctor's and Abigail Williams' affair was based on the tension he discovered that the two of them shared throughout the actual court proceedings.

'This play is not history in the sense in which the word is used by the academic historian. Dramatic purposes have sometimes required many characters to be fused into one; the number of girls involved in the 'crying out' has been reduced; Abigail's age has been raised; while there were several judges of almost equal authority, I have symbolized them all in Hathorne and Danforth. However, I believe that the reader will discover here the essential nature of one of the strangest and most awful chapters in human history.

The fate of each character is exactly that of his historical model, and there is no one in the drama who did not play a similar-and in some cases exactly the same-role in history.

As for the characters of the persons, little is known about most of them except what may be surmised from a few letters, the trial record, certain broadsides written at the time, and references to their conduct in sources of varying reliability. They may therefore be taken as creations of my own, drawn to the best of my ability in conformity with their known behaviour, except as indicated in the commentary I have written for this text.'

Plays can be classified in two major varieties: plays of episodic action and plays of continuous action. Shakespeare's plays are episodic. No one scene is very long, and the action jumps from place to place, sometimes skipping over years in between. On the other hand, Greek tragedies like Oedipus Rex and some modern plays such as Eugene O'Neil's Long Day's Journey into Night, follow what are called the three unities: of time-the action usually takes place within a 24-hour period; of place- there is only one location,, and of action-there is no break in the action from beginning to end.

The Crucible falls somewhere in between. The time span is about three-and-a-half months; the action occurs in four different places, although it never leaves Salem; and there is a gap of at least a week between each act (between Acts III and IV almost three months elapse). But within each act the action is continuous from curtain to curtain.

One advantage of the continuous-action method is that it allows the author to build tension or suspense gradually. It also can be less confusing for an audience, because we don't have to stop and figure out where we are every few minutes. And, finally, it allows us to get to know the main characters very well, by letting us watch them for a long time at a stretch. This is especially important in The Crucible, where we come to understand what happened in Salem in 1692 through the experience of one man, John Proctor.

The Crucible was written in an historical style, marking a shift in Miller's preferred writing style from the "naturalistic dialogue of the American middle class" in his first three plays, to a formal, New-England-Puritan style. Miller "makes exemplary use of this new style, its biblical echoes, its metaphorical richness, and its ethical basis". The Crucible concerns the dilemma of "making moral choices in the face of community pressure and about the irrational basis of that pressure". The similarity between the Communist and Puritan witch-hunts allows Miller to formulate an explanation for their inception, along with the destructive effect that speculations can have on individuals when brought before an unsympathetic, judgmental and irrational public. The public's trepidation toward the subject matter of The Crucible was due to the play's remarkable similarity to the political pulse at the time, causing critics to give it "polite, lukewarm reviews", and closed after only a few months. Ironically, The Crucible was successful in an off-Broadway production five years later and was given ample praise by the same critics who previously rejected it. This performance ran over six hundred shows, establishing it as Miller's second most popular play.

Miller’s style is very simple. He uses simple sentences and sentence structure with a simple vocabulary. While using the simple style, Miller does not take away from the suspense in he plot. The dialogues of his characters are like actual speech. His words are used effectively and does not include anything not necessary to convey the idea. He makes the plot and idea interesting by foreshadowing future events.

In The Crucible, the characters do not speak in fragments, and some do occasionally string together phrases. Also, they do form their thoughts carefully before speaking. The sentences are simple and the structure does not vary too much.

In the first passage spoken by Reverend Parris, the speech is more formal that speeches spoken by other characters. This displays that Reverend Parris is more educated than the others. It has a somewhat fatherly, yet commanding tone.

The second passage spoken by Abigail is markedly different from the first passage. The sentences are less thought out and more fragmented. She repeats the phrase “I know you” several times. This shows less education but more deep emotion than the first passage. The tone for this line is moving, but when compiled with Abigail's character, becomes deceiving.

The third passage spoken by Elizabeth shows a clearly though out idea. It shows that while Elizabeth may not be as educated as someone like Parris, this is a subject that she has thought about a long time. This gives a tone of something like a bottom line or an ultimatum. While Elizabeth does not give a specific choice to Proctor, it is obvious that he must make a decision on what to do.

Miller does not rely too much on imagery. There are few cases of imagery in this play. One remarkably memorable one is the statement by Abigail about the way John Proctor “sweated like a stallion.” While this statement is also a simile, it provides an unforgettable image in the minds of the audience.

The most memorable case of simile is the line, “I know how you clutched my back behind your house and sweated like a stallion whenever I came near!” This statement compares Proctor with a stallion.

Miller rarely uses metaphors or personification in this work. His people generally referred to as people and items as items. Occasionally he alludes to some portion or person in the Bible, but rarely to anything else. For example, while John Proctor is speaking with Rebecca in prison, she alludes to the martyred apostles. Rebecca says, “Let you fear nothing! Another judgment waits us all.” This is an allusion to idea from the Bible that man is judged by God in heaven.

Miller has few cases of verbal irony. He uses it in act 3 while Elizabeth tell she court that Proctor did not sleep with Abigail she knows that he did.

All parts with the girls lying about witches and ghosts are cases of dramatic irony since, while the audience knows that the girls are lying, most of the characters do not. For example, in court, Abigail and the other girls pretend to be attacked by spirits and the people in court fear them to be in danger. However, the audience knows that they are faking it.

Miller's attitude towards witchcraft is satirical. The tone is serious, cynical, and formal. He achieves this tone by the terrible tragedy of the innocent people executed, and the mental struggles of John Proctor. Miller shows the irony and the unjustness of the witch trials, and thereby the irony and the unjustness of the McCarthy trials.

For Whom the Bell Tolls

ERNEST HEMINGWAY; 1899-1961

Ernest Hemingway was born in 1899 in a wealthy, conservative Chicago suburb. The second of six children, he showed an early talent in writing that he honed through work on his high school's literary magazine and student newspaper. Upon graduating from high school in 1917, Hemingway moved away from home and embarked on a professional writing career, starting as a reporter for the Kansas City Star.

In 1918, during the height of World War I, Hemingway volunteered to serve as an ambulance driver for the Red Cross, which sent him to Italy. Within just a few weeks of his arrival, Hemingway was injured by an exploding shell and was sent to a hospital in Milan. During his recovery, he became romantically involved with a nurse—an episode that he portrayed years later in his novel A Farewell to Arms (1929).

After the war, Hemingway worked as a newspaper correspondent in Paris, where he moved among a circle of expatriate artists and writers, including American writers F. Scott Fitzgerald and Gertrude Stein, Irish writer James Joyce, and Spanish painter Pablo Picasso. Stein, in particular, became Hemingway's mentor. Some critics have suggested that she provided the inspiration for the character Pilar in For Whom the Bell Tolls, who serves as a mother figure for the protagonist, Robert Jordan.

During his time as a correspondent, Hemingway traveled extensively in Spain and developed a strong interest in Spanish culture. He became especially interested in bullfighting, which he viewed as a uniquely Spanish experience that accustomed Spaniards to face death and thus enabled them to live fuller lives. Hemingway's interest in Spain led to literary masterpieces such as The Sun Also Rises (1926), a chronicle of a group of disaffected Americans in postwar France and Spain, and Death in the Afternoon (1932), a nonfiction work about bullfighting.

For Whom the Bell Tolls (1940) takes place during the Spanish Civil War, which ravaged the country throughout the late 1930s. Tensions in Spain began to rise as early as 1931, when a group of left-wing Republicans overthrew the country's monarchy in a bloodless coup. The new Republican government then proposed controversial religious reforms that angered right-wing Fascists, who had the support of the army and the Catholic Church.

After a strong Communist turnout in the 1936 popular elections, the Fascist army commander Generalísimo Francisco Franco initiated a coup in an attempt to overthrow the Republican government. Unexpectedly, the key cities of Madrid and Barcelona remained loyal to the

Republic. This divide marked the beginning of the Spanish Civil War, a conflict between the right-wing Fascists (Nationalists) and the left-wing Republicans (Loyalists), a large number of whom were Communists. Violence exploded all over Spain, and both sides committed atrocities. Many western countries saw the Spanish Civil War as a symbolic struggle between fascism and democracy. Eventually, the superior military machine of the Fascist alliance prevailed, and the war ended in the spring of 1939.

During the Spanish Civil War, Hemingway was involved in the production of two Loyalist propaganda documentary films. Later in the conflict, he served as a war correspondent for the North American Newspaper Alliance. For Whom the Bell Tolls expresses Hemingway's strong feelings about the war, both a critique of the Republicans' leadership and a lament over the Fascists' destruction of the earthy way of life of the Spanish peasantry. The novel is set in the spring of 1937, at a time when the war had come to a standstill, a month after German troops razed the Spanish town of Guernica. At this point, the Republicans still held out some hope for victory and were planning a new offensive. For Whom the Bell Tolls explores themes of wartime individuality, the effects of war on its combatants, and the military bureaucracy's impersonal indifference to human life. Most important, the novel addresses the question of whether an idealistic view of the world justifies violence.

Hemingway's novels are known for portraying a particular type of hero. Critic Philip Young famously termed this figure a "code hero," a man who gracefully struggles against death and obliteration. Robert Jordan, the protagonist of For Whom the Bell Tolls, is a prime example of this kind of hero. The tragedy of the code hero is that he is mortal and knows that he will ultimately lose the struggle. Meanwhile, he lives according to a code—hence the term code hero—that helps him endure a life full of stress and tension with courage and grace. He appreciates the physical pleasures of this world—food, drink, sex, and so on—without obsessing over them.

Hemingway is particularly known for his journalistic prose style, which was revolutionary at the time and has influenced countless writers since. Hemingway's writing is succinct and direct, although his speakers tend to give the impression that they are leaving a tremendous amount unsaid. This bold experimentation with prose earned Hemingway the 1953 Pulitzer Prize and 1954 Nobel Prize for Literature for his most popular work, the novella The Old Man and the Sea (1952).

Although Hemingway wrote several more novels afterward, he was never again able to match the success of The Old Man and the Sea. In the late 1950s, the combination of depression, deteriorating health, and frustration with his writing began to weigh heavily on him. His depression worsened, and in July 1961, he died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound in Ketchum, Idaho. Although Hemingway's long career ended sadly, his novels and short stories remain as popular today as ever before, and he maintains a reputation as one of the most innovative and influential authors of the twentieth century.

For Whom the Bell Tolls : Background of the Novel

For Whom the Bell Tolls, published in 1940, grew out of Hemingway's personal interest in the Spanish Civil War of the thirties. While still a foreign correspondent in Paris, Hemingway had watched the Spanish political situation developing under the reign of Alfonso XIII. He had visited Spain again during the summer of 1931 after the overthrow of the monarchy. He predicted the civil war would begin in 1935, and when it erupted in 1936, Hemingway began writing and making speeches to raise funds for the Loyalist cause. Later, in 1937, he went to Spain to cover the war for the North American Newspaper Alliance. In reality, the Spanish Civil War was the first battleground for World War II, testing the forces of Nazism, Communism, and Fascism against either the republican or royal form of government. Many young men from the United States and other countries joined the Spanish Loyalist forces in defense of democratic ideals in a war that was won by the dictator, Francisco Franco. Since that war has tended to slip into the dimness of the shadow cast by World War II, the following review of historical and biographical background should clarify a number of things pertinent to the novel.

In the spring of 1931, after several years of civil strife and strikes, municipal elections were held in Spain. The parliamentary seats won in this election were divided between the leftists and rightists in such a way that an extremely dangerous situation was created. In view of this, and in the hope of avoiding civil war, King Alfonso XIII decided on voluntary exile. On April 13, 1931, the republic was proclaimed.

The Communist-Socialist coalition which ruled Spain during the first two years of the republic was, like its predecessors, plagued by strikes, and a general election was called for November 1933. In this election, the rightists were returned to power with a large majority.

The Conservatives were, however, only able to keep themselves in power for about the same length of time that the leftists had. By February 1936, when another general election was held, public opinion had swung back to its previous position. The leftists won this election by a small majority — 256 seats to 217 for the Conservatives.

Five months after the leftists regained control of the government, José Calvas Otelo, a powerful Monarchist-rightist, was assassinated. This was credited with precipitating a revolt which was led by the army, but which had obviously been planned for some time. General Francisco Franco was recalled from the Canary Islands, where he had been sent to keep him out of politics. He flew to Spanish Morocco on July 17 and quickly overthrew the government there, continuing on to Spain the next day.

Within a few hours after Franco's arrival in Spain, his forces had taken several of the larger Spanish cities, and garrisons of the army all over Spain were in revolt. Surprising and

stubborn resistance from the government's militia brought this initial surge to a temporary halt, and the capital city of Madrid remained in the hands of the Loyalist-leftists.

Foreign intervention in this revolt which had turned into a civil war was an accomplished fact by August of 1936. Russia was sending "observers" and "volunteers" as well as financial aid donated by its citizens to help in the leftist cause, but they were not industrially capable of giving a great deal of aid in the form of material. In support of the Monarchist-rightists, both Germany and Italy sent planes, tanks, and munitions in addition to the usual "observers" and "volunteers."

The quickly formed Loyalist-leftist forces managed to bring the war to a stalemate during the winter of 1936-37, but this situation was only temporary. By the spring of 1937 (the time during which the incidents of For Whom the Bell Tolls occur), the leftists had, however, gathered enough men and equipment to prevent Franco from overrunning the country. The Monarchist offensive proceeded, but slowly.

International politics played a great part in the civil war during the next two years, giving the advantage first to one side and then to the other. Throughout this period, both sides committed sickening atrocities. The Loyalists were charged with the murders of hundreds of members of the clergy as well as the assassination of their political enemies, and the systematic bombing and strafing of nonmilitary objectives by the Monarchists was a portent of things to come in World War II.

By January of 1939, an almost completely effective blockade was preventing Loyalist troops from receiving further munitions and supplies. Resistance in towns and cities which had managed so far to hold out against Franco's troops began to collapse. Finally, on March 28, 1939, the well supplied Monarchist forces overcame the resistance of the besieged city of Madrid. The long and bitter civil war was over.

After World War I, Hemingway returned to the United States, but by 1921 he was married and back in Europe as a foreign correspondent. He traveled extensively in Spain and was vitally interested in the political developments during the reign of Alfonso XIII, from 1923 until 1931. In 1928 he moved to Key West, Florida, and so was not present for the overthrow of the monarchy in 1931. He returned to Spain for a visit that summer, however, and learned what had happened from his friends there.

When the Conservatives were returned to power in 1933, Hemingway was traveling in Africa. He was not surprised by the failure of the liberal government for two reasons. First, he felt that "the mass of the people were not ready for it and did not want it." Second, though Spain had become more prosperous under the liberals, and though he agreed at least in principle with the civil reforms instituted by them, he realized that the peasants were receiving very

little benefit from the government. The money was going where it had always gone — into the pockets of those in power.

Between 1933 and 1936, Hemingway carefully watched the political developments in Spain. When the civil war finally began in 1936, the only surprising thing to him was that it had come so soon, for as early as the summer of 1935, he had predicted that war would come before the end of the decade.

In 1936 and 1937, Hemingway wrote and made speeches for the purpose of raising money for the Loyalist cause in the Spanish Civil War. Later in 1937, he went to Spain to cover the war for the North American Newspaper Alliance. His announcement, some months after he arrived in Spain, that he was writing a novel with the Spanish Civil War as its background, caused a great stir of excitement and anticipation in the literary world. The result was For Whom the Bell Tolls.

For Whom the Bell : Plot Overview

The Situation: - Robert Jordan, an American volunteer in the Spanish Civil War, is given the assignment of blowing up an important bridge in the Guadarrama mountains. The significance of the bridge is that it is situated on the road which is the only supply line for the Fascists. The bridge is to be blown up when the attack on the pass by the Republican forces starts so that the Fascists cannot bring in either supplies or reinforcements. Anselmo, a guerrilla, leads Jordan across the Fascist lines to the hide-out of Pablo.

Pablo's Resistance to the Plan: - Pablo immediately recognizes the danger implicit in the plan because not only is it risky but he will have to move out of these hills after the bridge has been blown up. He is sick of being hunted.

The Guerrillas' Bands: - This band consists of Pablo, the leader and his gypsy wife, Pilar. Besides these two there is a young girl, Maria, who falls in love with Robert Jordan. Rafael, the gypsy, is useless as a guerrilla. Agustin, a youngman, and three other men constitute the entire band. Another band headed by El Sardo is also there in the vicinity. Pilar is for blowing up the bridge if it can help the cause.

Jordan Inspects the Bridge: - Anselmo guides Jordan to a point from which he can watch the bridge unobserved. Jordan sketches the bridge to calculate how much dynamite is needed to blow it up, and where to place the sticks. The bridge is guarded by sentries on either bank of the stream, and there are two pickets for sentries. In order to destroy the bridge, the pickets will have to be destroyed too.

Pablo Escapes Being Shot Dead: - Jordan is informed that Pablo is capable of treachery. He also learns that the band is divided on the question whether the bridge is to be blown up

or not. Pablo is against it, and the rest are for it. Pilar is the new leader and supports Jordan's plan. In the heated argument that follows, Jordan at one time is tempted to kill Pablo but being uncertain of his own position desists. Jordan consults Pilar who approves of his decision of not killing Pablo.

Maria Comes to Jordan's Sleeping Bag: - Maria, who was the daughter of a village Mayor and was a victim of Fascist atrocities, comes to Jordan's sleeping bag at night. She has been sent there by, Pilar. They make love that very night. For Maria, Jordan is the first man whom she has loved. Jordan regards the whole affair as a windfall because h cannot think loving a woman on a permanent basis, especially whets he is carrying out a dangerous assignment.

Fascists Know of the Attack: - Next morning many Fascist planes are sighted which strike terror in the hearts of these guerrillas, even though there is no bombardment in the area. Anselmo and Rafael are assigned by Jordan the tasks of watching the road and the pickets respectively. Fernando, who has returned from Segovia informs Jordan fan that there are rumours circulating in Segovia that some bridges will be blown up in this area as a prelude to a Republican attack on these

Pilar Reveals Pablo's Past: - Leaving the explosives in Agustin's charge, Pilar, Maria and. Jordan set out for El Sardo's camp. On the way, Pilar narrates how Pablo had destroyed all the Fascists in his home town at start of the revolution. It was a cruel operation, but the worst came when the Fascists retook the town.

El Sardo Meets Jordan: - El Sardo confirms Fernando's information. He also realizes how difficult the assignment is but he agrees to help El Sardo's part will be to destroy one picket while Jordan plants explosives. He also decides to steal sore horses for the retreat to the Gredos.

Jordan and Maria Make Love Again: - On their way back, Pilar goes ahead leaving Jordan and Maria together so that they may make love. Pilar intuitively knows that the lovers do not have much time at their disposal. After making love, Jordan's head is very clear and he wonders whether he could marry Maria. It is against the Communist discipline that he has accepted for the period of the war. He wonders whether it were possible to lead a life of seventy years in seventy hours.

Snow Spoils Jordan's Plan: - An unexpected snowstorm overtakes Jordan, Maria and Pilar before they search the camp. In the cave, Pablo describes to Jordan how he came to have Pilar, who was formerly a bull-fighter's woman. Pablo worked for a horse contractor in Zaragoza where he met Pilar. Pablo teases Jordan that his plan cannot work now that it is snowing outside.

Anselmo and Rafael Report: –There has been much movement on the road that day because the Fascists are carrying their reinforcements to the site of the attack. Jordan also learns how often and when the guards change.

Pablo Escapes Death Again: – Pablo is drinking heavily. He teases Jordan for being a false _professor, for making love to Maria, and for his foolish plan. Jordan cannot fire his pistol inside the cave because of the presence of dynamite there. Agustin picks up a quarrel with Pablo so that he may kill Pablo but the latter backs out of the quarrel. Pablo is convinced that Jordan is a bird of ill omen. He leaves the cave to have a look at the horses but he stands near the mouth of the cave to hear how his fate is being decided. It is decided that Pablo .should be liquidated but Pablo on his return declares that he is with the group and thus survives.

Jordan Reflects on His Past and Future: – Jordan is aware of the possibility of his death; so he instructs Anselmo how to blow up the bridge if the former dies. Maria's love makes him wish to live with her for a long time. He recalls how Karkov, the Russian journalist, had been instructing him in the Marxist ideology which does not go well with his love for Maria. However, he is determined to blow up the bridge at all costs.

Jordan-Maria Affair: – Maria comes to Jordan's bag for the second night also. Jordan promises to marry Maria after this assignment, even though Maria considers marriage of no consequence ; for her Jordan's love is enough.

Jordan Shoots a Fascist Cavalryman: – Jordan while lying in the bag hears the sound of the arrival. of a horse. He sees a Fascist soldier on horseback, whom he shoots at once. Pablo takes away the horse to hide. Jordan predicts that there will be more cavalry to deal with, so he prepares to meet this threat.

Preparations For Escape: – Jordan camouflages a machinegun so that if the cavalrymen penetrate the camp they may shoot at them. Horses are kept in readiness for escape, while their luggage is being packed. Jordan wants to avoid a confrontation that day because a battle will destroy his plan to blow, up the bridge. If the worst came to worst he would take Anselmo with him and escape, and blow up the bridge after. Rafael, who is on duty, had been negligent in his watch to let the first cavalryman come in.

More Cavalrymen Appear: – First, a batch of four cavalrymen comes following the trail left by their companion. They come very close to the blind but do not see these guerrillas. They follow the trail and go out of this area. Twenty more cavalrymen appear. They also leave the area without creating any problem. Jordan's restraint saves the guerrillas' lives.

El Sardo's Fight: – The Fascist cavalry following the trail reach El Sardo's camp where a battle ensues. El Sardo pushes back the attack, reaches the flat top of a hill in a wounded condition, digs in, and prepares for his end. In the afternoon Fascist planes come and

bombard El Sardo's hill and return to Segovia. Agustin and others who want to go to El Sardo's help 'are restrained by Jordan in whose judgment it would be no more than a Quixotic gesture. In the evening Pablo and Anselmo bring back reports of El Sardo's end. El Sardo's end increases the element of risk in Jordan's plan.

Andres Marty Leaves For Golz's Headquarters: - Jordan realizes the futility of Golz's attack because he knows that the Fascists will not be taken by surprise. All preparations for meeting the attack have been completed. Jordan decides to send Andres Marty to Golz advising him to cancel the attack. Andres Marty leaves for Navacerrada with the dispatch.

Jordan's Psychological Problems: - Jordan wants to survive now so that he may live with Maria but it has nothing to do with his fear of death. His father who had committed suicide makes Jordan ashamed of himself. Jordan prefers his kinship with his grandfather who had fought in the American Civil War as a Republican and acquitted himself well. Jordan is under some psychological compulsion to prove that he is not a coward, and that he will face death boldly. Despite his despatch to Golz, Jordan knows that he will have to destroy the bridge.

Maria Narrates Her Past: - On the third night Maria informs Jordan that they cannot make love because there is "soreness and much pain". Jordan is disappointed butt consoles himself. Maria describes how she was raped by many Fascists, and how she was rescued by Pilar. Jordan assures her that he loves her as he loves Spain, and all the comrades who have died in defending this country. Jordan's resolve to destroy the bridge, is strengthened by his knowledge of Maria's suffering.

Pablo Betrays Jordan: - At about 2 o'clock in the morning Pilar comes to Jordan to inform him that Pablo has disappeared taking with him something from Jordan's, rucksacks. They are an exploder, detonators, fuse and caps. Pablo has also taken with him two of the best horses. Pilar feels guilty of having been negligent in her duty of guarding Jordan's equipment. As the loss is irreparable Jordan decides to get some sleep. He brings the rucksacks out of the cave so that he may guard them himself. The danger to his life now has increased many times.

Maria Makes a Soothing Gesture: - Towards dawn while Jordan lay fuming and fretting Maria asks him to make, love to her. On this occasion he has a sort of mystic experience in love Maria becomes for him not only his wife but his sister and his' daughter as well. His head being clear now, he makes a new plan to destroy the bridge.

Andres Marty's Futile Journey: - Andres Marty, in the meanwhile, slowly moves towards his destination. The arrangements for the attack are complete. When the message finally reaches General Golz, the Republican planes are taking off to go and bombard the pass.

Jordan Improvises: - In the morning, with the luggage packed, Jordan gives last minute instructions to the remaining guerrillas who know that they may not live to see another day.

He is going to use hand grenades instead of detonators and the fuse. The exploding will be done by pulling the pins of hand grenades mechanically. The bridge will be destroyed but so will be the band that has agreed to help Jordan. Pilar is to lead the attack on the lower Agustin is to man the machine gun, and fire upon every approach object while Jordan plants the dynamite sticks.

Pablo Returns: - As the details are being finalized Pablo returns with five more guerrillas who are brave but stupid. He undertakes to attack the upper post. He has destroyed the stolen equipment ; so Jordan's new plan stands. After breakfast, they move to their respective duties.

The Attack: - Anselmo and Jordan have to shoot the sentries on duty. As the morning light filters through the leaves Jordan hears a thud, the signal that the Republican attack has started. Jordan and Anselmo shoot the two sentries. Pilar and Pablo attack their respective posts. Jordan, with assistance from Anselmo, plants the dynamite sticks. Pablo has to deal with not only the post but also some vehicles and a tank. Finally, the bridge is blown up. Anselmo dies on the spot. Pilar loses two men. Pablo shoots the five guerrillas who have helped hi in over-running the post. The band assembles near the horses and prepares to leave.

Jordan is Hurt: - Maria is happy to receive Jordan in her arms. Agustin accuses Pablo of murder but Jordan keeps his mouth shut. They move down a slope to cross the road at a point about 200 yards from the bridge. They cross the road successfully except Jordan whose horse is hit by a bullet as a result of which it falls. Jordan's left thigh-bone breaks and he cannot resume the journey. After a hurried leave-taking, the guerrillas escape towards the Gredos, leaving Jordan behind to deal with the Fascist cavalry that is bound to chase them. Jordan awaits his end lying on the pine-needles. He is tempted to shoot himself but he decides against it. Lieutenant Berrendo who fought against El Sardo is moving towards Jordan, who aims his rifle at him. It is obvious both will die at the end.

Critical Analysis of For Whom the Bell Tolls

A New Developments Hemingway: - Hemingway' had signed "a separate peace" in A Farewell to Arms and his writings in the Thirties are a sort of narcotic which kept him from thinking about society and a writer's social obligation. The period was devoted to writing a treatise on bull-fighting, a safari in Africa from which resulted Green Hills of Africa, and some admirable short stories like "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" and "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber". But the Thirties were a time of self-analysis for all thinking men in America ; and Hemingway broke fresh ground in To Have and Have Not, whose hero, Harry Morgan, in his dying moments gives the new message for his age : "A man alone ain't got no bloody chance."

Separate Peace Ends: - It is a far cry from what Henry, the protagonist in A Farewell to Arms, had thought about man's role in society. According to Henry : "I' was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious, and, sacrifice and the expression in vain……and now for a long time ...I had seen nothing sacred, and the things that were glorious had no glory and the sacrifices were like the stockyards at Chicago if nothing was done with the meat except to bury it. There were many words that you could not stand to hear and finally only the names of placers had dignity ... Abstract words such as glory, honour, courage, or hallow were obscene beside the concrete names of villages, the numbers of roads, the names of rivers, the numbers of regiments and the darts" Henry liked a boy named Gino but his patriotism separated him from Henry who was completely disillusioned with slogans, and The causes that they stood for.

A Commitment to Mankind: - In the play, The Fifth Column, the hero who like Jordan is fighting for the Loyalist cause in Spain declares that he has left love behind, for his love of mankind and his love for his beloved cannot go together. And where I go now I go alone, or with others who go there for the same reason I go." He also shares Jordan's ambivalence: "I don't know where it (his destination) is." What is of paramount importance is his devotion to the cause, he has chosen to espouse. Jordan likewise is fighting for a cause: "Liberty and dignity and the rights of all men to work and not be hungry." Jordan has been very pure in his ambitions because he had no thought of anything except the movement and the winning of this war.

Mixed Motives for Participation: - The depression in America and the Spanish Civil War woke his social conscience-and in his capacity as a human being he helped the Loyalists in Spain as far as he could. For Whom the Bell Tolls is a product of a tumult of experience and emotions; the overthrow of the author's non-political attitude in the face of a pressing need for action, the hate of. Fascism and sympathy for the Loyalist Republic, a romantic love of old Spain, and the enthusiasm and anxiety for the future of the world which flung many artists into the international brigades as if to fight a decisive crusade for human liberty.

A Deep Commitment: - All these themes are present in the novel. The compact structure of the novel, the heightened eloquence of the language, the poignant heart-searching in the novel, the desperate search for new moorings, the seriousness of the intent of the novelist are ample proof of the author's intense involvement in the movement. He has deeply felt what he has written' in this book, for it embodies a brusque tenderness and compassion of the author for the suffering Spanish masses who became involved in this human crisis.

An Individual Commitment: - As mentioned earlier Hemingway had broken loose of the aestheticism of the Thirties and entered a new phase of development as a novelist. Jordan is a lost young man who has staked his life for the sake of a people he has come to love. He is doomed to die according to the logic of Hemingway's vision of the world but this time there

is a major difference. "The only difference", according to Nemi D' Agostino, "is that now the individual failure is overtly seen as part of a collective failure, a common drama in which the new ideals and hopes one by one prove fruitless, and in the end only this which remains is the unbroken chain of pessimism and despair." Jordan lying on the floor of the pine forest and waiting for the Fascist cavalry reflects: "And if you wait and hold them up even a little while or just get the officer that may make all the difference. One thing well done can make."

Is this all that one pins one's hopes on? Why is he so dependent on the approval of his grandfather or Karkov for his actions? It is a fatalistic universe, centering round the drama of the individual. It is an elegy sung in praise of the "lonely rebel".

Contradictions in Jordan's Ideology: - Jordan came to Spain to learn the Spanish language better so that he could teach it more effectively. Here he becomes involved in the Civil War because he feels for this country a strong liking and sentiment. He develops an illusion that there is a cause to fight for. He acknowledges that he has learnt much in this war and he would perhaps write a book about it but the truth of the matter is that he has not learnt much in this war. He still believes in Equality, Liberty and Fraternity and man's right to pursue happiness but he has accepted Communist discipline for the duration of this war. He is ignorant of the inherent contradiction in these two positions that he has taken. 'He has experienced love, a fact which challenges the red assertion that in a purely materialistic conception of society there is no such thing, as Love. He is overwhelmed by the dilemma of his position and consequently he has decided to put his thinking and power of judgement in abeyance. Actually each new faith frightens and unsettles the writer, and Jordan-Hemingway is the old tormented individualist divided between his need for the community and the scorn and fear it excites in him. And the novel is not so much imbued with history as impregnated by the confused attitude of that no-man's party to which Hemingway belongs.

Only Death Triumphs: - The book in spite of the heroic stand and the fight of its hero is an elegy on a dying man. It celebrates a triumph of death, dissolution and destruction of all that is good in man. Death hovers over this book from the very opening scene in which Jordan is seen lying on the floor of the pine forest. If the reader is in any doubt Pilar's prophecy seals Jordan's fate. The guerrillas are disillusioned despite the bravado shown by some of them. Pablo is a mockery of his former self, and Pilar affirms it. El Sardo, a heroic figure, is, destroyed by the Fascists' planes and he embodies the utter helplessness of man in a mechanised war. Even Anselmo who is reluctant to kill Fascists meets a fate no different from that of Eladio, or Fernando, or El Sardo. The theme of dissolution is interwoven, in fact in the very texture of the book.

A New Prose-Style Evolved: - This gloom connected with the theme of dissolution is relieved by "the breath of poetry". Hemingway in this novel broke away from his earlier bleak and bare prose which critics had admired and amateur writers tried to imitate, but seldom successfully. He attempted a freer and broader rhythm which has immense

potentiality and power. It touches at times moments of true intensity and genuine dramatic power. Pilar's account of Pablo's exploits at the commencement of the movement, Maria's account of the death of her parents and Fascists' atrocities, El Sardo's last stand on the hill-top, and Andres Marty's journey from the first Loyalist out-post to the head-quarters of General Golz are classic examples to show Hemingway's power as a story teller. The last scene in which Jordan awaits the arrival of the Fascist troops lingers long in the memory of readers for here Jordan becomes a solitary figure who symbolises all human loneliness in the hour of death which is unrelieved by hope.

A New Range of Characters: - More than the new prose rhythms the novel is valued for its range of human characters that Hemingway has created. Maria and Jordan are almost types in Hemingway's fiction but Pilar—a larger than life and mysterious character, and Anselmo—a true Christian, something very unusual in Catholic countries, and Pablo—a sort off debased Ajax, and El Sardo—an inveterate fighter, and many others reveal a new development in Hemingway's art. According to Nemi D' Agostino : "He has tried to create varied and trenchant characters, succeeding in setting besides the somewhat inadequate protagonist and the conventionally picturesque portraits of Pilar and Maria such fierce and poetic figures as El Sardo, Joaquin and Anselmo."

Some Flaws: -The novel is one of Hemingway's most ambitious works and to this fact one can trace some of its strength and weakness. Its language was intended to be in part the intimate expression of the intellectual protagonist, and in part to shape itself around the simple heroes of the guerrilla, and to throw a new light on the epic events. It is dim and turgid in the long meditations of the hero ; and in the passages of dialogue, where Hemingway tried to create a platonic language composed of the Spanish idiom, the Bible, and the Elizabethans, it is overloaded with dialectical quotations (which is a critical transfer and not an artisitic solution), weighed down with over much local colour, and often forced into melodramatic effects.

Elements of Melodrama: - The elements of melodrama are also present in the plot as well and they have weakened the tension of the plot. Pilar's long description of the smell of death is a case in point. It may be very interesting in itself but it does not contribute to the development of the story nor does it throw any fresh light on any character. Similarly, Jordan's love-making, and Pilar's inquiry whether the earth moved, weaken the plot to a great extent. In the long meditations of Jordan, similarly, critics have found flaw for, though they throw light on the hero's motivation, these is a repetitive quality about them. "There are a good many passages", according to Philip Young, "in which Jordan appears to be struggling for the faith on which he acts than to have achieved it." Young also points out that the love story is highly idealized and very romantic, if not sentimental.

In the final analysis the novel demonstrates that Hemingway's talent was once again intact and formidable, despite the flaws pointed out above. It remains one of his masterpieces.

Whatever the ideologically committed critics may say, the reader if he is unbiased, feels a sense of life, which is an achievement by any standard.

Main Themes in For Whom the Bell Tolls

Hemingway is one of the major novelists who touched the apex of literary skies in American literature. He has written many great novels and his contribution has got international acclaim and fame. He is contribution to literature earned him prize. He attracted the attention of readers and critics because of his themes and style of telling a story. He is so unique in these two areas that he heroes and writing style have come to be known as Hemingway heroes and Hemingway style. Hemingway's themes are unique and different from many other American writers. It is true that he carried the influence of many American and English writers

Hemingway's choice of a John Donne poem as the source of the novel's title and epigraph emphasizes a major theme of For Whom the Bell Tolls: "No man is an island," that is, no person can exist separate from the lives of others, even others living in far-away countries. The theme is demonstrated by the actions of Robert Jordan. Throughout his participation in the Spanish Civil War, he has fought actively for a cause of antifascism. As the novel progresses, his involvement with the guerrillas and his love for Maria, teach him the value of the individual as he or she affects a larger society.

He doesn't believes in the abstract ideology which doesn't represent people. For Jordan, Maria represents human love, the first he has ever known. It is for her that he stays behind to allow the rest of the band to escape, demonstrating his realization that others depend on him as he has depended on them. His decision not to commit suicide at the end of the novel represents his ultimate understanding that he must fight for the people whose lives are affected by the cause. Apart from the relationship of individual and society, death is another theme: "his heart beating against the pine needle floor of the forest."

The main topic of the novel is death and violence as effected by war. When Robert Jordan is given the mission to blow up the bridge, he knows that he will not survive it. Pablo also knows that it will lead to their deaths. El Sordo faces that inevitability also. Almost all of the main characters in the book contemplate their own deaths, and it is their reaction to the prospect of death, and what meaning they attach to death, especially in relation to the cause of the Republic, that defines them. Violence haunts the novel, death of Maria's parents, Joaquin's tragedy and above all, Robert Jordan awaits his death feeling his heat beating on the floor of Spanish land at the end. The war has affected the lives of people physically as in Maria who loses her physical innocence when she is raped by Fascist soldiers and also psychologically as the changed behaviours of characters like Anselmo who has to suppress his aversion to killing human beings, and Lieutenant Berrendo to quell his aversion to cutting heads off of corpses. War even costs the innocence of people who aren't involved in it directly as War journalists, writers, and we as readers who abandon innocent expectation. In

war, Hemingway shows that morality is subjective and conditional, and that the sides of right and wrong are almost never clear-cut. All these conditions are resulted by fascism which Jordon calls 'a lie told by rods'. Later, he talks of the threat of fascism in his country: "…many who do not know they are fascists but will find it out when the time comes"

Thus, salvation lies in romantic love which is another main them of the novel. Even though many of the characters in For Whom the Bell Tolls take a cynical view of human nature and feel fatigued by the war, the novel still holds out hope for romantic love. Even the worldly-wise Pilar, in her memories of Finito, reveals traces of a romantic outlook on the world. Robert Jordan and Maria fall in love at first sight, and their love is grand and idealistic. Love endows Robert Jordan's life with new meaning and gives him new reasons to fight in the wake of the disillusionment he feels for the Republican cause. He believes in love despite the fact that other people like Karkov entertain "purely materialistic" outlook. Romantic love is one of the most important ways in which Robert Jordan rejects abstract theories in favor of intuition and action over the course of the novel. Loving her transports him from his intellectual world of ideology to the world of real-life relationships. Maria represents the love that humanizes Jordan, making possible his transition from a political partisan to one who recognizes the worth of the individual. For Maria, Jordan's love is the healing touch she needs to cure the psychic wounds and a moving spirit for Jordon as he declares: "I have not found one [woman] that moved me as they say they should move you."

The most important theme which is the integral part of Hemingway's novel is heroism, especially code-heroism. To be a hero, Hemingway believes that a man must display grace under pressure. Most of his characters put themselves into dangerous situations and then act with remarkable bravery in the face of danger. Robert Jordan is no exception. During the novel, Robert Jordan becomes the true Hemingway Code Hero, displaying a penchant for action and grace under pressure. Even though he realizes the dangerous nature of his mission and questions the orders of General Golz to carry it out in daylight after the offensive has commenced, he never doubts his own ability to accomplish the task. Even after Pablo steals and destroys some of his key equipment, he does not run from the danger. Jordan more clearly displays grace under pressure after he has been injured by fascist gunfire. Paralyzed and unable to easily escape with the others, he insists upon being left behind with a gun. When Maria begs to stay with him, he convinces her to leave by telling her his mission will have been worthwhile if her life is saved. Thus unable to travel to safety, he faces death with bravery, firing his gun at the enemy to give the others time to get away. He exemplifies the Hemingway code because the code heroes also fight to the last bit as he stated: "there is something you can do yet"

Finally, there are other themes in Hemingway's 'For Whom the Bell Tolls' ranging from the power of superstition and divination as in Pilar, suicide as in Jordon's father, the Spanish War and its tragedy and hypocrisy and theme of solidarity as in Robert Jordon. Jordan laid down his life for a cause but the irony of the situation is that he couldn't make a total commitment

to his "cause" for the Fascists to be killed are, also human beings. "No man is an island". Thus the novel takes a pure ironical stand in the situation of Spanish War.

The Structure of For Whom the Bell Tolls

Complex Structure: - For Whom the Bell Tolls is one of the most complex novels written by Hemingway for it is more than the story of love of Robert Jordan and Maria ; or even the story of the Spanish Civil War in which the protagonist loses his life for a cause. It extends beyond the country in which the central event takes place, as it transcends the allotted seventy hours which according to Robert Jordan can be as significant as a life of seventy years.

The Bridge Central to the Plot: - In the centre of the action is the bridge that Jordan has come to destroy. The bridge is situated on the road from Segovia to the pass that General Golz is going to attack. That it is a vital bridge is made clear to the reader as soon as the novel begins. "That is the only road on which they (the Fascists) can bring up reinforcements. That is the only road on which they can get tanks, artillery, or even move a truck toward the pass which I attack. I must know that bridge is gone. Not before, so it can be repaired if the attack is postponed. No. It must go when the attack starts and I must know it is gone." General Golz has chosen the most reliable person who can perform this difficult operation. Even before Jordan has left the General in Madrid he has assured him that he "will do it all right".

The Spanish Society Represented: - The bridge is situated in the Guadarrama mountains and in. these hills are scattered the hide-outs of guerrillas who are supporting the Republic. El Sardo and Pablo are the two leaders of guerrillas on whose help Jordan has to depend. These hills are a microcosm of all Spain for in Pablo's and El Sardo's caves we have representatives of all sections of the Spanish society.

Pilar, the gypsy woman, is a mother who looks after the band like the mother-earth itself ; Pablo is the evil father, for Jordan at least ; Anselmo, the old man, is a true Christian whose principles do not permit him to kill men but he is compelled to shed human Jordan's out of necessity ; Joaquin, the nineteen-year brother who has suffered at the hands of the Fascists as Maria has done ; El Sardo is the brave guerrilla, who defies death and exemplifies for Jordan the code that laughs at death for it cannot conquer man if he is strong enough in his belief ; and then there is Maria who is Jordan's wife ; and then she becomes for him the sister as well as his daughter. Similarly, Agustin, Fernando and the two brothers, Andres Marty and Eladio, are part of the community to which Jordan goes for help to complete his mission.

Pablo's Role: -The skirmish between the Fascists cavalry and El Sardo's band highlights the dangers that the partisans face every day of their life in these mountains. Pablo had realized

immediately what Jordan's mission meant to his band—it spelt danger, destruction and death. He was not at all willing to help him and he tried his best to dissuade Jordan from carrying out this suicidal plan. He tried to create a split in the band but it failed. Then he was relieved because he knew that if the snow-storm continued Jordan would not be able to carry out his mission. However, the snow melted away continued to harp on the old theme. The next day when El Sardo and his band were wiped out by the Fascists he felt confident that Jordan would give up his plan. Even this disaster did not prevent Jordan from thinking that he still had a chance to demolish the bridge. In despair Pablo stole his detonators, fuse and the exploder because now it would be well nigh impossible to destroy the bridge and thus Pablo would be safe in his "fox-hole". However when he returned at three in the morning and found that Jordan was sticking to his plan he changed his mind and decided to help him. He was the only one who could lead his band to the Gredos and he could not escape his self-imposed responsibility. The civil war is made very real to us this way. All the loyalty and treachery in the Republican ranks is present here in this small group.

The Whole World is Involved: - While keeping the bridge at the centre of our interest Hemingway extends our awareness beyond the Guadarrama mountains. First, there are the Russian commanders who are guiding the operations from Madrid. They have trained some Spanish farmers in their military academies who have now taken over the management of the war from the spontaneous leaders of the Spanish people. The Russians are not the only foreigners in Spain. The observation planes that scan the Guadarrama mountains are of German and Italian makes. The Heinkel bombers and Fiat pursuit planes make it clear beyond doubt that there are other interests involved in Spain. The International Brigades are testimony enough to prove that the Spanish Civil War was not a local issue because for one reason or another many countries were involved in this human crisis. Hemingway has rightly called this war a dress rehearsal for the Second World War. Jordan's presence in Spain proves that the ripples of this war have travelled beyond the Atlantic as well.

Flashbacks Enrich the Plot: - Through the device of flash-backs, Hemingway has enveloped the whole of Spain in this narrative. We get from Pilar an account of what happened in the town where she lived with Pablo before the start of the movement. The ruthless manner in which Pablo had massacred the local Fascists throws light on the Spanish character. So does Maria's story of her misfortune. Her father had been murdered because he was a Republican and her mother was put to death for she supported her husband. The issue does not remain political because Maria's rape is a human issue. She becomes blood-thirsty for revenge because she has suffered for no fault of her own ; it is enough that she is the daughter of a Republican. She becomes the bride of the "Red Christ". Joaquin's story of his suffering adds up to the same conclusion. No wonder Jordan thinks that the entire future of mankind may eventually depend upon this bridge and he is conscious of his responsibility in this enterprise.

Flashbacks Extend the Scope in Time: - These flashbacks also in a way extend the time of the action of the story from seventy hours to not only the proverbial seventy years but

also the entire history of mankind. There are frequent references to Jordan's grandfather who fought in the American Civil War. He believes that his "juice" came from the old man rather than his father who, he believes, was a coward. Again, we are told that Jordan did not want to be another Horatius on the Bridge because he wad in love with Maria and he would love to live with her a long time. Hemingway's glorification of "now" is meant to make us aware of what he called the fourth and the fifth dimensions in prose. The mystical dimension of his love for Maria links him with all the lovers who might have experienced or will experience love in such intensity in any part of the world. This type of love is beyond time and is in fact timeless. This he believes in despite his cynicism which tells him "there isn't supposed to be any such thing as love in a purely materialistic conception of society." The idea is that the Spanish Civil War, for the author of For Whom the Bell Tolls and the protagonist in the book, is a landmark in human history—it is a pivotal point for history. The attack to be launched by General Golz is the first by the Republicans and- since they have been at the receiving end for a long time Jordan does not want to make a mess of it for if this attack is a flop the Republican morale will go down and whatever is valuable in Spain will be lost for ever. The consequences of the success or the failure of Jordan's mission are going to travel far and thus the history of the human race may turn on the fate of this bridge. It is to this end that Hemingway has quoted approvingly from John Donne on the cover page of the novel :

> No man is an Iland, intire of itselfe; every man
> is a peece of the Continent, a part of the maine;
> if a Clod bee washed away by the Sea, Europe
> is the lesse, as well as if a Promontorie were, as
> well as if a Manor of thy friends or of thine
> owne were; any mans death diminishes me,
> because I am involved in Mankinde;
> And therefore never send to know for whom
> the bell tolls; It tolls for thee

Epic in Character: - Carlos Baker maintains that the structure of the book is epic-an epic of modern times. In the opinion of this critic the novel reaches epic proportions for the seriousness of its conception and execution. The language of the various speakers has a quaint touch about it ; almost Elizabethan in its ring. It is an intentionally heightened language which is quite appropriate to the function to which it has been put. The implications of what is written are much more than what meets the eye. In the visible part the past and the present meet and look forward to the future. The past is present in the present and the future can be seen in the present. For Whom the Bell Tolls is a tragic epic, not unlike the Iliad and "Madrid, like Troy, was fated to fall." Elaborating his point Baker adds.

Despite the obvious gap between Spain and Ilium, the student of epic may find part of his answer in considering the Homeric parallel. A primitive setting, simple food and wine, the

care and use of weapons, the sense of imminent danger, the emphasis on masculine prowess, the presence of varying degrees of courage and cowardice, the rude barbarism on both sides, the operation of certain religious and magical superstitions, the warrior codes—these, surely, are common ties between the two sets of protagonists. Jordan is not to be scorned as the type of, Achilles, and one can recognize in Pablo the rude outlines of debased and sulking Ajax. Pilar the gypsy, though she reads the life line in Jordan's palm instead of consulting the shape and colour of animals' entrails, makes the consciousness of the supernatural an operative factor.

As if these were not enough to establish the novel as a modern epic Hemingway seems to have added a few more details to complete the picture. The Fascists' planes—what Hemingway has elsewhere called mechanized doom—come in threes. They are compared to sharks that are ruthless in their hunt. Pilar is a half-witch, half-woman who predicts Jordan's death almost infallibly. Her prediction hovers over the book like an evil spirit. Jordan tries to keep it out of his mind but he cannot. Maria confirms it when she comes to Jordan's bag for the last time. Golz's despair is evident in his outburst when Jordan asks for the exact time of the attack. In this picture of Nada–nothingness–Jordan and Anselmo are veritable islands of hope for the Republic.

Irony in For Whom the Bell Tolls

Free From Politics: - When For Whom the Bell Tolls was published reviewers and critics from both the Right and Left accused Hemingway of having gone over to the other side. Critics from the Right thought that Hemingway had become a victim of the "red rash", or "the Marxist measles" ; while those of the Left accused him of distorting facts and being unfair to the Republicans in general and Comrade Andre Massart, in particular.

The Marxist critics were disappointed in this novel for they believed that Hemingway, despite his own contribution to the war effort of the Loyalists, lacked a true understanding of the cause of the Spanish people. What these critics failed to comprehend was that Hemingway was not writing a political novel ; the Spanish Civil War was only the back-drop-of this human tragedy. He wanted to show something true about human life ; and he had come to take a more complex view of humanity at war than he projected in A Farewell to Arms. Similarly, they failed to fully appreciate the significance of the epigraph from John Donne : "And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls : it tolls for thee." Jordan is not a patriot : he suffers from no illusions about the Spanish people. Hemingway was also aware of the limitations that partizan loyalty imposes on an artist and therefore he chose to remain above party politics and presented life as he knew it. It becomes obligatory for an artist to present "a series of situations pregnant with irony", if he is to present life as he sees it.

Jordan Has Fascist Tendencies: - Robert Jordan is trying to be an ideal soldier who is to carry out the orders as he has received them. He has scrupulously avoided asking why he

should carry out those orders given by General Golz, even after he has realized that they are inoperative because of the changed situation. The Fascists have already carried their tanks to the pass that Golz is going to attack and Jordan knows this too well. He still sticks to his original plan of destroying the bridge and consoles himself with the thought that his job is merely to blow up the bridge and not question Golz's strategy it is not for him to cancel the attack. His attempt to communicate to Golz what he has known about the Fascists preparation to meet the attack is almost half-hearted for after sending Andres Marty with the despatch he is sure that he will have to blow up the bridge. He goes to bed with this certainty within hint ; he had to he sure. His inability to change the plan on his own in the light of his superior knowledge betrays Fascist tendencies, even though he is fighting against Fascism. The irony of this predicament is too obvious to be missed. Irony reveals inner turmoil and the author of For Whom the Bell Tolls leaves no doubt in the mind of the reader about Jordan's ambivalence and inner conflict.

Non-Spanish Activists in the Spanish War: - The war is being fought in Spain but the chief protagonist is an American, who happened to be in Spain when the civil war broke out. His love for Spain is due to the fact that he is a student of Spanish and he teaches the language in a small college in America. "……the fact that the principal characters in the novel have to be wheedled and cajoled into a sense of duty by an American reinforces the gathering cynicism of the leader for the Loyalist cause." Nor is the reader allowed to forget that the guerrillas, upon whose help Jordan is so dependent are mostly gypsies of non-Spanish descent.

Anarchy in the Loyalist Rank: - For Whom the Bell Tolls reveals the absence of co-ordination in the Loyalist ranks and there is a state of anarchy in the Loyalist lines, for the despatch that Andres Marty carries from Jordan to Golz is delayed inordinately by the inefficiency of the bureaucracy. Hemingway also exposes the inability of the commanders to enforce discipline. Anarchism in organised combat leads inevitably to defeat. It is to this outfit that Jordan is attached and he hopes for victory. The irony of the situation is enhanced by the fact that the discipline and co-ordination necessary for victory are present among the Fascist officers. The Loyalist cause is doomed for these reasons from the very start.

Atrocities Committed by the Loyalists: - That the protagonist's position is paradoxical is supported by a number of contributory situations. The most outstanding example is Pilar's account of the start of the movement in Pablo's home town. She seems to be confessing to Jordan and is bent upon leaving out nothing. She reveals in Pablo a strain of sadism that mounts with every murder that he instigates the farmers to commit. The most shameful atrocities have been committed by decent peasants who initially had revolted at the thought of killing the very people whom .they had known all their lives. The grisly and nauseating acts that Pilar is at pains to describe, ironically, have been committed by the Loyalist who are fighting for human dignity and a decent life for all men. The Fascists who had been arrested during the night are flailed and led between a double row of men to the edge of a steep cliff below which flowed a river. Pablo's plan is to give them a watery burial. The cowardly

behaviour of the Fascists leads the mob to become violent and finally sadistic. Pablo's hatred of the priests makes him torture the priest until the mob gets him and leis regret is that the priest had not died well. To the main frame of this highly ironic episode minor ironies contribute in no small measure.

Minor Ironies: - The irony that these very people are Jordan's supporters is not lost on the reader. It is for these people than he is prepated to lay down his life. Robert Penn Warren thinks that the irony runs "counter to the ostensible surface direction of the story", but as Halliday points out "this is the nature of irony". The prevailing darkness is occasionally relieved by a glimmer of hope as each one of us must do what we can.

Jordan is Betrayed by a Friend: - The theme of betrayal which is one of the most recurrent themes in Hemingway's fiction is also present in For Whom the Bell Tolls, and it heightens the irony in the novel. Jordan had come to Pablo for help thinking that he was one of the most staunch supporters of the Republic and that he could not blow up that bridge without his help—it lay in his country, Pablo provides him with sufficient provocation as to make it convenient for him to liquidate him. He has also been warned by Agustin that Pablo constitutes a substantial danger to the project. He has also been given the green signal by the group to kill Pablo. In spite of these clear indications Jordan abstains from carrying out what was a necessity. And he has to pay a heavy price for this lapse. In the ordinary course of events it would have been excusable but since this treachery comes from a friend or a supporter the irony is heightened.

The Irony of El Sardo's Death: - Similar is the case with El Sardo's annihilation by the Fascists. He had gone to steal horses for the retreat but the unseasonal snow makes the venture a big hazard and as a consequence Jordan loses a big ally. Jordan does not let any of the guerrillas in Pablo's band go to his rescue and it is highly ironical again that they, despite their keen desire to help a comrade in trouble cannot do so.

An Ironic Comment on the Human Situation: -There are a number of situations in the novel that contribute to the impression that Hemingway intended the book to be an ironic comment on the human situation in Spain. The central event of blowing up the bridge is rendered an exercise in futility for the loose tongues of the Loyalist comrades have betrayed their own cause. The Fascists know in advance the Loyalist plan to attack the pass, and they have taken proper precautions to meet it. Jordan's promise that nothing will go across that bridge is a mockery of the intention with which it was given. It is due to the treachery of a friend that Jordan loses such a venerable old man as Anselmo. Pilar's party which attacked the saw-mill post loses Eladio and Fernando. Even when Jordan has successfully destroyed the bridge he cannot escape to the Gredos on account of a fall from a wounded horse-Jordan of all the people ! Jordan had put his thinking in abeyance during the course of the war in order to win the war first, but now in his hour of death he has to do the final reckoning and he is

not sure that he was right in doing what he did. The doubts about the rightness of his actions had assailed him previously as well :

How many is that you have killed ? I don't know. Do you think you have a right to kill any one ? No. But I have to But……you like the people of Navarra better than those of any other of Spain. Yes. And you kill them. Yes……Don't you know it is wrong to kill ? Yes. But you do it ? Yes. And you still believe that your cause is right? Yes.

Both Parties Pray to the Same God: – Similarly, Anselmo who wants to kill no one is committed to shedding human blood and his sadness is highly touching. The irony is that a man who upholds the Christian ideal of loving thy neighbour is compelled to sacrifice his principles for a cause that is doomed to fail from the very start. Since the start of the movement Anselmo confesses that he had not prayed because he had come to believe that there was no God otherwise He would not have allowed such things to happen which he had seen. But when he sees the dead bodies of the Fascists and the heads of the members of El Sardo's bands he prays to the same God to which Lieutenant Berrendo addresses his prayer for his dead friend Julian, who has died at El Sardo's hands. Captain Mara, completely oblivious of his imminent death, goes on shouting obscenities at the hill-top. What could be more ironic than the fact that the two become fellow voyagers.

Good People on Both Sides: – Hemingway has portrayed Berrendo in very sympathetic colours. He is as committed to his cause as Jordan, or even Anselmo, and believes in the rightness of his cause as firmly as any member of the International Brigades. He is religious as well as kind. He gives orders for beheading the dead guerrillas but cannot see those orders being carried out. "It is he", writes Halliday, "who looms in the sights of Robert Jordan's machine-gun in the last paragraph of the story, lending the finale an ironic depth that protects it from false heroics. For these two young soldiers, preponderant as our sympathy may be for one rather than the other, the same bell tolls." It is tragic irony because both of these youngmen are human beings of whom mankind could be proud but they are fated to die

For Whom the Bell Tolls : War – A Great Cause of Disillusionment

In the late 1930's, Spain was in the midst of a civil war. The country had been in a state of disarray since 1931, when King Alfonso XIII went into voluntary exile. This was followed by a five-year power struggle between the fascists, led by General Francesco Franco, and the Republicans. This struggle became violent in the summer of 1936, and the war lasted until 1939, when Franco's forces triumphed. (Thomas 600)

Ernest Hemingway's 1940 novel For Whom the Bell Tolls tells the story of Robert Jordan and his Republican comrades as they resist the fascists in the fall of 1937. Although a work of

fiction, Hemingway's novel accurately portrays the events of the period, and the characters display many of the attitudes prevalent among Spanish revolutionaries. The two central characters, Robert Jordan and Pablo, begin the war as idealistic fighters, but both become disillusioned as the war progresses.

The Spanish civil war had a violent beginning. Across the country, local peasants revolted against the fascist bourgeoisie, killing 512 people during the first months of the war (Thomas 176). In For Whom the Bell Tolls, Hemingway poignantly and accurately describes the execution of the upper classmen of the Spanish town of Ronda. The peasants of the town, led by a man named Pablo, corralled the town's fascists into the city hall. Pablo had the peasants, armed with flays, form two lines that extended from the door of the hall to a cliff overlooking a nearby river. One by one, Pablo forces the fascists to leave the city hall and walk between the two lines towards the cliff, which the fascists are thrown off; meanwhile, the peasants beat them to death with flails.

Pablo is ruthless in executing the local fascist police in Ronda. As he prepares to shoot one man in the head, Pablo says, "And you are an ugly thing, you murderer of peasants. You who would shoot your own mother" (Hemingway 112). Later that morning, Pablo remains stoically brutal as he prepares to send the fascists out of the city hall to face the angry crowd outside. The fascists are with a priest, and they pray with him before they are sent to their death. Pablo's wife describes how Pablo acts towards these men, and she says,

"I watched Pablo speak to the priest again, leaning forward from the table and I could not hear what he said from the shouting. But the priest did not answer him but went on praying. Then a man stood up from among the half circle of those who were praying, and I saw that he wanted to go out….Pablo shook his head and went on smoking. I could see Don Pepe say something to Pablo but could not hear it. Pablo did not answer; he simply shook his head again and nodded toward the door" (Hemingway 135).

Pablo may be a brutal man, but at this point in the civil war, he is still dedicated to the Republican cause. He is willing to risk much by leading the local rebellion, and he is successful in doing so.

It is interesting to note the way in which Hemingway describes the crowd as they kill the fascists. He compares it to the way people act when they are inebriated. Pablo's wife says,

"But cruelty had entered into the lines and also drunkenness or the beginning of drunkenness and the lines were not as they were when Don Benito had come out…Drunkenness, when produced by other elements than wine, is a thing of great ugliness and the people do things that they would not have done" (Hemingway 127).

In this description, drunkenness is used as a metaphor to describe mob mentality. No person would normally beat a man to death with farming tools unless he were drunk. The people of

the town are sober, but because they have formed a mob, they act as if they are drunk. Pablo utilizes the crowd's inhuman thirst for blood and directs it against the fascists.

Despite his initial courage, within a year, Pablo had lost his revolutionary fervor. One year after the seizure of the town, Pablo and his comrades have retreated to the hills, and he is not willing to take risks. Robert Jordan, one of Pablo's companions and the main character, is sent to destroy a bridge in the hills near Pablo's hideout. However, Pablo does not support Jordan because he is afraid that he will be forced to leave his homeland due to fascist retaliation. He says to his comrades, "And it means nothing to thee to be hunted then like a beast after this thing from which we derive no profit? Nor to die to it?" (Hemingway 58). Pablo is no longer a bold commander of men who is fighting for a cause; he has become a coward who is only looking after himself.

The main character also begins the novel as an enthusiastic brave man who is dedicated to the Republican cause. Unlike most of the characters in the book, Robert Jordan is an expatriate from the United States. He believes in the cause of the Republicans so much that he is willing to leave his country and travel half way around the world to risk his life for it. At the beginning of the novel, Jordan's commander asks him if he will accept a mission to destroy a bride. Jordan replies, "I will do it. I will do it all right" (Hemingway 9).

At the end of the novel, Jordan and his comrades are on horseback trying to escape a fascist attack. During the escape, Jordan falls off of his horse and is fatally wounded. As he dies, he is no longer concerned with the cause of the Republicans. Instead, he thinks of his comrades. Dying, Jordan thinks,

"Think about them being away. Think about them going through the timber. Think about them crossing a creek. Think about them riding through the heather…Think about them O.K. tonight…Think about them. God damn it, think about them" (Hemingway 506).

In his struggle to fight the fascists, Jordan ends up giving up his life. But when the time comes to die, he does not care about the Republican cause. He cares about his friends.

Both Pablo and Jordan begin the war as dedicated Republicans. Pablo leads a successful revolt in his local town, and he goes from being a normal peasant to being the commander of a group of revolutionaries. Yet after a year of fighting, Pablo is no longer concerned with the outcome of the war. He is only concerned with saving himself. Jordan also changes his priorities as the novel unfolds. In the beginning, he is a dedicated anti-fascist. Yet as he dies, he realizes that he cares more about the welfare of his friends than for the Republican cause.

Through the plights of these two characters, Hemingway shows that war is a great cause of disillusionment. Initially, both Pablo and Jordan want to fight for freedom and justice. But as the war progresses, they become more concerned with self-preservation and the safety of

their comrades. For them, war is transformed from an abstract fight against fascism into a personal struggle for themselves and their loved ones.

"In Hemingway there is no morality, only ritual ; and For Whom the Bell Tolls admirably illustrates this." Support, modify or contradict this statement.

Two Schools: – On the question of morality, Hemingway specialists are divided. into two well-defined camps. One school believes that Hemingway's honest and uncompromising standards of thinking and acting contain all that matters about morality in the modern world ; others dismiss his ideas of right and wrong as crude, neurotic, and intellectually stunted. There is little hope of reconciling these views but the fact remains that Hemingway's works reflect a deep concern with the questions of right and wrong. It is also true that he did not spell out very clearly his concepts of moral right and wrong because for him the 'what' got transformed into 'how'. His concern for the observance of ritual overshadowed his morality.

Definition of Morality: – He defined morality in Death in the Afternoon : "I know only that what is moral is what you feel good after and what is immoral is what you feel bad after." His writing is pervaded by an ironic tone associated with moral austerity. Honesty, integrity, honour and truth without having been defined carry strong emotions with them. He, as is well known, shied away from abstractions, while he has lavished enormous care on details of how certain acts are to be performed.

Morality Rooted in Something Outside Oneself: – An accepted assumption about morality is that it is rooted in something outside oneself-say in God, mankind, country or even family. Obligations to these are not arbitrary, and they are of a fundamental nature. True morality does not reside in one single act but is comprehensive enough to cover an individual's entire conduct.

Ritual Defined: – From the point of view of a strict moralist, ritual is artificial, contrived and even whimsical. Ritual is a kind of game and a serious game. It creates its own occasions, its own setting in which to act. But it has its own morality, or rather its own aesthetic. In an important sense, it is an art to be judged in aesthetic terms. It has been rightly called "a disciplined rehearsal of right attitudes." A prescribed series of gestures mechanically symbolize one's feelings about ultimate things. The emphasis in ritual is on the performance of a preconceived drama which has its own meaning. Morality adapts itself to the occasion ; the form of ritual is fixed. The meaning of ritual is in the action itself.

Jordan's Naive Belief: – When Jordan came to Spain with a view to fighting against Fascism he was a naive person. He accepted communism and felt like a religious convert. In his own words

It gave you a part in something that you could believe in wholly and completely and in which you felt an absolute brotherhood with the others who were engaged in it. It was something that you had never known before but that you had experienced now and you gave such importance to it and the reasons for it that your own death seemed of complete unimportance, only a thing to be avoided because it would interfere with the performance of your duty.

Realities of War Destroy That Faith: - Jordan cannot sustain this faith for long. His belief in communism disappears as he becomes familiar with the ugly realities of war. When we meet him in the novel, he has no politics. He accepts communist discipline for the duration of the war because it is the best available. Discipline becomes an arbitrary set of rules for him—a ritual, in fact.

The Need to Suppress Thinking: - Under these circumstances, it is clear why Jordan suppresses all thoughts. He understands the role of the communists in Spain but to take his thinking to its logical conclusion implies that he must give up his activities. He knows who the peasant commanders in reality are, but he continues to work with them. He understands Pablo's intentions wren he brings those five guerrillas with their horses to help Jordan, bat he keeps his mouth shut. He terms his insoluble problems discipline and goes on functioning because lie has a bridge to blow up. It is the grand ritual to which he sacrifices truth and other moral values.

Blowing up the Bridge : A Ritual: - The destruction of the bridge becomes his supreme goal even when he knows that it is futile to destroy it. Fernando learns in Segovia that Fascists know of the Republican attack and El Sardo confirms it. But Jordan persists. El Sardo's death makes the task all the more difficult and yet his determination to blow up the bridge is unshaken. Pablo steals his exploding device and detonators, but Jordan has other alternatives. Since Agincourt, he has found fault with others' battles, therefore he wants to fight his own so that it is fought the right way-ritualistically. And all along his pretext is that he is following Golz's orders.

Death : A Ritual Too: - Finally, when he has to face death, the earlier feeling of the brotherhood of mankind is no longer there. Death is no longer unimportant for he wants to live. Hemingway specifically shows that Jordan's death is to be a waste, that it does not contribute substantially to the cause because the attack of which it is a part is doomed to failure by bad communications. And Jordan is aware of the waste, and that by blowing up the bridge and sacrificing himself no useful purpose will be served. In fact, he is prepared to sacrifice the guerrillas with whom he has established strong ties of loyalty, friendship and love. His courageous encounter with death, when it finally happens, has become almost wholly a ritual action. The emphasis all the time is on correct acting and correct dying. He must attain ritual correctness. "You follow orders. Follow them and do not think beyond

them." His last battle and death are "a festival" for him ; he has become so dispassionate about his own death.

An Aesthetic Experience: - In the last scene Jordan is no different than Romero in the bull-ring who must give a. perfect, demonstration. The odds do not matter ; his performance will be appreciated by a few aficianados. There are no moral questions left, or at least they are so oversimplified that at they do not matter. The beauty of the act lies in its correctness. The audience plays up the aesthetic character of the performance, and also links up with the fact that primitive ritual is almost always public and tribal ; calling for some sense of community. The ritual fails to effect moral good in the last analysis Hemingway does not seem to have distinguished clearly between ritual and morality.

"For Whom The Bell Tolls" as a Modern Tragedy

"For Whom The Bell Tolls" is a modern tragedy, as it depicts the conflict, struggle, tension and frustration of a modern man.

A modern tragedy is quite different from classical standards. According to Aristotle, tragedy is a story of conspicuous man who fall from prosperity to adversity because of his error judgment, i.e., hamartia, his death is not essential, but his fall arises a sense of pity and fear for him, in us. But in a modern world, there are no kings and princes, who could be regarded as "conspicuous", therefore, modern tragedy is the story of a common man who falls from prosperity to adversity, because of his error of judgment, i.e., his hamartia, but his death is not essential, but his fall arises a sense of pity and fear, in us. Secondly, now a modern man is not confronted with the supernatural forces of his surroundings and society. Thus a modern tragedy is different from a classical tragedy.

Hemingway writes in an effort to reduce the harms done by the two world wars. He presents a picture of the post war scenario, when the atomic weapons shattered all the dream of global peace. There was a big generation gap in the society and a sense of lost ness. Hemingway portrays in his novels, a microcosm of that larger universe, and gives a lesson of constant and untiring struggle.

Robert Jordan is a typical Hemingway protagonist. He is an American volunteer. He is very sensitive and intellectual man who wishes for the global peace. He believes that liberty diminished at one place means some liberty lost everywhere. Because of his this belief, he is fighting Spain for republican he is not only fighting the war of the freedom of Spain, he is also fighting a mental and psychological war of self-realization and self-assessment. He has been assigned the duty of blowing a supply line bridge up, of Fascists and through this duty; he wants to judge his mental and physical usefulness for the world.

Hemingway's hero is usually a disillusioned but a reluctant man. He is aware of the futility of action but tries to avoid this awareness by indulging into sensual pleasure. Robert Jordan also tries to avoid his thoughts and seeks refuge in Maria's arms and intoxication. But being an intellectual he cannot escape from his thoughts. He knows that his action of blasting the bridge would not help the Republicans and the Fascists would not be stopped; yet he continuous his work. The reason is the accomplishment of duty, which has been assigned to him, and an inner satisfaction that at least he has done what he could do. He feels that he is fighting for his love of Spain, for his love of Maria and for his love of freedom as he says: "You believe in life, liberty and the pursuit of Happiness"

But this is a kind of self-deception and false justification of his useless act and this proves his flaw, which leads to his tragedy.

However, it is a preoccupation of a Hemingway Hero, which he goes too far in the accomplishment of his duty, regardless of any danger. Hemingway adopts this trait to achieve his moral end, and this gives a new dimension to tragedy. He has moralized the tragedy, "despite Hemingway's preoccupation with physical contests, his heroes are almost always defeated physically, nervously, practically; their victories are moral ones". As we see that Jordan remains stick to his duty. He says: "You can do nothing for yourself but perhaps you can do something for another".

This belief keeps him firm, even when Pablo betrays him and leaves with the blasting material. This is the moment of his moral uplift.

There is a sure fear of his death, but he goes on. Though life is dear to him, but dearer than life is the justification of his courage, which his father lacked. He also hints this in his saying: "May be I have lived all my life in these seventy hours".

Jordan successfully blows up the bridge but, while moving away from the scene, he falls from his horse and breaks his leg. This is the most pathetic and tragic situation, when a man achieves success at one moment and loses everything at the other. The reader feels extreme pity for Jordan at this stage.

The ending moments of the novel are the most convincing and magnificent ones, when Jordan is lying on the ground waiting for fascists to come. So that he may be able to prove his courage and strength by fighting till the end. He repeated utterance: "I wish is not made for defeat".

I create a moving effect. The dramatic ending of the novel gives a message, a lesson and also hope to the reader that: "Man is not made for defeat". Jordan proves that: "A man can be destroyed but not defeated".

Jordan fights till end and sacrifices his life for duty. He dies not only for Spain, not only to save the girl, Maria, whom he loves, but also for his own sake and in fulfilment of a moral duty. So his only reward is the consciousness of duty done. And again: "Winner takes nothing".

But it seems that Hemingway had found something to die for, and he seems to imply that if you die as Anselmo or Jordan died, then physical death means nothing, death has no sting for the dying man rather he dies victoriously and his death is a moral victory.

Thus we can conclude that "For Whom the Bell Toll" is a modern tragedy in which an ordinary hero –an American volunteer falls from prosperity of adversity because of his hamartia, i.e., his extreme sense of duty. He dies a physical death but wins a moral victory. His sufferings arise a sense of pity and fear in us.

Hemingway's Nihilism

The term nihilism implies the negation of any authority and code at the heat of the universe. Hemingway has largely been accused of being nihilism. It is said that his heroes have no code to follow; that they are living on their own, that they are lost in this world thus they are hopeless and chaotic. A critic remarks: "---Again and again, Hemingway was writing of the – the end of life, the end of love, the end of hope, the end of all".

But to condemn his writing, by pronouncing nihilism, is to do injustice to him. Though Hemingway writes of the chaos and desperate situation, yet he provides a hope and code for life. If he denies the presence of God, heals creates new gods, for his heroes, in the apparent forms i.e., honour, dignity and struggle. He gives the code of constant and untiring struggle for life.

In his writings, Hemingway focuses at the lost generation, which emerged in the consequence of the two highly explosive World Wars. In19th century mankind was enjoying global peace, economic stability and scientific progress. People were thinking that Man has conquered the beast in him and has learned to live peacefully. But all these idealistic dreams shattered away, when the First World War emerged due to this very industrial progress. The men who entered war with patriotic ideals were stunned atman's inherent Barbarity when they realized the horrible uncertainty, pithiness and meaninglessness of life, they were desperately disillusion with the hollowness and emptiness of the high sounding slogans of religious and political leaders. Moreover, Darwin's theory of evolution added fuel to fire and crumbled the roots of Christianity. It was felt that "God does not exist and man has to face all the consequences of this". Hence: "Man is forlorn; because neither within him nor without does her find anything to ding to".

Hemingway captures all this nothingness and forlornness in his stories. His heroes represent the lost generation. They are usually expatriates, disillusioned with war. They have utterly disappointed with the nothingness of life and seeks refuge in drinking, sex, wandering. Hemingway depicts his heroes at war, sometimes physically but most often metaphorically. Then, within the course of their war, they get the code is of unending struggle regardless of victory or defeat.

His hero in "The Old Man and the Sea", Santiago says: "Pain does not matter to a man". Then: "Man is not made for defeat". And finally, he says: "A man can be destroyed but not defeated".

In "The Sun also rises", there is a massage of hope: "A man can live only through the manly encounter against death".

Robert Jordan in the "For Whom the Bell tolls", is confused about his aims. He is disillusioned with war; he loves humanity and wants peace. But to establish peace, he has to fight against the evil. He is not certain about the usefulness of his action, though takes refuge in Maria's arms, yet he resolves to continue his task. He says: "You can do nothing for yourself but perhaps you can do something for another".

It is an understanding assumption of Hemingway's philosophy that there is no world beyond the grave. Therefore, one's victories and losses are to be measured in terms of this world and not in the world beyond the grave. Life is tragic, sad and there is no escape from pain, therefore, it is useless to try to escape the inevitable. Hence what one can do is to be a man. When man is afflicted with misery pain or sorrow or even death, the proper way to face it is to remain true to oneself and one's companions, to endure pain and must fight like Santiago against the heavy odds. To give up a fight would be unmanly. One must achieve moral victory even though he has nothing to win. Robert Jordan has to remain undefeated, to prove his moral victory. He fights not only for the sake of Spanish freedom, but also for the fulfilment of his moral duty and his reward is the consciousness and his satisfaction in the duty done.

This constant struggle and absoluteness of duty is something, which one can cling to in the present times. Hence, Hemingway should not be pronounced as nihilism, prevailed in his time, and presents the solution of it rather he gives the faith of constant struggle and a moral victory to his readers. Thus the outlook or the background of his novels is nihilism but the message of his novels is the message of hope and confidence.

Hemingway's Message : Man Can Be Destroyed but Not Defeated

Hemingway was considered to be a man more than life. He thrived to reduce the life than its gigantic stature. He wanted to explore more and more about the gravities of life. He had seen both pre-war and post war situations. He had deeply observed the change in the attitude of people, towards life and their scattered dreams and desires. Thus, he sought to give message

to the post war generation –the message of struggle for life. He taught them that man can live only through the manly encounter against death and miseries.

Nineteenth century was the period of the boon of humanity. There was industrial rise and scientific progress. Mankind was enjoying global peace and stability. Man was thinking that he had conquered the beast in him and had learnt to live peacefully. But them, this wide spread scientific progress brought two most destructive and fierce worldwide wars. With the advent of these wars, all the thoughts and dreams of a peaceful and progressive future shattered. People look refuge in sensual pleasure i.e. drinking, free sex and wandering and avoided thinking. These people, after the wide spread devastation of wars, were pronounced as the Lost Generation.

Hemingway writes his stories, to guide his lost generation. They are expatriates, confused and frustrated beings, indulged in drinking, gambling and sexual pleasures. Hemingway wants to give them a code of life, higher than any ethical code. This is a code of "constant struggle".

Hemingway creates a microcosm of the post war scenario in this story and delineates his characters, very close to real men, with their tensions and conflicts. Almost all of his protagonists are representatives of lost generation. They are all disillusioned with war, but each experiences this situation differently. Yet one thing is common in all of them that they have to struggle for life. Henry hates war; at he has to fight for life. Jordan knows that war is destructive; he wants peace and is aware of the feet that to attain peace, it is necessary to suppress force, by force.

Hemingway perceives life as a struggle, in which man has no choice except to fight. Santiago has to go far away, on the sea, to fight with evil, regardless of any loss. Robert Jordan has to blow up the bridge without considering its usefulness. It also gives a view that duty, must be done at any cost, and a duty assigned to an individual should be considered special in its way. Jordan says: "If I have to do what I think, I will have to do; it will be very select indeed".

Besides fighting with the outer circumstances, Hemingway's protagonist also fights a battle of inner self. He knows the worthlessness of his act, yet he fights to prove his courage and strength by accomplishing that act. Jordan realizes the futility of his act; he also loves life and feels: "This world is a fine place". Though life is dear to him, yet dearer than life is the need to justify his courage, which his father lacked.

Hemingway feels that winner gets nothing in this world. The victory of his protagonist is never physical but always moral. Santiago, after successfully achieving victory over Marline loses it during his journey back to home. Jordan successfully blows the bridge, yet, in the end, his is a loser –loser of his life. All that is achieved in all this exercise is the insight that one must go on struggling come what may and whatever is the cause. Thought he winner

gets nothing yet he attains moral dignity. Jordan says: "You can do nothing for yourself but perhaps you can do something for another".

Hemingway holds the view that whatever has to be done, has to be done with good grace. He says in "Old man and The Sea": "Pain does not matter to a man"

Robert Jordan repeatedly wishes for the arrival of Fascists, to the end of the novel, because of his increasing pain. Yet he does not choose to kill himself. He feels that to die a courageous death is better than to live, as a coward in owes own eyes. He says: "I wish, they would come now". He fights bravely and does not lack courage. He proves: "A man is not made for defeat".

Jordan fights till end and sacrifices his life, for duty. He dies not only for Spain, not only to save the girl, Maria, whom he loves, but also for his own sake and in fulfilment of a moral duty. So, his only reward is the consciousness of duty done. Thus he proves that: "A man can be destroyed but not defeated".

Hemingway's Concept of Hero and Code Hero

Robert Jordan, a tall, a thin young man, with sun streaked fair hair, and wind and sun burned face, is one of the most complicated heroes, in Hemingway's fictions. He is a typical Hemingway hero who fights till end and wins a moral victory for him.

Two categories of heroes are found in the novels of Ernest Hemingway. One of which is a round character who finds himself unfit for the circumstances in which he is surrounded, but with the passage, of time he evolves certain values, which make his survival possible. According to the critics, this kind of character is "Hemingway Hero", or "the Tito". In the other category of hero is a developed character that does not need for further improvement. He is a confident man who knows his area of action and his skills. He serves to teach, the Tito, and thus is called "the Tutor" or "the code hero".

Jack Barnes, Nick Adam, Fredric Henry etc., are all Hemingway's typical heroes. They have been presented in the background of First World War. They portray the attributes of "Lost Generation". They have got disillusioned with war and, therefore, remained under great stress. War has shattered their all the ideas of religion, humanity, love and peace. Hemingway at first shows through them the death of love, lost ness and forlornness' and finally the moral code of life that "a man can be destroyed but not defeated". Hemingway hero is a sensitive and intellectual being, but he suppresses his thoughts, he suffers from "Nada" the extreme feelings of nothingness. Inconsequence, he leads a life of sensuousness and seeks pleasure in sexuality, drinking and roaming about.

Hemingway takes life as a battle, in which man has to fight till his end. Therefore, his hero is always revealed in a war or war –like conditions, fighting against natural or human forces. This war can either be physical or spiritual or both. Within the course of his war, he learns the code of his life that: "A man is not made for defeat". And that: "A man can live only through the manly encounter against death".

This code helps him to achieve a moral victory. Hemingway believes that "a winner gets nothing in this world", therefore, we see. "Despite Hemingway's preoccupation with physical contests his heroes are almost always defeated physically their victories tries are moral one".

Robert Jordan is considered to be the most complex of all heroes, presented by Hemingway. He has seen excessive violence and bloodshed and is thoroughly aware of the cruelties of war, yet he is ready to fight for the cause of "humanity". He is an idealist as well as a realist. He knows "neither all fascists are black nor all republicans are white", but he fights for the betterment of Spanish people, as his meditations reveal: "You believe in liberty equality and Fraternity. You believe in life, liberty and pursuit of happiness". Thus, as it is common with Hemingway's heroes, Jordan is also shown under great stress and tension –at the same time though he criticizes his actions yet he is also ready to blow the bridge.

He is very sensitive and intellectual being but he feels that thoughts are not appropriate for the world in which he is living, he takes refuges in drinking and sexually. Though he does not want to keep his mind busy in thinking about the rightness of his action, as he feels "to worry is as bad as to be afraid". Yet he keeps himself busy in the unrealistic thoughts of a happy future with his beloved Maria. "When there was no understanding only the delight of acceptance".

Though he likes "good things" of life yet he is so committed and honest to himself and his duty, that he does no let these things, come in his way. Even he attributes his love for Maria to his love for Spain as he says: "I love thee as I love that we have fought for".

He is so honest to the job that is assigned to him that he can understand that to blow the bridge is futile, yet he blows it, for it is the very order given to him.

Being a main character of Hemingway, he also fights his personal psychological battle in Spain. Jordan is extremely ashamed of his father, who attempted suicide instead of fighting. He wants to wash out his guilt. Though the life is dear to him, yet dearer than life is the need for the justification of his courage, which his father lacked. Thus, the war has a "double importance" for him. He says: "My mind is in suspension until we win the war".

He idealizes his grandfather, who was a courageous warrior and had died in a battle. Fighting against the enemy, Jordan seeks his code within the thoughts of his grandfather and is determined to fight till his death. When he falls from the horse and it breaks his leg, Jordan remains there to cover the escape of his companions. At this time it is the memory of his

grandfather, which keeps him firm on his decision. Though he is disappointed yet not desperate. He has learnt the lesson like Santiago that: "A man can be destroyed but not defeated".

Near the end, he bears the pain courageously, and proves that "pain does not matter to a man". He appears to be satisfied on achieving the moral victory over his enemy. This is the lesson Hemingway wants to give through his writings that fighting matters more than winning and one who fights till the end, is the winner in true sense.

Thus we can conclude that Robert Jordan is a typical Hemingway hero, with all the heroic qualities in him. He also retains some of the autobiographical touches in his characters; this quality of his personality also enriches his personality in the eye of the readers.

For Whom the Bell Tolls : Background of "Lost Generation"

Seeking the bohemian lifestyle and rejecting the values of American materialism, a number of intellectuals, poets, artists and writers fled to France in the post-World War I years. Paris was the center of it all. American poet Gertrude Stein actually coined the expression "lost generation." Speaking to Ernest Hemingway, she said, "You are all a lost generation."

The term stuck and the mystique surrounding these individuals continues to fascinate us. Full of youthful idealism, these individuals sought the meaning of life, drank excessively, had love affairs and created some of the finest American literature to date.

There were many literary artists involved in the groups known as the Lost Generation. The three best known are F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway and John Dos Passos. Others usually included among the list are: Sherwood Anderson, Kay Boyle, Hart Crane, Ford Maddox Ford and Zelda Fitzgerald.

Ernest Hemingway was the Lost Generation's leader in the adaptation of the naturalistic technique in the novel. Hemingway volunteered to fight with the Italians in World War I and his Midwestern American ignorance was shattered during the resounding defeat of the Italians by the Central Powers at Caporetto. Newspapers of the time reported Hemingway, with dozens of pieces of shrapnel in his legs, had heroically carried another man out. That episode even made the newsreels in America. These war time experiences laid the groundwork of his novel, A Farewell to Arms (1929). Another of his books, The Sun Also Rises (1926) was a naturalistic and shocking expression of post-war disillusionment.

John Dos Passos had also seen the brutality of the war and questioned the meaning of contemporary life. His novel Manhatten Transfer reveals the extent of his pessimism as he indicated the hopeless futility of life in an American city.

F. Scott Fitzgerald is remembered as the portrayer of the spirit of the Jazz age. Though not strictly speaking an expatriate, he roamed Europe and visited North Africa, but returned to the US occasionally. Fitzgerald had at least two addresses in Paris between 1928 and 1930. He fulfilled the role of chronicler of the prohibition era.

His first novel, This Side of Paradise became a best-seller. But when first published, The Great Gatsby on the other hand, sold only 25,000 copies. The free spirited Fitzgerald, certain it would be a big hit, blew the publisher's advance money leasing a villa in Cannes. In the end, he owed his publishers, Scribners, money. Fitzgerald's Gatsby is the story of a somewhat refined and wealthy bootlegger whose morality is contrasted with the hypocritical attitude of most of his acquaintances. Many literary critics consider Gatsby his best work.

The impact of the war on the group of writers in the Lost Generation is aptly demonstrated by a passage from Fitzgerald's Tender is the Night (1933): "This land here cost twenty lives a foot that summer...See that little stream--we could walk to it in two minutes. It took the British a month to walk it--a whole empire walking very slowly, dying in front and pushing forward behind. And another empire walked very slowly backward a few inches a day, leaving the dead like a million bloody rugs. No Europeans will ever do that again in this generation."

The Lost Generation writers all gained prominence in 20th century literature. Their innovations challenged assumptions about writing and expression, and paved the way for subsequent generations of writers.

The Lost Generation is a term used to describe a group of American writers who were rebelling against what America had become by the 1900's. At this point in time, America had become a great place to, "go into some area of business" (Crunden, 185). However, the Lost Generation writers felt that America was not such a success story because the country was devoid of a cosmopolitan culture. Their solution to this issue was to pack up their bags and travel to Europe's cosmopolitan cultures, such as Paris and London. Here they expected to find literary freedom and a cosmopolitan way of life.

A cosmopolitan culture is one which includes and values a variety of backgrounds and cultures. In the 1920's the White Anglo Saxon Protestant work ethic was the only culture that was considered valued by the majority of Americans. It was because of ethics such as this which made the cosmopolitan culture of Paris so alluring. American Literature went through a profound change in the post WWI era. Up until this point, American writers were still expected to use the rigid Victorian styles of the 19th Century. The lost generation writers were above, or apart from, American society, not only in geographic terms, but also in their style of writing and subjects they chose to write about. Although they were unhappy with American culture, the writers were instrumental in changing their country's style of writing, from Victorian to modern.

Hemingway is probably one of the most celebrated authors of his time. Hemingway is well known for his fiction. His take on fiction is something invented or imagined. Main topics were centralized around his love of embellishment of the facts. Hemingway did not have the education as many other writers of his time, rebelling against his parents attempts to send him to colleges. His idea of education did not consist of lectures, and research papers, but of life experiences, and his love of reading. Hemingway's readings centered around Russian writers such as Tolstoy and Turgrnev, Tolstoy was a primary influence in Hemingway's writings. WWI also had a profound impact on him as well, as he was an ambulance driver during the war. He hated the abstract, especially abstract words such as honor, glory, and courage.

Hemingway held strong to old beliefs, and symbolism, as he used symbolism to depict the Protestant religion he could not accept. He used observation and description in his works, rather than rhetoric views. The concept of war fascinated Hemingway, as well as the experiences one could endure in a lifetime. One of the most famous works, "Farewell to Arms" depicted the uselessness for words such as honor and glory, because they were not the first things in a soldier's mind as he walked onto the battlefield. Hemingway's works were raw, and dilled with the notion that one could be inside the characters mind, the concrete, and not around in the abstract view of his works.

The Aimlessness of the Lost Generation: – World War I undercut traditional notions of morality, faith, and justice. No longer able to rely on the traditional beliefs that gave life meaning, the men and women who experienced the war became psychologically and morally lost, and they wandered aimlessly in a world that appeared meaningless. Jake, Brett, and their acquaintances give dramatic life to this situation. Because they no longer believe in anything, their lives are empty. They fill their time with inconsequential and escapist activities, such as drinking, dancing, and debauchery.

In “The Sun Also Rises” it is important to note that Hemingway never explicitly states that Jake and his friends’ lives are aimless, or that this aimlessness is a result of the war. Instead, he implies these ideas through his portrayal of the characters’ emotional and mental lives. These stand in stark contrast to the characters’ surface actions. Jake and his friends’ constant carousing does not make them happy. Very often, their merrymaking is joyless and driven by alcohol. At best, it allows them not to think about their inner lives or about the war. Although they spend nearly all of their time partying in one way or another, they remain sorrowful or unfulfilled. Hence, their drinking and dancing is just a futile distraction, a purposeless activity characteristic of a wandering, aimless life.

Hemingway’s Contribution to the Art of the Novel

A Spokesman of the Age: – Hemingway, by writing of the condition of the modern man and his agonized and futile responses to the calamities that befell him, carved a niche for himself

in the temple of immortality. The Swedish Committee set the stamp of approval on him by awarding him the Nobel Prize in 1954, even though he did not come up to the ideals of the philanthropist. Primarily the learned committee commended his contribution to the style of modern narration especially in The Old Man and the Sea yet they had in their minds Hemingway's writings of the last thirty years. The literature of the Twenties would be poorer for the loss of The Sun Also Rises and A Farewell to Arms. For Whom the Bell Tolls remains a landmark in American fiction of the Forties.

Revitalises the Novel: - The nineteenth-century fiction with its overwhelming emphasis on realism had more or less come to a dead end. It needed revitalisation. And some fresh blood had already been injected into its veins by powerful writers like Henry James, D. H. Lawrence, Joseph Conrad and others but it remained for Hemingway to revive the dying art of the novel and give it a new lease of life.

A New Style: -Hemingway in his apprenticeship as a journalist had learnt to be sceptical of decoration, embellishment, flowery language and metaphorical fat. He brought to fiction the colloquial style of speech to serve literary ends. His sentences were short and crisp. They were usually not qualified because when they are qualified the reader's attention is diverted from the main clause. Therefore, in Hemingway's early style in the Twenties one finds a sort of machine gun burst of short sentences, sometimes linked by a conjunction "and" or "but" going directly to its target. This style, in part imitation of the Bible, is an excellent medium for expressing an exact but limited truth. The language may be bleak and bane but there is poetry in it. His prose rhythms have transformed the staccato rattle into the liquid, cadenced ripple of his later works. Compare the following paragraph:

Walking carefully, downhill, Anselmo in the lead, Agustin next, Robert Jordan placing his feet carefully so that he would not slip, feeling the dead pine needles under his rope-soled shoes, bumping a tree root with one foot and putting a hand forward and feeling the cold metal jut of the automatic rifle barrel and the folded legs of the tripod. then working sideways down the hill, his shoes sliding and grooving the forest floor, putting his left hand out again and touching the rough bark of a tree trunk, then as he braced himself, his hand feeling a smooth place, the base of the palm of his hand coming away sticky from the resinous sap where a blaze had been cut, they dropped down the steep wooded hill side to the point above the bridge where Robert Jordan had Anselmo watched the first day. (For Whom the Bell Tolls)

Two Styles Compared: - If the first passage reflects the newly forged medium to express an intense emotional response to a brutal, animalistic and chilly world the second is a specimen of grace and poise in which the author seems to have acquired a peculiar vision of the world but a vision nonetheless. His preoccupation with action is reflected in his earlier style as well as in his later style. It moves in a rhythmic pattern in which the reader's attention is focused on the action all the time but he can afford to relax occasionally.

Unique Ability to Transmit Experience: - Whether he was writing in the Twenties or in the Fifties he reflects a youthful response to light, colour, form, and atmosphere of particular places that he has visited and which he is utilizing in his novels and short stories. He remains one of the supreme masters who have the unique ability to transfer on paper what they have felt and experienced. In the last period of his life when he wrote The Old Man and the Sea he brought about a synthesis of the controlled style of the early Twenties and the relaxed style of the Thirties. In The Old Man and the Sea one can sense the austerity of the biblical style and at the same time the beauty of the world that has charmed him :

He no longer dreamed of storms, nor of women, nor of great fish, nor fights, nor contests of strength, nor of his wife. He only dreamed of places now and of the lions on the beach. They played like young cats in the (tusk and he loved them as he loved the boy. He never dreamed about the boy. He simply woke, looked out the open door at the moon and unrolled his trousers and put them on. He urinated outside the shack and then went up the road to wake the boy. He was shivering with the morning cold. But he knew he would shiver himself warm and that soon he would be rowing. (The Old Man and the Sea)

Maintains High Standards: - Throughout his life he did not let his standards for the exact word, the concrete statement and his concentration on the physical world of things relax. He makes a scene so real, that we can almost smell the pine-covered slopes or the surf on a sea-beach. In A Farewell to Arms the fall is vividly depicted in Chapter 1, and the famous Caporetto retreat remains a landmark in realistic technique. Similarly, El Sardo's last stand on the hill-top creates on the mind of the reader an impression not very different from that of a coloured movie.

A Mastery on Dialogue: - To this admirable gift of his he brought another talent : the art of writing dialogue. His ear, because of its somewhat erratic training in music that he might have received from his mother, was a very sensitive device to catch the peculiarities of accents of various speakers. He also captured their speech rhythms. They are not literally transferred on to the paper but they are transformed into brilliant dialogue by the unique process of artistic transformation. He shunned all authorial comments and let the conversation convey to the reader what it stands for by itself. If an authorial comment, in Hemingway's opinion, is needed then the writer has not visualised the scene or listened attentively to the conversation that he is putting on paper. He applied to prose the kinaesthetic test that Robert Jordan felt when he heard Maria's story.

Pilar Among Memorable Characters: - Hemingway has created some of the most memorable characters of our time. Beginning with Prick Adams who is a symbol of the twentieth-century shocked sensibility, to Santiago in The Old Man .and the Sea his characters are individuals and at the same time representative of a whole generation of men and women whom they portray. Orville Prescott thinks : "It is the guerrilla chieftain's wife, the super-woman Pilar, who alone survives in memory and who will continue to do so as long

as the bitter courage and heroic defiance of the Spanish, people in the civil war are not forgotten. Pilar is Mr. Hemingway's only triumphant feat of characterization" On My Opinion, p. 67).

Many Memorable Characters: - One cannot agree with Orville Prescott entirely because in Leslie Fiedler's opinion Brett Ashley (in The Sun Also Rises) is the only al female character in Hemingway's fiction. Again, Carlos Baker thinks that Margot Macomber is a perfect representative of the predatory Anglo-American bitches and at the same time an individual. Whatever be her morality and her code of ethic she is certainly a living character and will last as long as Hemingway's stories are read. Similarly, Manuel in "The undefeated", not only exists as a symbol of the undefeated human spirit but also as an individual whom we see charging at the bull with a sword in his hand forgetting all the pain of a broken wrist. Even characters like Count Greffi or Dr. Valentini in A Farewell to Arms make much deeper impact upon us than what their brief appearance, in the novel warrants.

Cyclic Plots: - Hemingway's plots are extremely simple. With the exception of For Whom the Bell Tolls in which social and political forces are introduced and_ they play very important roles in the lives of the main characters, the rest of the novels have very simple plots. They depict one or two major characters, their ordeals, their disappointments and their failures and their vain or successful struggle to achieve a measure of dignity. The novels end usually at a point where they begin. Jake Barnes love for Brett Ashley cannot be consummated because of his physical injury. At the end of the novel he has gained a measure of maturity and learnt to live without love but the love still remains unconsummated. Similarly, in A Farewell to Arms one crazy lover (Catherine Barkley) at the beginning of the novel is replaced by another shocked lover (Frederic Henry). In For Whom the Bell Tolls, Maria carries the wound of having loved and lost which is as deep as the shock of rape committed by the Fascists. Robert Jordan's attempt to blow-up the bridge, in spite of his success, is an exercise in futility because the Fascists have already known of the Republicans' plan of launching an offensive and they have already carried their reinforcements across the bridge which Robert Jordan is supposed to destroy just before the offensive. In his last novel, The Old Man and the Sea, Santiago returns as empty-handed after three days of his ordeal on the sea as when he set out hopefully on the eighty-fifth day.

Characters Grow Up: - Carlos Baker calls the plots of Hemingway's novels cyclic but if they were cyclic there would be no insight obtained in the course of the action depicted in the novels. It would be far better to say that the plots of his novels are spiraled rather than cyclic, because in a spiral there is a difference of level even when one comes to the starting point and it indicates the maturity of the main character, as a result of the action. The main character grows in stature in the course of the novel.

Now Becomes Eternal: - In Green Hills of Africa, Hemingway mentions that an author can attain fourth and fifth dimensions in prose if he is sincere enough and lucky too. Critics

have not reached any definite conclusion as to what he meant by the fourth and fifth dimensions. However, there is some agreement that the fourth or fifth dimension could mean the raising of "now" to the level of eternal now. By concentrating on the present and the intensity of its experience, the "now" becomes "eternal now". And in this intensity of experience the participants share their experience with people in other times and at other places who have had or will have similar experiences. They share with these people a sort of mystical union and a sort of immortality not very unsimilar to what Robert Jordan has experienced in his love for Maria.

Fragile Affirmation: - Hemingway tried to be a realist all his life. But as time went by he moved toward some affirmation from his earlier near-nihilism and this is reflected in the deeper layers of his prose narration. He has utilized the techniques of irony, allusion, extended metaphor, symbolism, and even myth to connote meanings that are not apparent on the surface. Frederic Henry's experience of the First World War reflects the experience of 'the whole American nation which was betrayed by the politician. Jake Barnes' experience as embodied in The Sun Also Rises is the experience of a whole generation—the lost generation, the American expatriates wandering aimlessly in the cities of Europe. Again, his use of rain as a symbol in A Farewell to Arms is highly suggestive. Rain in itself is no evil but the way it is associated with Henry's misfortunes and finally. Catherine's death it becomes a symbol of disaster, death, defeat anti decay. His use of the hyena and the vulture as symbols for artistic betrayal in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" suggests a new dimension in his art. Even a short scene in A Farewell to Arms, in which Frederic Henry empties his glass on a burning log of wood so that he may have his whisky and by this action kill hundreds of ants prematurely, even though they were born to die, becomes a symbol of man's fate in a deterministic universe. There is "no exist" for any of us but we all try to make our little contributions to the welfare of the, human race. That is why one should not ask for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.-

His Vision of Nada: - More than all these, Hemingway is one of the supreme spokesmen of the twentieth-century man. His vision of Nada–nothingness–penetrates to the depth of the existential dilemma that man faces today. Man is lonely, and he has seen that the world is purposeless and that there is no meaning beyond what meaning man gives to his life. Action is to be performed for its own sake and it is its own justification. There are no gods or superhuman agencies that will support man in an hour of crisis. If man is to live meaningfully, he must evolve a code for himself based upon the empirical evidence of his senses. There is no life beyond the grave and therefore one must realise one's identity in this life on earth. It is the picture of a solitary man in an indifferent universe that Hemingway seems to project in his novels and short stories. Jordan, in the last scene of For Whom the Bell Tolls is a symbol of "the lonely rebel" whose despair is unrelieved by any hope. Love, drink, religion, community life—all are no good. It is a stark and bare statement of a stark and bare truth; and it is not easy to be reconciled to this vision of nothingness and meaninglessness. One can

occasionally seek comfort in fishing or love-making or drinking or the company of friends but man is basically alone. But Hemingway is no nihilist for his is an art of affirmation.

Affirmation in Art: - It is his devotion to art that ultimately redeems him from nihilism. It. is his craft that gives him the scope for creativity and his sense of identity. It is an art .that he wants to practice without fakery and without tricks. He wants it to be the religion of a creative artist and it will give him the justification for his life. Similarly, even, when the winner takes nothing he attains dignity in the manner of his losing like Robert Jordan. This is where the matador, the artist, and the ordinary man become one; and one can face life as the matador does in the bull-ring.

High Quality Art: - Hemingway has not written much and the impact that he has made on the reading public is far too great as compared to the volume of his work. But they are chiselled jewels and in the service of his art he has spared no pains and in spite of the limitations that Earl Rovit mentions he has achieved almost a permanent place in the history of the twentieth-century novel.

Hemingway's Concept of Physical defeat and Moral Success

Life Seen As Struggle: - Hemingway achieved maturity as a man during the First World War in which he had been wounded seriously. As a result of this unfortunate occurrence his vision of life became coloured because in - those impressionable years he had seen life from very close quarters and he had discovered that violence was one of the real and rude facts of life, the most important, in fact. He saw life as a struggle in which man has no choice except to fight—sometimes literally and quite often metaphorically. Paolini, an Italian critic, commenting on this aspect of Hemingway's art says:

Here (in Hemingway's works) the inner motive is precisely that antithesis between professionalism and dilettantism, interpreting these two opposing concepts in their broadest and universal sense. For the Hemingway man to belong to the category' of 'professionals' implies a choice–either by instinct or as a result of a series of experiences ; it means he has taken up a solid strategic position in life-war which by its very nature can no longer be stormed by the enemy or engulfed in the abyss of nada. The choice determines whether life is worth living and fighting for or is 'a nothing and then nothing and then nothing'. Hence the dilettante is a failure: he has failed in his duty, in the true categorical imperative of the conscience; he has wasted his talents and energies. The other category is that of the undefeated; the winner, even when they win nothing, even when they seem to be routed. It is in these that Hemingway solves the dilemma of 'to be or not to be', in which the 'nonbeing', probably deriving from the mysticism of the Slav writers, is both an obstacle and a calamity to being.

Jordan is Ideologically Confused: - Jordan in For Whom the Bell Tolls is a typical Hemingway hero and he suffers from some of the same nightmares as Nick Adams. In his early childhood he had seen a Negro being lynched and this human degradation haunts him even now. In Spain, he sees similar atrocities committed by man, whether it be Maria's tale or Pablo's exploits. He has made his choice to fight for the Republic in order to safeguard the interests of man, anywhere in the world. In his opinion Fascism constitutes a potential danger to the rights of man and he does not mind laying down his life for the Republic. But as has been made obvious beyond doubt he is not sure of his commitment: he is perhaps still trying to justify his choice. In his moments of doubt he prefers to either dull his senses by liquor, or escape from the necessity of thinking in the arms of Maria. He confesses that he has kept thinking in abeyance for the duration of the war. After the war has been won he will, he thinks, form his judgments. He is as confused as Henry in A Farewell to Arms with the only difference that he has accepted the illusion of a cause which Henry had rejected. At the end of the novel he is merely an individual fighting to protect his beloved whom he has raised to the level of a symbol for Spain.

Life is Defeated: - However, this should not blind us to the realities of life as they are presented in the novel. Due to the treachery of Pablo and Pilar's lack of vigilance he loses his vital equipment, a fact which makes human sacrifices a necessity. He loses a true Christian like Anselmo whose life could have been saved. On his instructions El Sardo goes to steal horses and due to the unseasonal snow he is traced to his hide-out and eventually wiped out by the Fascist planes. The gypsies who do not understand the causes of the war and the motives of Jordan's sacrifice escape. Jordan also is eventually overtaken by death; and he lies on the floor of the forest waiting for his end. All this bloodshed is rendered, unless for the Fascists have learnt of the attack and they have made the necessary preparations to meet the attack. Jordan's attempt to get in touch with General Golz reveals on the one hand inefficiency in the Loyalist ranks and on the other the futility of the attempt. Andres Marty thinks that by being given the task of delivering the dispatch he has been given a reprieve because all the guerrillas are so depressed by what they have seen of the war that they are convinced that their cause is lost forever. They are symbol of the desperation that has eaten into their entrails. Pablo is not an exception because El Sardo knows equally well how dangerous Jordan's plan is: and Pablo tries to oppose him because he is more than ever convinced that the time to make a move from the Guadarrama Mountains has not come as yet. Agustin is bored with his stay in the hills and he wants action for the sake of action. He lacks the education which is necessary for a cause to succeed. Pilar knows from the moment she has seen Jordan's hand that Jordan is bound to die. With the smell of death being so strong in the air, it is quite clear that the forces of life are defeated.

Ideologies Translated Into Physical Combat: - Having reduced the opposing forces to a physical combat Hemingway gives the hero enough courage and daring and resolution to enable him to last somehow until the end. Jordan avoids carefully any conflict with Pablo so as not to endanger the success of his mission. Even during the period when the Fascist

cavalry are almost knocking at the door of Pablo's hide-out, Jordan thinks of escaping from there with his explosives. He does not want to fight. He does not let anybody go to help El Sardo in his last fight. He prepares himself for the final effort to blow up the bridge which, as we come to know, does not remain such a necessity. He does it out of a false sense of duty to the Republic and against his better judgment.

Mere Action Replaces a Clear Vision: - Hemingway poses the problem of politics but sees no way out. Not that a novelist is compelled to give solutions of the problems that he has posed but in terms of the characters in the story he is under obligation to delineate clearly what their thinking implies. Hemingway at the crucial moment brusquely brushes the vital issues aside and makes the hero take part in action which is breath-taking of course, but it is a literature of evasion. Action must lead to some 'results, inevitably, but in Hemingway action becomes a substitute for a clear vision of life. It is here, the charge levelled by some critics that the Hemingway hero is incapable of thinking, finds its support.

Jordan Does His Part Well: - As Paolini points out the hero in For Whom the Bell Tolls belongs to the category of "Professionals". He is like Manuel in "The Undefeated" who must perform his duty and whether he lives or dies becomes immaterial. Similarly other values also lose their glamour and charm. He is not after gains, for the real satisfaction must come, in the last analysis, from within. Man must overcome pessimism and find "his own unit of measurement". Jordan finds his measurement in his satisfaction that he has done his little bit as this is all be could do.

Action Solves No Ethical Problems: - As a matter of fact, war solves no ethical problems which Hemingway's work invariably raises. For the Hemingway hero death becomes an easy solution of the intricate problem of living. Kashkin, a Russian critic, argues that For Whom the Bell Tolls champions "the invigorating and inspiring role of work", but he forgets due to his cultural background and political commitment that work, or action in itself cannot be justified. Work in order to be psychologically satisfying must be a result of inner motivation and not a necessity to deaden one's inner questioning.

Contradictions in Jordan's Thinking: -Jordan has tried to submerge his individuality in the Loyalist cause but it is very doubtful whether he succeeded, for the Hemingway "hero is usually a great individualist. He has learnt from Karkov, the, Russian journalist, that political conviction is. essential for any meaningful partisan activity ; he has accepted communist discipline for the duration of the war because it is the best, and the communists alone offer the programme that he can accept, and yet he upholds the guiding principles of the American constitution, like equality, liberty, fraternity, and the pursuit of happiness. The Red ideology tells him that there is no such thing as love, and Jordan has experienced genuine love. He has seen what the Loyalist discipline is like and still he fights for these people.

A Sense of Futility Haunts: – It is true that in For Whom the Bell Tolls the irresponsibility of the "Lost Generation" is superseded by heroism and a sense of duty and a commitment to the human race yet if this were so in any real sense the futility that overwhelms the hero and the reader would not have been there. The final gloom is absolutely unrelieved; the human cause is lost forever on the Spanish soil. Franco's rule in Spain was a testimony to the author's vision of the Loyalist cause having been lost for practically all times to come. Even such a strong supporter as Kashkin of the philosophy of action and the solidarity of the human race cannot but admit the futility of the hero's action:

He dies not only for Spain, not only to save the girt Maria whom he loves, but also for his own sake and in fulfilment of a moral duty. Jordan knows that to live properly is impossible without 'going where you have to go and doing what you have to do.' So his only reward is the consciousness of duty done. And again 'Winner Takes Nothing'.

At Best Wins Moral Victories: – It seems Hemingway had found something to die for and he seems to imply that if you die as Anselmo or Jordan died, then physical death means nothing. You may ask as you breathe your last: "Death, where is thy sting ?". But this vision faded in the next decade because this commitment to mankind is absent from the next two novels he wrote. They deal with individual problems of the heroes and Hemingway seems to have retreated from his social commitment if it meant the solidarity of all the working people of the world. However, the artist's role remains to understand and present, which he did admirably. That is what makes his hero a limited achievement because his victories, at last, remain moral ones.

"He did not wish to write a political novel, but one in which political events should form the setting for a timeless story of personal tragedy." Discuss this statement with reference to For Whom the Bell Tolls.

A Human Document: – Leicester Hemingway records in My Brother, Ernest Hemingway "The early spring of 1938, Ernest worked intensely while he was in Key West, revising The Fifth Column and thinking beyond it, he began to feel that there must be a great novel buried in the treachery, courage, and sacrifice that he had seen during recent months in Spain." Of course Hemingway's personal sympathies were with the Loyalists yet what impressed him more than the struggle of the Spanish people for a decent life was "the treachery, courage, and sacrifice that he had seen in Spain."

The fact that this happened in Spain is incidental: what is more significant is that these traits are human traits and will be found anywhere in the world. In this respect For Whom the Bell Tolls is not purely a political novel; it is basically a human document which praises what is good in man and condemns, though with a deep understanding, what is evil.

Focus on One Minor Event: - Hemingway has chosen to write not of the Spanish Civil War in its entirety but of a minor incident in the war. Although the story extends beyond the Guadarrama Mountains due to what the hero learns of some other events from other characters, yet what we are shown is confined to the action that takes place in the vicinity of the bridge. Jordan's arrival in the company of Anselmo, the split in the band due to Pablo's decision not to participate in the blowing up of the bridge, Jordan's love-making, El Sardo's willingness to help and his destruction by the Fascist planes, Pablo's treachery and his eventual return to the band, and finally the destruction of the bridge and Jordan's death-these are the key events. The flash-back scenes take us to Madrid and Hotel Gaylord's where the Russians are staying, Pablo's home town where he destroyed the Fascists, Maria's home town where her father and mother were killed and she herself was raped, the dynamiting of the Fascist train by Kashkin and Maria's rescue. The only action which takes place away from the bridge is Andres Marty's journey to the head-quarters of General Golz. The Spanish Civil War was a complex affair, as we are told by a number of intellectuals including George Orwell in his Homage to Catalonia ; therefore, it would be naive to believe that the war was confined to the hills near Segovia ; nor are there any political discussions in the novel which highlight the issues involved. What we are told is the experience of a young American volunteer during his three-day stay in the hide-out of a guerrilla leader. And this does not qualify it as a political novel.

A Fruitless Action: - The political events and discussions, if any, are no more than a backdrop against which a personal drama is enacted. It is a tragic story of the failure of an individual who is swayed by idealism, and his strong common sense–one could call it his pragmatism–creates a conflict in his mind whether what he is doing is worth doing. He suppresses his doubts and persuades an indifferent band of guerrillas to help him to destroy a vital bridge so that the Fascist reinforcements may not reach the pass which Golz is attacking. On a purely personal plane one could argue that Jordan's effort is highly admirable but he knows as well as any one else that what he is doing and at such a heavy price is fruitless. The Fascist reinforcements have been carried across the bridge already; they have known before-hand of the attack and they are a disciplined army. On the other hand Fernando informs Jordan that he learnt in Segovia that the Loyalists were going to launch an offensive in the vicinity of Segovia and that it was an open secret. The loose tongues of the Loyalists have been the cause of their ruin. At best, one could say that the events narrated here are representative of what went on elsewhere in Spain but it is not the whole truth about the Spanish Civil War or the, political situation in Spain.

Jordan's Sole Purpose: - As a personal story of an individual it is admirable. When Golz tells Jordan: "I do not like to ask people to do such things and in such a way. I could not order you to do it. I understand what you may be forced to do through my putting such conditions" Jordan promises that whatever be the difficulties he will blow up the bridge on time. Having seen how the guerrilla morale stood in Pablo's band he cleverly wins over the loyalty of Pilar and the other guerrillas and he thus isolates. Pablo. When El Sardo's band

has been wiped out by the Fascists his devotion to duty compels Pilar to take on some of the responsibilities of “the very select” offensive that Jordan is planning to launch against the Fascist posts on both sides of the bridge. He loves the good things of life but he will not let them interfere in his work. Pilar very aptly remarks: “You are a very cold boy.” Before he becomes committed to Maria he declares: “I have not found one [woman] that moved me as they say they should move you.” And when it has become obvious to him that due to the absence of the exploder and the fuse the assignment might prove fatal to him he is prepared to carry out his job, even though he would have liked to live, and for a long time, with Maria. Love is one of the good things of life but he rejects it in favour of his duty to the Republic which he equates with “Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness”. When it is a question of duty even Maria, whom he loves more than his life, has no place in his life. He tolerates Pablo, a murderer, and is not too critical of him. He is useful to the Republic even though he is highly debased, therefore, he may be allowed to live. He is ready to exploit the guerrillas for his own purpose but once the bridge has been blown up he sacrifices his own life so that they may escape to safety. He does not like to murder men but he kills the Fascist cavalryman who threatens to invade their privacy and thus spoil the chances of his successfully blowing up the bridge. He shoots the Fascist guard on the bridge because it is essential. He orders Anselmo to kill because knowing Anselmo’s Christian character he makes sure that he does not falter and thus endanger the success of the operation. He is an intellectual and still he suspends his thinking for the duration of the war because too much preoccupation with unnecessary thought might hamper him in his work. Such a devotion to duty (to the solidarity of Man) borders on fanaticism but it is admirable in a partisan who, even though an American, is fighting for the Spanish people.

Hemingway Writes of the End: - Jordan represents certain aspects of Hemingway’s character and thus in Jordan he expresses some of his own fears and hopes. Kashkin, the Russian authority on Hemingway, remarks that in the middle years (1928-38) his activity “was the purposeless activity of a man vainly attempting not to think, that his courage was the courage of despair, that the obsession of death was taking hold of him, that again and again he was writing of the end—the end of love, the end of life, the end of hope, the end of all.”

As An Elegy: -In Jordan’s courage, critics have detected an element of, despair. The picture of the world that Hemingway delineates in For Whom the Bell Tolls is that of “a fatalistic world”. “Not an epic of the war, nor even the story of Robert Jordan’s education in the war, but almost an elegy sung in praise of the lonely rebel, serving in a foreign country with a foreign army, though now with the illusion of a cause ; a lost man whom the war overwhelms without changing him. In the face of this central feeling of the impossibility of belief, the Marxist ideal, can only be the opium of the people, an austere facade hiding deceit.” The book is a monument to the confused thinking of a man who really belongs to “no-man’s party”.

Jordan is Lost but Perseveres: - There are four distinct stages in the novel when Jordan is, compelled to think that the cause he is espousing is lost irredeemably. On his arrival Pablo's initial hostility, which he later on successfully conceals, is the first indication of what he might expect in this oasis. El Sardo's destruction should have made any man wiser but Jordan persists. He also has learnt that the Fascists know of the attack and they have made preparation for the attack but he continues to harp on the theme of his choice. Finally, Pablo's treachery and Pilar's lapse arouse his ingenuity and out of sheer desperation he decides to use hand-grenades in place of the fuse and detonators. All through his three-day stay in this hide-out with the exception of the love of Maria and Pilar's unquestioned loyalty to him he meets nothing that could cheer up his spirits. The novel is concerned with what happens between "two supine postures" —Jordan lying on the floor of the forest in the beginning of the novel, and then at the end of the novel. Nemi D'Agostino remarks

The utter uselessness of the attempt on the bridge, upon which the future of the human race might depend, is made clear from the start, as is the uselessness of the pathetic heroism of that group of solitary eccentrics which Hemingway selects as his chief characters. The sky overhanging the sierra is without depth and beyond the mountains there is no crusade but only the confused movements of heterogeneous crowds, a massacre iii a betrayed land. Jordan is a new Frederic Henry, who finds a code of behaviour by which to endure life in the exact fulfilment of his mission, and in the end is driven to 'sacrifice' more by desperation than by any certainty. His drama is too oppressive and restricted to reflect the so much wider and more complex tragedy of Spain. There is too much disenchantment with Jordan's idealism in the novel.

Borders on Melodrama: - For this very reason the heroics produce an effect not very different from melodrama. But for the sure touch of the novelist the tragedy of Jordan could have become an actual melodrama and the bathos of his death could have degenerated into pathos. The presence of such heroic figure as Joaquin, El Sardo and Anselmo redeem the novel and the author from absurdity. But for Anselmo's true sentiment and El Sardo's true heroism the book would not have been what it is.

Irony Saves the Novel: - Last but not the least, For Whom the Bell Tolls cannot be a partisan novel because of the extensive use of irony in the novel. Some critics feel that it goes against the main drift of the novel. Hemingway who supported the Loyalist cause in the Spanish Civil War could not shut his eyes to the realities of the Spanish life. He remains an artist first and foremost; therefore, he could not be a partisan as a novelist. Lieutenant Berrendo is portrayed with sympathy and understanding, even though he is fighting against the Loyalists. The Fascist discipline is shown superior to the commitment of the Loyalist supporters; and the fact that they are irregular gypsies hardly mitigates the adverse criticism.

Remains an Imperfect Novelist: – Lincoln Kirste in his article on Hemingway, "The Canon of Death", writes: Hemingway is an incomplete tragic artist whose wilful limits, as yet exclude him from the company of creators of living characters, but they have the signatures of his choice attached, and he had personally endowed them with their characteristics. They do not exist independent of his approval, as do Anna Karenina, Starbuck, or Leopold Bloom. Convinced and a master of a physical world as he now is, can he dare to acquire a knowledge of the others?

Mourning Becomes Electra

EUGENE O'NEILL; 1888-1953

Eugene O'Neill (1888–1953) was the son of an actor whose work meant that the family led a difficult life on the road. O'Neill would later deeply resent his insecure childhood, pinning the family's many problems, including his mother's drug addiction, on his father. Educated at boarding schools, O'Neill gained admission to Princeton University but left after only one year to go to sea. He spent his early twenties living on the docks of Buenos Aires, Liverpool, and New York, sinking into an alcoholism that brought him to the point of suicide. Slowly O'Neill recovered from his addiction and took a job writing for a newspaper. A bout of tuberculosis left him incapacitated and he was consigned to a sanitarium for six months. While in recovery, O'Neill decided to become a playwright.

O'Neill wrote his first play, Bound East for Cardiff, in 1916, premiering it with a company in Provincetown, MA that took it to New York that same year. In 1920, O'Neill's breakthrough came with his play Beyond the Horizon. Historians of drama identify its premiere as a pivotal event on the Broadway stage, one that brought a new form of tragic realism to an industry almost entirely overrun with stock melodramas and shallow farces. O'Neill went on to write over twenty innovative plays in the next twenty years, to steadily growing acclaim. The more famous works from his early period include The Great God Brown (1926), a study in the conflicts between idealism and materialism, and Strange Interlude (1928), an ambitious 36-hour saga on the plight of the Everywoman. His late career brought such works as his masterpiece, The Iceman Cometh (1946), an Ibsenian portrait of man's hold on his pipe dreams, and A Long Day's Journey into Night (1956), the posthumously published and painfully autobiographical tragedy of a family haunted by a mother's drug addiction.

O'Neill wrote morality plays and experimented with the tragic form. O'Neill's interest in tragedy began as early as 1924 with his Desire Under the Elms, a tale of incest, infanticide, and fateful retribution, but would come to maturity with his monumental revision of Aeschylus's Oresteia, Mourning Becomes Electra (1931). O'Neill chose Electra because he felt that her tale had been left incomplete. More generally, as his diary notes indicate, O'Neill understood his exercises in tragedy as an attempt to find a modern analogue to an ancient mode of experience. Thus Mourning aims to provide a "modern psychological approximation of the Greek sense of fate" in a time in which the notion of an inescapable and fundamentally non-redemptive determinism is incomprehensible. Accordingly, the setting of the trilogy, the American Civil War, springs from O'Neill's attempt to negotiate the chasm between ancient and modern. For O'Neill, the Civil War provided a setting that would allow audiences to locate the tragic in their national history and mythology while retaining enough distance in time to lend the tale its required epic proportions. Mourning also provided O'Neill with an occasion to abandon the complex set

design of the Art Theater, which he had long bemoaned as a constraint on the playwright's creative freedom.

Introduction to Mourning Becomes Electra

Greek Sources

The title of the play suggests its relation to the Greek drama. The story of the house of Atreus was set down by Homer, Pindar, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and diverse other Greek writers whose works are not extant. From this house shadowed by an ancient curse, Agamemnon, brother of Menelaus, goes forth to the war at Troy.

His wife, Clytemnestra, the sister of Helen, during: her husband's absence takes for her paramour Aegisthus and shares the government of Argos with him. In due time Agamemnon, having at the God's behest sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia and bringing with him Cassandra, Priam's daughter, returns and is murdered by Clytemnestra and her lover. Electra, her daughter, is shamed and degraded and prays for the return of her brother Orestes, long ago sent out of the country by his mother and now become a man. Orestes returns, kills Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. Hey is pursued by the Erinyes, and only after wandering and agony and a vindication of himself before the tribunal of Athena's Areophagus is he cleansed of his sin.

Narrative Pattern

Mourning Becomes Electra begins with the mother and daughter, Christine and Lavinia, waiting there in the house of the Mannons, the return of Ezra Mannon 'from the war, which with Lee's surrernder is about over. A thread of romance is introduced between. Lavinia and Peter, and between Lavinia's brother, Orin and Hazel, Peter's sister. Meanwhile, Captain Adam Brant comes to call ; he pays a certain court to Lavinia, and she, acting on a cue from the hired man, who has been on the place sixty years, traps him into admitting that he is the son of one of the Mannons who had seduced a Canadian maid servant and been driven from home by his father, Lavinia's grandfather. She has all her data straight now. She has suspected her mother, followed her to New York, where -Christine has pretended to go because of her own father's illness, but has in fact been meeting Adam. Lavinia has written to her father and to her brother, hinting at the town gossip about her mother. We learn that Adam had returned to avenge his mother but instead had fallen passionately in love with Christine, who loves him as passionately as she hates her husband. From this point the play moves on, with the father's hatred of the son, who returns it, the son's adoration of his mother, the daughter's and the mother's antagonism, the daughter's and father's devotion, to Christine's murder of her husband with the poison sent by Adam and substituted for the medicine prescribed against his heart trouble. Orin returns, after an illness from a wound in the head. Christine tries to protect herself in her son's mind against the plots of Lavinia. Lavinia, in the room where her father's body lies, convinces, him with the facts ; they trail Christine to Adam's ship, where she has gone to warn him against Orin. Orin shoots Adam. Christine next day kills herself. Brother and sister take a long voyage to China, stop at the Southern Isles, and come home again. Substitutions have taken place, Lavinia has grown like her Mother, Orin more like his father. Meanwhile, his old affair with Hazel,

encouraged at last by Lavinia, who now wants to marry Peter, is cancelled he finds himself making an incestuous proposal to Lavinia and is repulsed by her. He shoots himself. In the end, Lavinia, speaking words of love to Peter, finds Adam's name on her lips. She breaks with Peter, orders the blinds of her house nailed shut, and goes into the house, to live there till her death. Justice has been done, the Mannon dead will be there and she will be there.

Parallel Characters

It is now obvious that the American dramatist, as the Greek did, used a well known outline which he could fill in to his purpose. Obviously, too, Ezra Mannon is Agamemnon, Captain Brant is Aegisthus, Christine Clytemnestra, Lavinia Electra, and Orin Orestes. But to dismiss the matter by saying that O'Neill has merely repeated the classic story in modern terms is off the track. Let it go at that and you will miss even the really classic element in the play and get only the Greek side of it that is self-evident and that would be easy for any dramatist to imitate.

Departures From the Greek Play

The story itself follows the Greeks up to the middle of the third division of the play, and here the incest motive, the death of Orin and the transference of the whole situation and the dramatic conclusion from the mother to the sister depart from Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Adam's relation to the family adds to the role of the lover the motif of a blood relationship. The old hired man, the confidant, parallels to some extent a Greek device, familiar to us in countless plays. The townspeople and workmen are now and again a kind of chorus. Many of the shadings and themes are from the older plays ; for a good example, the servant's line in Aeschylus about the dead killing one who lives, which underlies one of the new play's main themes. The death of the lover, as in Aeschylus and Euripides, not as in Sophocles, comes before that of the mother, which throws the stress where the O'Neill play needs it. The division of the play into three parts is, of course, like the trilogy of the Greek dramatist. On the other hand, the dividing line is much less distinct in Mourning Becomes Electra ; the final curtain of the first part, for example falls, it is true, on Mannon's death, as in Aeschylus it does on Agamemnon's, but there is not the same effect of totality because of the stress put on Lavinia ; in Agamemnon Electra does not even appear.

Magnificent Theme

The magnificent theme that there is something in the dead that we cannot placate falsely is there in the Greek plays and in, the O'Neill play as well. The end of the play is by imaginative insight Greek in spirit Lavinia goes into the house, the blinds are closed for ever, the stage is silent, the doors shut, the exaltation is there, the completion, the tragic certainty.

Summary of the Play

The Homecoming

It is late spring afternoon in front of the Mannon house. The master of the house, Brigadier-General Ezra Mannon, is soon to return from war.

Lavinia, Ezra's severe daughter, has just come, like her mother Christine, from a trip to New York. Seth, the gardener, takes the anguished girl aside. He needs to warn her against her would-be beau, Captain Brant. Before Seth can continue, however, Lavinia's suitor Peter and his sister Hazel, arrive. Lavinia stiffens. If Peter is proposing to her again, he must realize that she cannot marry anyone because Father needs her.

Lavinia asks Seth to resume his story. Seth asks if she has not noticed that Brant looks just like her all the other male Mannons. He believes that Brant is the child of David Mannon and Marie Brantôme, a Canuck nurse, a couple expelled from the house for fear of public disgrace.

Suddenly Brant himself enters from the drive. Calculatingly Lavinia derides the memory of Brant's mother. Brant explodes and reveals his heritage. Lavinia's grandfather loved his mother and jealously cast his brother out of the family. Brant has sworn vengeance.

A moment later, Lavinia appears inside her father's study. Christine enters indignantly, wondering why Lavinia has summoned her. Lavinia reveals that she followed her to New York and saw her kissing Brant. Christine defiantly tells Lavinia that she has long hated Ezra and that Lavinia was born of her disgust. She loves her brother Orin because he always seemed hers alone.

Lavinia coldly explains that she intends to keep her mother's secret for Ezra's sake. Christine must only promise to never see Brant again. Laughingly Christine accuses her daughter of wanting Brant herself. Lavinia has always schemed to steal her place. Christine agrees to Lavinia's terms. Later she proposes to Brant that they poison Ezra and attribute his death to his heart trouble.

One week later, Lavinia stands stiffly at the top of the front stairs with Christine. Suddenly Ezra enters and stops stiffly before his house. Lavinia rushes forward and embraces him.

Once she and Ezra alone, Christine assures her that he has nothing to suspect with regards to Brant. Ezra impulsively kisses her hand. The war has made him realize that they must overcome the wall between them. Calculatingly Christine assures him that all is well. They kiss.

Toward daybreak in Ezra's bedroom, Christine slips out from the bed. Mannon's bitterly rebukes her. He knows the house is not his and that Christine awaits his death to be free. Christine deliberately taunts that she has indeed become Brant's mistress. Mannon

rises in fury, threatening her murder, and then falls back in agony, begging for his medicine. Christine retrieves a box from her room and gives him the poison.

Mannon realizes her treachery and calls Lavinia for help. Lavinia rushes to her father. With his dying effort, Ezra indicts his wife: "She's guilty—not medicine!" he gasps and then dies. Her strength gone, Christine collapses in a faint.

The Hunted

Peter, Lavinia, and Orin arrive at the house. Orin disappointedly complains of Christine's absence. He jealously asks Lavinia about what she wrote him regarding Brant. Lavinia warns him against believing Christine's lies.

Suddenly Christine hurries out, reproaching Peter for leaving Orin alone. Mother and son embrace jubilantly. Suspiciously Orin asks Christine about Brant. Christine explains that Lavinia has gone mad and begun to accuse her of the impossible. Orin sits at Christine's feet and recounts his wonderful dreams about her and the South Sea Islands. The Islands represented all the war was not: peace, warmth, and security, or Christina herself. Lavinia reappears and coldly calls Orin to see their father's body.

In the study, Orin tells Lavinia that Christine has already warned him of her madness. Calculatingly Lavinia insists that Orin certainly cannot let their mother's paramour escape. She proposes that they watch Christine until she goes to meet Brant herself. Orin agrees.

The night after Ezra's funeral, Brant's clipper ship appears at a wharf in East Boston. Christine meets Brant on the deck, and they retire to the cabin to speak in private. Lavinia and an enraged Orin listen from the deck. The lovers decide to flee east and seek out their Blessed Islands. Fearing the hour, they painffully bid each other farewell. When Brant returns, Orin shoots him and ransacks the room to make it seem that Brant has been robbed.

The following night Christine paces the drive before the Mannon house. Orin and Lavinia appear, revealing that they killed Brant. Christine collapses. Orin knees beside her pleadingly, promising that he will make her happy, that they can leave Lavinia at home and go abroad together. Lavinia orders Orin into the house. He obeys.

Christine glares at her daughter with savage hatred and marches into the house. Lavinia determinedly turns her back on the house, standing like a sentinel. A shot is heard from Ezra's study. Lavinia stammers: "It is justice!"

The Haunted

A year later, Lavinia and Orin return from their trip East. Lavinia's body has lost its military stiffness and she resembles her mother perfectly. Orin has grown dreadfully thin and bears the statue-like attitude of his father.

In the sitting room, Orin grimly remarks that Lavinia's has stolen Christine's soul. Death has set her free to become her. Peter enters from the rear and gasps, thinking he has seen Christine's ghost. Lavinia approaches him eagerly. Orin jealously mocks his sister, accusing her of becoming a true romantic during their time in the Islands.

A month later, Orin works intently at a manuscript in the Mannon study. Lavinia knocks sharply at the locked door. With forced casualness, she asks Peter what he is doing. Orin insists that they must atone for Mother's death. As the last male Mannon, he has written a history of the family crimes, from Abe's onward. Lavinia is the most interesting criminal of all. She only became pretty like Mother on Brant's Islands, with the natives staring at her with desire.

When Orin accuses her of sleeping with one of them, she assumes Christine's taunting voice. Reacting like Ezra, Orin grasps his sister's throat, threatening her murder. He has taken Father's place and she Mother's.

A moment later, Hazel and Peter appear in the sitting room. Orin enters, insisting that he see Hazel alone. He gives her a sealed envelope, enjoining her to keep it safe from his sister. She should only open it if something happens to him or if Lavinia tries to marry Peter. Lavinia enters from the hall. Hazel moves to leave, trying to keep Orin's envelope hidden behind her back. Rushing to Orin, Lavinia beseeches him to make her surrender it. Orin complies.

Orin tells his sister she can never see Peter again. A "distorted look of desire" comes into his face. Lavinia stares at him in horror, saying, "For God's sake—! No! You're insane! You can't mean—!" Lavinia wishes his death. Startled, Orin realizes that his death would be another act of justice. Mother is speaking through Lavinia.

Peter appears in the doorway. Unnaturally casual, Orin remarks that he was about to go clean his pistol and exits. Lavinia throws herself into Peter's arms. A muffled shot is heard.

Three days later, Lavinia appears dressed in deep mourning. A resolute Hazel arrives and insists that Lavinia not marry Peter. The Mannon secrets will prevent their happiness. She already has told Peter of Orin's envelope.

Peter arrives, and the pair pledges their love anew. Started by the bitterness in his voice, Lavinia desperately flings herself into his arms crying, "Take me, Adam!" Horrified, Lavinia orders Peter home.

Lavinia cackles that she is bound to the Mannon dead. Since there is no one left to punish her, she must punish herself—she must entomb herself in the house with the ancestors.

Critical Appreciation of 'Mourning Becomes Electra'

Eugene O'Neill[1885-1953], a dramatist of USA could not keep pace with the progress in other branches of literature. Upto 18th century the puritan prejudice in the USA playwright was neglected if the play was poor. The people's need for drama was satisfied often by imported stuff.

At the end of 19th century English drama came to end. Standards of the drama had also fallen. By the next decade playwrights became increasingly aware of the richness of the American sense.

The American theater in the 1920's experimented in many different ways. Expressionism was also brought to America from Europe. The artists tried to depict state of mind and psychological condition. Due to the expressionism American theatrical spirit grew.

O'Neill's Contribution to Drama

O'Neill was genius. He brought change in American drama depiction. He used realism and expressionism. He did bold experiment. He used naturalistic details with symbolist mood, suggestiveness that was known only on the Greek stage where an Aeschylean triology kept the people spellbound for hours. John Gassner says-

"The stature of Eugene O'Neill casts a long shadow on the American theater whether it stretches or contracts in the critical estimates of a particular period or critic, this much is certain: the height and breadth of the American theater is measured by it. Find fault with O'Neill and you find fault with O'Neill and you find fault with the entire American stage, find merit in him and you find worth in this striving or straining toword significant drama."

In order to communicate inner reality O'Neill used expressionistic techniques. He used poetic devices as aside, soliloquy. He used poetic devices as aside, soliloquy, masks, etc. With the same end in view. He used myth and restored to epic dimesions in order to convey the sense of over-hanging fate driving men to their doom, eg, Mourning Becomes Electra. O'Neill uses symbolism to communicate.

In 'Mourning Becomes Electra', O'Neill has used myth and legend as symbols to give a broad and universal significance to his theme. In this play he used the Electra legend to achieve an approximation to the Greek sense of fate, such as would appeal to modern audiences. O'Neill writes- 'Not masks for all plays, naturally. Obviously not for plays conceived in purely realistic terms.' His symbolism is quiet near to realism.

O'Neill grew a lovely Pastureland in the barren land of American literature. Drama was the weaker side of America. Until the first world war no worthwhile play was written in the USA Eugene O'Neill was the beginner in drama. Before him force, comedy and melodrama were written. No greatly moving and powerful play was written. O'Neill wrote moving and powerful tragedies. His famous plays are 'The Hairy Ape', 'The Emperor Jones' and 'Mourning Becomes Electra'.

O'Neill violated "The sacred rights of the play-goer to discharge his obligations to the stage in two hours and a half of theatre attendance" His play were very lengthy. His play had epic dimensions. Through lengthy plays O'Neill brought a spaciousness that was only on the Greek stage where an Aeschylean triology kept the people spell bound for hours.

John Gassner, "the height and breath of the American theatre... Find fault with O'Neill and you find fault with the entire American stage; find in him and you find worth in striving or straining towards significant drama. It is possible to single out American playwright endowed with greater refinement and facility than can be attributed toi him but none who made a comparable impression on the twentieth century. Chiefly as a result of his persistent efforts after 1918, the American drama actually entered the century and made contribution to world theatre that could be considered significantly modern."

O'Neill, like T.S. Eliot, went to the Greek for inspiration. He said,- "tragedy, I think, has the meaning the Greeks gave it. "Like the Greek tragedy writers like Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides he saw humanity tortured and tormented in anguish. O'Neill's plays also have serious moral purposes like, Greek plays. Like Greek plays O'Neill plays also have serious moral purpose. He also has a modern equivalent of the Greek concept of fate or Gods. O'Neill studied Freud and Jung which made him discover the unconscious. In the Greek drama the struggle used to be between man and God; in the plays of O'Neill the struggle is now with himself, man's own past and future. To him God, Fate, Mytery are all aspects of the sub-conscious. O'Neill's tragic heroes are the modern equivalent of the Gods. Pride is responsible for their tragedy.

O'Neill brought back to life many conventions of Greek drama; like the chorus, the aside and the triology Maurning Becomes Electra is an American version of the Greek trilogy of the murder of Agamemnon, the death of Clytemnestra and the result that follows. O'Neill has adopted the Greek story to the necessity of American setting. The Trojan War and Agamemnon is General Ezra Mannon. Christine Mannon is Clytemnestra Electra is Lavinia, Orestes is Orin Aegisthis is captain Brant like Eliot in murder in the cathedral O'Neill is also greatly fascinated by the Greek dramatists and their techniques.

"The Electra complex derives from the 5th century Electra, who plotted matricidal revenge with Orestes, her brother, against Clytemnestra their mother, and Aegisthus, their stepfather, for their murder of Agamenon their father Sigmund Freud developed the female aspect of the sexual development theory-describing the psychodynamics of sexual competition with mother for sexual possession of father as the feminine Oedipus

complex, yet it was his collaborator carl Jung who coined the term Electra complex in 1913".

Eugene O'Neill's stature as a dramatist was summed up by Times in its laudatory obituary this: "Befor O'Neill, the United States had theatre: after O'Neill it had drama".

Mourning Becomes Electra is a triology designed on Oreseia showing the destruction of characters. This play refers to 'Fate' and 'Greek' Mythology. The play shows the psychological conflicts of the modern man. The Triology includes Home Coming, The Haunted and The Hunted. The play views Mannon family of New England. Ezra Mannon- the brigadier General and an ex- Judge, has gone to participate in the civil war and the mother- Christine and the daughter-Lavinia awaits the return of Ezra Mannon. Ezra is to return as the war ended on surrender of Lee's forces.

Captain Brant, a man from the Navy is courting Lavinia. Lavinia learnt from a hired man who has been there for sixty year that Brant is the son of Lavinias's Grand uncle who had seduced the Canadian maid servant. Brant's father was expelled from the Mannon household by Lavinia's Grandfather. Lavinia has visited New York where her mother is supposed to go on the pretext of her father illness but she has been meeting Adam Brant. Lavinia informed her brother Orin about her mother. Orin was in love with Hezel, Peter's sister. Peter loved Lavinia.

Adam Brant's mother has been ill-treated and he would like to be avenged on the Mannon family. But he has fallen in love with Christine who hated her husband. Ezra Mannon is sick and in place of medicine Christine poisons him. Brant sent this poison to her. Ezra dies. The differences between mother and daughter increases. Lavinia was very dear to her father. Brant was very close to his mother. The first part ends here. Now, we shall go through the second part of the trilogy.

The Haunted is the second part of the Trilogy. In this part Orin returns from war. He got injury in head. Christine was successful in getting favour of her son. Lavinia gives minute details regarding Christine in the room where her father's dead body has been lying. Lavinia and Orin follow Christine to the ship in which she has gone to warn Brant against Orin. Orin shots Brant. The next day Christine commits suicide. Lavinia gives the impression that he mother has father's death. In first part 'The Homecoming' Ezra Mannon is killed and in the second one Brant and Christine died. Now let's see what happens in the third part.

In 'The Hunted, Orin and Lavinia are back after visiting china and various other islands of the south East Lavinia has grown more beautiful like her mother and her brother has incestuous love for her. Lavinia wanted Orin to marry Hazal who was peter's sister but her wise could not be fulfilled. She herself wanted to marry peter but this wise of hers remained unfulfilled. Orin shoots himself. Lavinina loved peter very much but breaks with him. She decides to share the fate of other Mannons and she orders the curtains on

the window to be drawn to exclude the sunlight. She decides to remain in her house till her death.

O'Neill was not satisfied with the realistic details of his first draft of the play. He was eager to introduction psychological fate and symbolism. For this he brought the sea as a symbols and mask. The playwright has presented the sea as a symbol of escape and the house has become on image of tomb or love and hate. O'Neill has referred to the sea-symbol.

"Develop south sea Island motive-its appeal for them all-release, place, security, beauty, freedom of conscience, sinlessness etc. longing for the primitive and mother symbols yearning for pre-natal non-competitive freedom for fear makes this Island theme recurrent motive" Orin and Lavinia after the death of their mother escaped to sea to come in contact with the sea and the island the image of mother to get peace.

O'Neill does not follow Greek plot blindly. He makes changes according to the need of American stage. In Greek play brother had no incestual love for the sister. O'Neill adheres Greek plot, he widens the perspective by introducing the incest motive between Orin and Lavinia. There was not such motive behind the relation of Orestes and Electra. According to stark young-

"The story itself follows the Greeks up to the middle of third division of the play and there the insect motive, the death of Orin and transferences of the whole situation and dramatic conclusion from Aeshylys, Sophocles and Euripides. Adam Brant's relation to the family adds to the role of the lover the motif of a blood relationship. The old hired man, the confident, parallels of some extent a Greek device, familiar to us in countless plays. The town's people and workmen are a kind of chorus. Many of the shadings and themes are from the older plays. The division of the play into three parts is, of course, like the Triology of the Greek dramatists. On the other hand, the dividing line is much less distinct in Mourning Becomes Electra. The final curtain of the first part, for, it is true, on Mannon's death as in Aeschylys it does on Agumemnon, out there is not the same effect of totality because of the stress put on Lavinia. In Agmemnon, Electra even does not appear. In this way we find similarities and dissimilarities with the Greek theme".

The servant's role, the play's division in three sections, the role of charous resemble the Greek Triology psychological condition of the tragedy. The house of Mannon was sepulchre. She said-

"Each time I come back after being away, it appears more like a mask on puritan Gray ugliness. We can see the ugliness of Puritanism in old Abe,and later on in Ezra Mannon and Abe Mannon resembled in the way they exhibited David, his brother because he fell in love with Marle Brantome, a maid-servant. No supernatural power is found in the play. The force of denial and destruction dominated the characters.

The determinism of the play attracted the modern audience. The conflict of the play lies in love and lust. Ezra Mannon was the image of pride and egotism. There was no difference between love and lust for him. The Mannon believed that one is born to die. Whereas Marie and Christine had instinctive love for life. Orin and Lavinia inherited Mannons. Brant's mother died. Christine did suicids. Christine had physical charms. She had rich copper hair and beautiful eyes. Lavinia inherited her attractiveness from her mother. She was her copy in figure and charms.

Lavinia becomes the embodiment of Christine and her brother embodies her father. Lavinia did not accept her brother's incestuous love. Orin kills himself Lavinia remains alive in the Mannon family. Orin could not bear his sister's hatred that's why he shoot himself. Lavinia remains alone to suffer Mannon's doom. Lavinia shoots at the partraits of her ancestors with the supremacy of the Motherhood in her. Her Puritanism was was defeated but she walks stiffy.

We find neurotic pride present somewhere in Shakespearean and Greek plays. Heroes and heroines of O'Neill's plays are quite different. Doris Falk writes-

"He must make a choice between alternate images of the self in order to discover the real self which he often fails to do. Certainly he performs acts-if nothing else, he antagonizes other characters who are engaged in their own search for self and it is of this conflict with other is only a byproduct of the protagonist's conflict with himself"

Robert Frost Whitman, slights the incestuous motives and O'Neill's debt to Freud in the play-

"This essentially incestuous relationship which control much of the action of the play, may send the unwary reader to his Freud, but it will be a fruitless trip. It is true that O'Neill hoped-to get modern psychological approximation of Greek sense of fate".

The mask-like face staged, was new technique. This device was criticized. This play is a great work in its delineation of the 'psychological fate through the paralleling of the plot with the Greek tragedy. This play has many characteristics including tragic intensity, expressionism, experimentation, depth etc. It has psychological significance. The playwright has given us an opportunity to peep into the characters inner conflict. The play also satisfies some of the codes of tragedy laid by Aristotle. It's interesting that the length of the play doesn't deviate our attention.

Themes of Mourning Becomes Electra

The Inner Conflict

In Mourning Becomes Electra, O'Neill leaves for a while the war between God and science and returns to the more limited conflict within the 'suffering' individual. But the conflict and the suffering are traceable more specifically than ever to the fixations upon

father and mother, to the tension between puritanism and freedom, pride and love, death and life. As before, in most of the plays since Desire Under the Elms all other masks and values stem from the power of the father-and-mother-images, the Oedipus and Electra complexes.

In his detailed "Working Notes and Extracts, froth a Fragmentary Work Diary", O'Neill outlines his purpose and method in Mourning Becomes Electra, emphasizing repeatedly his equation of the complexes with destiny. They are "a modern tragic interpretation of classic fate without benefit of Gods––for it (the play), must before everything remain (a) modern psychological play––fate springing out of the family."

Working out of the Family Fate

As with the original Atreidae, the family fate of the New England Mannons is ancestral, not limited to one generation. It has been set in motion before the opening of the play by Abe Mannon, father of Ezra (Agamemnon) and grandfather of Lavinia and Orin (Electra and Orestes). Abe's younger brother, David, had been involved in a liaison with a French-Canadian governess, Marie Brantome, resulting in her pregnancy. David married her, but Abe (in Lavinia's words) put them both out of the house and then afterwards tore it down and built this one because he wouldn't live where his brother had disgraced the family. The child of David and Marie is Adam Brant, the Aegisthus of the play, who returns to avenge his parent's death in poverty and misery after their exile.

Pride as a Source of Death

The house of Mannon, therefore, was built upon outranged pride and puritanism, leading inevitably to death for the Mannon line. For them pride is the source of death, and love is the source of life. Existence for the Mannons is life-in-death from which love, represented by Marie Brantome, has been shut out. In their longing to escape the ugly reality of their actual lives the Mannons yearn for release in love untainted by pride and sin, and in death itself.

Christine's acceptance of sexuality, has been embittered by Ezra's Puritanism––distorted into a possessive passion; but to her husband, lover, and children, she still represents release and spinelessness. Even to Lavinia, who hates her because she "stole all love from me when I was born", Christine is still the longed-for mother, as well as the image of herself, Lavinia, as giver and lover.

Shift of Emphasis

Since O'Neill has shifted the emphasis of the trilogy from Orestes to Electra, the changes which take place in the character of Lavinia provide a new dimension to the theme of the play. Caught like Nina Leeds in the father-complex, she struggles at once to realize and to escape from a self-image which is only a reflection of her soldier father. Her physical appearance tells the story: tail like her mother, her body is thin, flat-breasted and

angular, and its unattractiveness is accentuated by her plain black dress. Her movements are stiff and she carries herself with a wooden, square- shouldered, military bearing. She has a flat dry voice and a habit of snapping out her words like an officer giving orders. But in spite of these dissimilarities one is immediately struck by her facial resemblance to her mother. This facial resemblance, the mask of the mother in Lavinia, will have its moment of fulfilment, but only briefly, until God the Father's lightning strikes again.

Pride, Puritanism and Vindictive Justice

The father, Ezra, embodies the characteristics of the family which constitute their fate–– pride, puritanism, and a strong sense of vindictive justice. Because of his ingrown egotism and his guilty attitude towards sex, Ezra does not, at the beginning of the play, know how to love. Desire for his wife takes the form of brutal and clumsy lust. Not until he has known the comradeship of other men on the battlefield and has seen death, does he become aware of the significance of love and life; "Death made me think of life. Before that life had only made me think of death……That's always been the Mannons' way of thinking. They went to the white meeting-house on Sabbaths and meditated on death. Life was a dying. Being born was starting to die Death was being born." Ironically, his ability to love and his insight into life come to Ezra only when he returns home to Christine's hatred and his own death.

Suicidal Frustrations

Christine has fallen in love with Adam Brant, the son of Marie Brantome. When Ezra is in the throes of a heart attack, Christine deliberately withholds his medicine. To the outside world, Ezra appears to have died from natural causes; Lavinia however, discovers her mother's guilt. She plans her vengeance––driven, not only by the Mannon sense of justice and her love for her father, but by her frustrated love for Adam and hatred and jealousy of her mother. Since Christine has 'stolen' the love of both men from Lavinia, the fitting relation for Lavinia is not to take her mother's life, but to take from her the love which is her life. At Lavinia's instigation, Orin murders Adam Brant. Christine takes her own life, and after Christine's suicide the spirit of vindictiveness and death in the Mannons seems to be temporarily satisfied, and Lavinia can come to life. She takes on all the attributes of, her mother; "She seems a mature woman, sure of her feminine attractiveness. Her brown-gold hair is arranged as her mother's had been ... The movements of her body now have the feminine grace her mother had possessed." Now, at perhaps her guiltiest, she has lost her, sense of sin and death. Her father's ghost in Lavinia has now been placated; like him, she could find life only after experience of death.

Chained to Mannons

And as Lavinia assumes the characteristics of the mother, Orin takes on those of his father. He even wears a beard and walks like a "tin soldier". Together they take a trip to

the East, stopping at the South Sea Islands. Orin watches Lavinia's new sexuality with puritanical disapproval and jealousy. He feels that he and Lavinia have actually become their father and mother ; "Can't you see I'm now in Father's place and you're mother ?...I'm the Mannon you're chained to !"

Symbolic Incest Pattern

To complete the symbolic incest pattern representing the lonely Mannons' introversion and their narcissistic inability to love any but another Mannon, Orin falls in love with his sister. The same duality of love and loathing for oneself and its reflection in another which has always dominated Mannon relationships now governs this one. Orin hates Lavinia as much as he desires her; she has become to him what the Furies were to Orestes, a constant reminder of guilt, driving him towards madness. He wants to become her, lover in order to force her to share his guilt. "How else can I be sure you won't leave me? You would never dare to leave me––then! You would feel as guilty then as I do……" Lavinia, both fascinated and repelled, shouts her hatred at him: "I hate you you're too vile to live! You'd kill yourself if you weren't such a coward."

Crumbling of the Illusion

With these words Lavinia has committed her last murder. When Orin shoots himself Lavinia's, last illusion of her own innocence begins to crumble. The puritan conscience (or superego or father-god), from which she has found release in identification with the mother, now reasserts itself. She shouts defiance at the portraits of her ancestors, "I'm Mother's daughter––not one of you……!" but even as she does so, the Mannon pride claims its own. The feminine Lavinia now "squares her shoulders, with a return––of the abrupt military movement copied from her father which she had of old-as if by the very act of disowning the Mannons she had returned to the fold––and marches stiffly from the room."

Last Effort to Reach For Life

Lavinia takes one more desperate effort to reach from behind her mask of death toward life. She begs her childhood sweetheart, the innocent, untempted, and unsuspicious Peter, to marry her. Even as she pleads with him, however, she knows that the dead have not forgotten, and, will not rest until justice has been performed. She must pay. for their lives with her own, not in the easy expiation of actual death––that would be the release for which,' she has always longed––but in a return to the living death which is the Mannon fate, and which, as always, is to be accomplished by Mannon pride. She tells Peter goodbye, as Seth, the gardener, sings the refrain of his "Shenandoah".

The Trap of Self Claims Its Prey

When Lavinia "pivots sharply on her heel and marches woodenly into the house, closing the door behind her", the tension between love and pride, life and death, is dissolved;

only, pride and death remain. Violated order has been restored the trap of self has finally and with finality claimed its inevitable prey.

Mourning Becomes Electra as psychological play

A play primarily concerned with the emotional and mental lives of the characters rather than the external events of the plot. Character and characterization are of extreme importance in such works. In a psychological drama the stress is laid on the motives which impel to perform an action rather than the moral consequences. This kind of drama rests on the discoveries made by Freud and his successors in the field of psychology.

Freud and his followers described human relations in terms of sexual connotation which laid the bases of critical approaches which try to interpret literature with respects emotional and mental bent of characters. They also give the concepts of Oedipus and Electra complex. Moreover, they said that repressed sexual desires mould the whole character of human beings.

Their work gave a new understanding of human actions and deeds. From their work came the concept of psychological realism. Modern writers never neglect psychological realism. With help of psychological realism humanism took a great leap further. Before Freud and his doctrines, human beings were considered either virtuous or vile. Hence virtuous were adored and loved, while were hated and loathed. But psychological realism showed that human beings are neither virtuous nor vile. Rather they pushed into their role by a number of circumstances. These circumstances can have their roots in social, biological, religious and many other sources.

If we apply the above mentioned remarks on the play Mourning Becomes Electra by Eugene, we find that the play abides by the remarks mentioned above. Mourning Becomes Electra is about an aristocratic family. This family is ruined and finally wiped out because of some flaws in the members of the family. Ezra Mannon fails to love his wife Christine because she is below in status. Christine falls in love with another man, Adam Brant. When she is discovered by her daughter, Lavinia, she kills her husband by poisoning him.

It not difficult to interpret why Christine falls in love with Adam Brant and why she finally kills her husband or the behavior of any other character in the play. Ezra loved Christine before their marriage because of her physical beauty and charm. But as soon as they are married and Christine comes without any dowry, his love ceases. And when Christine watches this change in the behavior of her husband, she is emotionally cut off with her husband. She finds solace in her children, especially in her son Orin, but when Orin is taken away from her she becomes very desperate. Her position in Mannon House was that of an extra man. Conversation between the servants in Act one of the play is an ample proof of her status in her home. Again behavior of her daughter shows the magnitude of torture she was undergoing on basis in the Mannon House. A person facing

this kind of circumstances becomes surely desperately. Though we cannot approve her action, we can understand them and it is this understanding that we feel sympathy for Christine in spite of the fact that she commits an unforgivable sin by murdering her husband.

Now her murder of her husband was the vilest thing ever expected from any woman but had she any other option? Perhaps no. She could not have secured divorce from Ezra as Lavinia tells her bluntly and if she had run with Brant, her life could have become very miserable because Ezra was an influential person. And even if Ezra had not got Brant blacklisted, she could not have gone on living with Brant without marriage because Brant would have got tired of her finally and she had the example of Marrie Brantome. Her only chance was if Ezra had died some way. Then she could have married Adam and she could have got her share out of Ezra's property to live comfortably with Brant. She was hoping that war would that but her hope did not come true and she had to do it herself.

Similarly we can understand the actions of all other characters because the playwright has laid their minds and souls bare before us by their psychological portrayal. Lavinia's love for her father and Christine's love for Orin can be explained in psychological terms. Here the writer used to hint at what Freud and his successors termed as Oedipus and Electra complex.

On the surface the play seems to be a revenge story and the playwright seems to hinting that revenge is a self-destructive passion. In other words revenge destroys both parties involved. And this is what actually happens in the play. Adam Brant uses Christine to revenge sufferings of his mother and Orin kills Adam Brant to revenge the murder of his father. But the story does not end here. It has other dimensions and avenues. At the end of the story, we can safely say that a family with upbringing like Mannons was sure to suffer because pride and hypocrisy had gone deep in their bones. Abe's pride and hypocrisy showed the seeds lf their destruction when he disowned his brother who fell in love with a maid. However his action can be interpreted in psychological terms. He was forced to that decision because of fear of society and religion. Eugene shows us how these forces make a human being what he becomes.

In conclusion we can say that Mourning Becomes Electra is a psychological play because in this play the playwright shows how the past experiences of people influences their life. All the characters have been drawn with great psychological insight. That is why we fell sympathy fall the characters. Although all of them perform vile deeds, we feel that we will not do justice if we say any of them vile because they are forced into those actions because of circumstances in which they are placed. Anyhow whatever they do and howsoever they behave is convincing and based on realism. It does not that everyone will do what they did or behave the way they behaved. It only means that human beings are capable of behaving the way they behave if they find themselves in the kind of circumstances in which they playwright has placed the characters of Mourning Becomes Electra.

Symbolism in Mourning Becomes Electra

Edwin Engel, in his brilliant analysis of the play, pointed to the dominant symbols and philosophy of Mourning Becomes Electra:

Symbolism is the practice of representing objects or ideas by symbols or of giving things a symbolic character and meaning. For example scales symbolize justice; a dove stands for peace; a lion stands for .strength and bravery. In all literary works, symbolism uses a concrete image to express an emotion or abstract idea. A symbol shows more than what is actually seen. Symbolism as ' a literary movement started in France in the nineteenth century.

O'Neill's use of symbolism is highly artistic. His use of symbolism is, artistically intended to extend the scope and meaning of the play. In "Mourning Becomes Electra", O'Neill uses Freudian psychological symbols.

He has used in his play a number of symbols - the mother image, the Blessed Isles (Desert Island), the Mannon portraits, etc. The very house of the Mannons stands as a symbol of hatred and callousness (cruelty, coldness). As Edwin Engel says, In Electra the Mother is a primordial (ancient) image, an archetypal (classic, conventional) experience shared by all the Mannons. Thus, Lavinia is identified with her mother, Christine, and both are the image of Marie Brantome.' Adam Brant falls in love with Christine because he associates her with his mother Marie. To him Lavinia looks like her mother. Only his mother (Marie Brantome) had hair like hers. O'Neill uses the Mother-image in details in the case of Orin. His love for his mother has sexual overtones (hint). He is his mother's cry-baby. He used to wait as a child to get an extra goodnight kiss from his mother. When he comes back from the war he finds his mother beautiful, she is his 'only girl'. And Christine replies, 'You're a big man now, aren't you?' Lavinia and Orin are drawn to the parent who belongs to the opposite sex. With Orin, his mother means everything that is sweet, pure, lovely and comforting and peaceful.

He feels his mother around him in the Blessed Islands; the breaking of the waves was her voice. The sky had the colour of her eyes;" the whole island was Christine. So the mother symbol means much more than mother - peace, security, love, freedom from fear. After the suicide of Christine, Lavinia occupies the mother image for Orin and he loves her with all the guilt in him, the guilt they shared. Orin's subconscious motive, in taking Lavinia is to possess his mother completely and Lavinia would be able to share the burden of his guilt.

The Blessed Isles are a symbol of joy, purity and innocence of Orin, 'Lavinia and Christine and Adam. O'Neill is voicing (expressing) a yearning in the heart of the puritan man for an ideal paradise full of beauty and sinlessness. The islands are a place of beauty for Adam; a refuge and paradise for Orin and a lode (level) star for Christine and Lavinia. Thus the Blessed Islands have been invested with psychological dimensions of peace and new trouble-free life. The islands are thus an image of fresh new life. The

islands motif (image) runs through the whole play tantalizing (tempting) and attracting Orin, Lavinia and Christine to a life of peace and nature and unalloyed happiness -their dream of an earthly paradise. As Lavinia says, 'I love those islands. They finished setting me free. There was something there, mysterious and beautiful- a good spirit - of love - coming out of the land and sea. It made me forget death. The islands stand for freedom from all puritan tabs (, bounds, check) freedom from pain and misery. O'Neill shows an average American's yearning to escape and return to paradise. But it remains a paradise lost a vision unachieved for grief is the lot of the Mannons and mourning becomes Electra.

The song of Shenandoah serves the purpose of a choral song. In the first part - Home Coining - Seth sings that melancholy song which has the brooding (gloomy, threatening) rhythm, of the sea. The song foreshadows (predict) unattainability and frustration for the characters. The song is there again after Christine's suicide; 'Oh, Shenandoah. I can't get near you,' casting a veil of finality (conclusiveness, determination) and mystery on Christine's death.

The symbol of the Mannon House shows us much more than a large house. It is a house built in hatred (of Marie Brantome's marriage with David). It is a house of death and the dead Mannons' portraits always intervene in the path of' happiness of their younger generation. It is a house, haunted by ghosts and sin and evil.

The use of symbolism adds a poetic quality to O'Neill's prose and universalizes the theme. It adds a new, dimension of emotion and depth of meaning to the dark events of the play. Thus as Travis Bogard puts it,

"Mourning Becomes Electra, perhaps O'Neill's most secular (worldly) play is also his least symbolic work to date. Such symbols as exist in the play, the house, for example, or the portraits, or the flowers, are all ' related to the human-beings at the central focus. Now, none of the conflict between character and symbol that beset (plagued, under pressure) many of the minor works and such major plays as Strange Interlude enters to plague this study of crime and retribution (revenge). There are no ambiguities; nothing is vague or suggested. The characters are drawn precisely, their story fully told, and they move toward a comprehensible (clear, understandable) and convincing destiny."

Destructive Power of The Romantic Ideal in Mourning Becomes Electra

O'Neill's Anti Romanticism

S. K. Winter says; "Critical thought in the modern world has. been a relentless-enemy of the romantic' ideal, and no. modern writer has attacked it more consistently or more bitterly than Eugene O'Neill." The exaggerated romanticism which enveloped the American theatre nurtured the mind of O'Neill's youth and provoked the rebellion of his

maturity. Against that tradition his plays are a direct challenge. He hates the false dreams and false ideals and false endings that have dominated the American stage and are still the, inspiration of the movies.

Romantic Ideals as Disease

To O'Neill these ideals are not harmless entertainment, but s virulent disease that has eaten into the core of life, rotting and destroying the only hope for salvation that is possible for man. O'Neill believes that man's hope lies in his being willing to face lifer as it is, accepting its limitations and, on the foundations of these very shortcomings, erecting a new world free from the tyranny of romantic dogmatism.

Criticism versus Seduction

The creative imagination will not always obey the logic of cold reason, and nothing is more characteristic of O'Neill than the conflict between his criticism of the romantic ideal and the manner in which he succumbs, at times to its seductive appeal. I doubt if there is a character in the whole range of his work who could be described as truly realistic in the sense that Bazarov, Pelle, or Sister Car might be called realists. Perhaps the greatness of O'Neill's characters lies in this very fact : that they are too complex, too involved with the cross current of life to be purely one thing or the other. Their conflicts give them a quality "which'' inspires confidence in their humanity and enlists the, reader's sympathy and understanding in a' way that more consistent and unified personalities never could.

The Dreamy Eyes

A study of the men and women that move through the world of O'Neill's dramas reveals some noteworthy characteristics that many of them have in common. One is 'impressed by the courage and fortitude with which they face the unfavourable circumstances of the world in which they live. They are determined to give life meaning and, value in defiance of a world that is impersonal and unconcerned about the ambitions of, human beings. It is not this characteristic that I wish to emphasize at this point but something that is purely physical and, at the same time, suggests a hidden romantic passion in the nature of O'Neill. Buried deep in his inner being is a love for some quality that the materialistic interpretation of life does not seem to bring out in its proper perspective. In order to discover just what this is, it will be necessary too note, in some detail, his descriptions of the Reading characters in many different plays to observe what physical characteristics they have in common. In the pursuit of this study a curious fact comes to light. No matter who the character may be or what his occupation or position in the social order is the favourite character of an O'Neill play has dreamy eyes. His characters live in two worlds : one the outward world of physical reality, the, other, a world of unfulfilled and passionate desire. This latter world is one which the dreamer wishes for with all the pent-up powers of his being. To this world he will sacrifice all that life has given him, for there is nothing in life that for a moment is comparable to the genuine reality of his

dream. Captain Bartlett commits murder because his longed for dream of pirate treasure seems to, have come true, and in another play, another sea captain sacrifices the sanity of his wife in order that his desire for a full load of whale oil may become a reality.

Tragedy of Romantic ideal

The incest theme began in Dynamo, and in a sense wrecked the play, only to find its proper expression in the story of General Mannon's family. The tragedy that ends with Lavinia's resolve to "Live alone with the dead, and keep their secrets" began in the home of her grandfather long before she was born. Ezra Mannon as a child had been in love with Marie Brantome, but it was his uncle, David, who was the successful lover. So deep was Abe, Mannon's against his brother who had stolen the affection of the Young woman that he himself had loved––loved in the thwarted Mannon sense of love, which dares not face the truth––that he drove him and his sweetheart from his home, and eventually destroyed the house in order that all members of the cursed experience might be obliterated forever from his life.

False Romantic Ideal

In that episode begins the false romantic ideal which finds its, culmination years later in the grandson as accomplice in the murder of his uncle and the long series of crimes that follow. From the beginning the misfortunes of the Mannons grow out of an inability to face, the reality of life. They live by false Puritan standards of behaviour. They did not know and could not learn that man as a psychological phenomenon is doomed to disaster if compelled to five within the confines of a limited creed. One by one "Death" came tacitly and took them from the sunlight of a world they had never seen except through the coloured glass of the "Meeting House" windows. They didn't know what it was all about until too late to learn a new way of life.

Romantic Ambiguity of the Islands

The world tour of Orin and Lavinia is one of the great tragic conceptions of O'Neill, for these two children are doubly doomed because they do not know that their tragedy Ties within, and that were they able to flee from the plane itself they would still bear it with them. As they travel they make one faint gesture in the direction of freedom, but the scars on the past had left a tissue which inhibited forever a turn into a new world. I refer to the Islands of the South Seas that had been so dear to the memory of Captain Brant, and dear also to the imagination of O'Neill as they were to Melville, one of the very few authors that are mentioned by name in O'Neill plays. No single passage in the play touches the heart more than Orin'S sad speech in which he tells of these Islands with a bitterness born of his disillusionment. For, as he says "They turned ,out to be Vinnie's Islands, not mine. They only made me sick ––and the naked women disgusted me. I' guess I'm too much of a Mansion, after all, to turn into a pagan.' To Lavinia they were real, they were an escape, so she thought, from all that had cursed her family for generations. They were to her all that her young lover had promised her, but she could

not accept that which she wanted. The cruel hand of tradition led her back to her doom, where she told Peter the story of the Islands in these words : "I loved those" Islands. They finished setting me free. There was something there mysterious and beautiful––a goad spirit––of love––coming out of the land and sea. It made me forget death. There was no hereafter. There was only this world-the warm earth in the moonlight––the trade wind in the coco palms––the surf on the reef––the fires at night and the drum throbbing in my heart––the natives dancing naked and innocent––without knowledge of sin.

Realization Comes Too Late

It is a characteristic of the Mannons that they knew or realized in a dim sort of way what was wrong with them, but always the realization came too late to set straight their crooked path of life. General Mannon discovered a new philosophy on the night that he was murdered, a discovery that, made twenty years earlier, would have saved him and his family. And what may he said of him in this respect may be said of many of O'Neill's characters with reference to the romantic ideal. An uncritical analysis might lead a reader to believe that O'Neill had stacked the fates against them. The opposite is really true, for it is typical of the romantic dreamer that he does not, nor can he comprehend the falsity of his position until it is put to the crucial test, and them it is too late to turn back. It is O'Neill's clear development of this point that gives tragic reality to his work, and it is the failure to grasp this truth which has led many people to condemn him. But he is too much of an artist not to realize truly a fact of life that is the very essence of his own nature. He is the romantic dreamer who knows the deadly power of the dream's appeal. In his life, as in his work, he has striven against it, and out of the struggle he has created the hitter tragic' beauty of his art. He never forgets that life will exact a double, toll from those who believe that dreaming of what life ought to be will make it other than it is.

Theme of death in Mourning Becomes Electra

Imminence of Death

Beyond the stereotyped message that "adjustment is all", and in ironic contrast to it, there is in Mourning Becomes Electra an overwhelming, unrelenting sense of the imminence of Death. The events of the plot––murder, murder-suicide, immurement–– objectify this sense of death as does the sepulchral facade of the Mannon house. Death is the goal of O'Neill's Puritan ; he meditates on it, he walks in its shadow, he lives for it. Since this Puritanism does not include a theological dimension, Death is an end in itself, not a passage to another world.

Death as Epiphany

Thus Death is not merely a thematic image in the play or simply a way of dispatching the personae and cleaning up the stage. It is the Epiphany that concludes the action, the vision to which the plot progresses. If Greek tragedy included the death of the hero, it

also provided a means of encompassing the idea of death in a framework of death-and-rebirth. O'Neill's modifications, however, result in a hopeless reiteration that death is final, absolutely conclusive, the end. In addition to the agony and the pathos, the conflict and the suffering, the Oresteia includes a "rebirth" or epiphany, in which the hero is purified by both society and the gods. In Mourning Becomes Electra however, the epiphany is a vision of Death, of existential nothingness, the individual confronted by the void. "Rebirth" and purgation become simple release from suffering through suicide or self-immurement.

The Ubiquity of Death

John Henry Raleigh says : "Underneath the play's Freudianism ; its analogizing to Greek myth ; its recurrent incest motifs generation after ; its contrast between the uninhibited sexuality. of the South Seas and the rigid prudery of New England and the accompanying contrast between the freedom, rhythm, brightness, and beauty of life at sea and the restrictions, mechanizations, darkness, and dreariness of life on land ; underneath all these devices and themes is the ubiquity of death." Yes, it is true. It is not only a question of the two murders (those of Ezra Mannon and Adam Brant) and the two suicides (Christine Mannon and Orin Mannon), but of the very fabric of the thought of the play, wherein the characters are not only trapped by their own dead but are also continually, tortuously meditating upon death. No one ever reaches a conclusion ; all they know, with any certainty, is that death is surely, inexorably devouring the Mannons, their power, and their way of life. In act third of Homecoming the newly returned Ezra Mannon, back home from the war, cannot stop talking about death, despite his wife's plea that he cease : "That's always been the Mannons' way of thinking. They went to the white meeting-house on Sabbaths and meditated on death. Life was a dying. Being barn was starting to die. Death was being." But the war, seeing too many white walls splattered with blood "that counted no more than dirty water", made all this seem meaningless, ''so much solemn fuss over death !" Real death has thought him the meaninglessness of imagined death, the Mannon obsession. But by dawn he will be death's victim, murdered by his wife. Ironically, he had earlier observed to his wife : "All victory ends in the defeat of death."

Death Symbols and Themes

Death symbols and themes are woven into the play in all kinds of ways. For example, the ancestral Mannons, whose portraits glare down from the walls of the house, were "witch-burners". Again, the black-white symbolism that is endemic in O'Neill's plays, and in American literature generally, is pervasive in Mourning Becomes Electra : the white faces set off by black clothing ; the white porticos of the house dimming into darkness ; and so on. And as in Melville, white does not signify purity ; rather it means the charnel house. The sound effects concur. The first song heard is "John Brown's Body". The theme song of the play, "Shenandoah", is meant to signify the more sombre aspects of the sea ("a song that more than any other holds in it the brooding rhythm of the sea"). The drunken chantyman of the fourth act of The Hunted staggers off singing "Hanging

Johnny". Even American history plays a role in generating this aura of the charnel house, for the seminal national events in the background of the play are the Civil War, the greatest carnage experienced on American soil, and the assassination of Lincoln, its greatest single political tragedy. Moreover, beautiful, rhythmic ways of life are dying too, with the clipper giving way to the steamer. As the chantyman drunkenly and lugubriously laments to Adam Brant, the owner of a beautiful clipper: "Aye, but it ain't fur long, steam is comin' in, the sea is full smoky tea-kettles, the old days is dyin', and where'll you an' me be then? (Lugubriously drunken again) Everything is dyin' ! Abe Lincoln is dead."

Attack on Puritanism in Mourning Becomes Electra

Suggestive Setting

Mourning Becomes Electra is a psychological dramatization of the evils of puritanism. The puritan heritage of the personae in the play is established in a way by the setting. O'Neill situates the action in New England. The locale––in literary convention at least––is rugged, cold, sea-bound. The thin-soiled, rock-strewn countryside with small, barren mountain-ranges and rivers running down to the gray Atlantic creates an atmosphere of severity, inflexity, firmness. The people are like the landscape-tight, thrifty, joyless, merchant class puritans, descendants of Anglo-Saxon nonconformists. The Mannons live in this setting ; their attitudes are defined by the locale.

O'Neill's Version of Puritanism

Within this general situation O'Neill specifies, his puritanism. It is not a careful historical approximation of New England attitudes vintage 1865 ; it is puritanism as O'Neill understood it through the eyes of his own generation. And, in the early twentieth century, among the avant-garde of the literary world, it was the sum total' of everything that was wrong with American society. No matter what the private views of individuals, the official American posture was a hypocritical, righteously irreligious (or a-religious) puritanism.

The Voice of Mencken

The puritan background of Mourning Becomes Electra comprises, along with broader classical elements, that complex of attitudes described and decried by Mencken and his associates. O'Neill weaves these attitudes into the background of his action. As the-locale calls puritanism to mind; O'Neill visualizes the tradition in his stage setting. The Mannon house characterizes the family. The facade of the mansion is fronted by a white Grecian temple portico with six tall columns and a gray stone wall behind. This portico is like an incongruous white mask fixed on the house to hide its sombre gray ugliness. If

the audience fails to mark the significance of the setting, early in the first act it is called to their attention. In the words of Christine :

Every time I come back after being away it (the house) appears more like a sepulchre ! The "whited" one of the Bible––pagan temple front stuck like a mask on Puritan gray, ugliness ! It was just like old Abe Mannon to build such a monstrosity––as a temple for his hatred.

It is highly unlikely that a New Englander of 1865 would see the family home in this light ; the voice is the voice of Mencken. The action is played against this parisaical facade as the house of the Mannons visualizes for the audience the traditional attitudes of the "House of Mannon".

Cultural Base of the Mannon Heritage

This interpretation of the puritan heritage rests on a broad cultural base; the Mannon background also includes those features characteristic of the nineteenth-century New Englander. Grandfather Abe, whose Biblical name has dynastic implications, established a shipping business that made the family fortune. (The name Mannon, with resonances of Agamemnon, also has an appropriate resemblance to "Mannon".) As a result of their dedication to business, the Mannons are the most prosperous family in the community. After learning law, he became judge and mayor of the town. Devotion to business is part of the traditional Protestant mystique. Diligence and industry lead to financial success–– and this success carries with it a debt to society.

The Mannons its "The Elect"

To all outward appearances, the Mannons are "the elect". Their prominence in the community and the lavishness of the mansion testify to their probity, according to the orthodox standard. Christine, whose adulterous union would hardly be explicable in a rigid puritan, is set apart from the real Mannons ; her ancestry is not new England or even Anglo-Saxon. She is "furring lookin' and queer, French and Dutch descended." Her -family has not been financially successful––"She didn't bring no money when Ezra married her." "She ain't the Mannon kind" sums up the xenophobic reaction of the townspeople This background is contrasted with the family's––Anglo-Saxon stock, old settlers, successful merchants, in short, puritan "elect".

No Relish of Salvation

Though the family has all the visible earmarks of the predestined, these are simply outward show. Like the mansion, their puritanism is full of dead men's bones, and their theology has no relish of salvation in it. "The Mannon way" is a preoccupation with death, the cold remnant of Calvinistic dogma. For example, Ezra says, "Life 'had only made me think of death...That's always been the Mannon way of thinking. They went to the white meeting-house on Sabbaths and meditated on death. Life was a dying. Being

born was starting to die. Death was being born…That white meeting-house. It stuck in my mind––clean scrubbed and white––washed- a temple of death.” According to the cultural analyses of historians; like Weber, the virtues of the puritan––industry, thrift, social responsibility, regular habits, careful avoidance of sensuality, all stemmed from a search for certainty about election. Somewhat oversimplifying Calvin’s theology they depended on cautious organization and a clock-like regularity as protection against an irretreivable lapse––a fall whose implications extended out of time into the illud tempus of predestined election, that “moment” which melds the beginning with the end of time, the arche with the eschaton. No redemption is possible for the sinner within this system ; once fallen, he is forever reprobate. The Mannon concern with death, however, does not relate it to grace, election and after-life. There is no theological foundation to the puritan code in Mourning Becomes Electra. Like the puritanism that Mencken describes, it is an appearance without substance, an ethic without a dogma. These attitudes provide a basis for the motivation of the personae, but, unlike the tribal code of the Oresteia, they do not include an Olympian dimension.

Sex and Puritanism

Another prominent feature of the Mannons’ puritanism is their attitude towards sex. For O’Neill’s generation, puritanism was .associated, first and foremost, with a repressive attitude towards sexual impulses. This appetite posed the greatest problem for the Calvinist; it exercised the strongest pull and thus had to be most zealously guarded against. The “fall from grace” gradually assimilated sexual overtones ; the fallen woman fell only in one direction.

Sex and the Family Curse

O’Neill’s characters are caught between this revulsion and fascination. The origin of the family curse is, in the first instance, Abe Mannon’s hatred towards his brother David because of David’s seduction of, and subsequent marriage to, Marie Brantome. He went so far as to destroy the house in which the seduction took place. This hatred has implicit approval in the puritan way––no association of the elect with the reprobate. By sustaining the orthodox position on sexual errance, Grandfather Mannon––who, it turns out, was in love with. Marie himself––bequeathed his righteous hatred to the family. In the play this strain in the Mannon ethos finds full expression in the; reactions of Lavinia and Orin. In her first conversation with Captain Brant, Lavinia declares that she “hates love”, and equates it with “naked women and sin”. “Love” means the physical act of love ; the Captain, like all men, dreams dirty dreams––of love. Christine, whose descent explains her liberal attitude––the French are traditionally a passionate people––derides her daughter for prudishness : “Puritan maidens should not peer too inquisitively into spring ! Isn’t beauty an abomination and love a vile thing ?” Love is sometimes vile also for Christine ; her own marriage soon turned “romance into disgust”. She made her husband feel the burden of her distaste, and he expresses his reaction in good puritan style : “What are bodies to me? ...Ashes to ashes, dirt to dirt ! Is that your notion of love ? Do you think I married a body ?...You made me appear a lustful beast in my own

eyes––as you've done since our first marriage night." For the Mannons, dirt and animality and abomination spell out the implications of sex.

The Fascination-Revulsion Syndrome

The obverse of the coin is depicted also ; their revulsion is. attended by a fascination. Though bodies are only bodies, when Ezra sets out to effect a reconciliation with his wife, he becomes passionate. Christine allays his suspicion about her affair with Brant by kissing him and allowing him to press her "fiercely in his arms". Lavinia's repugnance for mother's sensuality is flavoured with jealousy, especially about her father's affection. Of all the Mannons, Orin reveals this fascination-revulsion syndrome most. His passionate attachment to his mother, rife with sexual overtones, has kept him from marrying Hazel, but he is drawn by the girl's purity, and he sees her passionless love for him as cleansing. On their return from the Islands, he finds Lavinia's blossoming attractiveness repulsive––because he sees her now as desirable. The climax of the brother-sister relationship is Orin's proposal that they have incestuous relations ; this would both satisfy his desire and cement their mutual guilt. From the puritan point of view, the physical act of love between brother and sister is the fullest expression of their mutual damnation. The "curse" which began with David's seduction of Marie Brantome spirals down to an incestuous proposal. No seventeenth-century divine would conceive in more suitable symbol for the ultimate reprobation of the Mannons ; no libertarian would devise a clearer picture of the fascination--revulsion combination that Mencken and his school saw in puritanism.

Conventional Puritanism

The attitudes of the townspeople-chorus underscore the conventionality of the play's puritanism. The middle-class conspiracy which aspires to Babylonian practices while proclaiming Christian values weds hypocrisy with a practical view of sex. The women gossip in orthodox fashion ; coming away from Ezra's wake, Mrs. Hills blurts out : "You remember, Everett, you've always said about the Mannons that pride goeth before a fall and that some-day God would humble them in their sinful pride." This version embarrasses the company ; afterward the mew draw aside for a less pious assessment. They make sniggering references to the General's love-making as the probable cause of his angina. The lower classes are even blunter about their sexual preoccupation. Before the climax of the second play, the murder of Adam by Orin, the drunken sailor who serves as chorus complains about the "yaller-haired pig who put her arm around me so lovin' " and then cleaned his pockets. Similarly, in the knocking-on-the-gate episode which opens The Hunted, the crones who gather round the gardener allow that Christine was a "looker". Owe offers to let her ghost sit on his lap if "ghosts look like the living". The middle-class and the proletariat fill out the picture ; they reflect Menckew's contention that the puritan sexual code does not really present the aspirations of the society. And, while practice and appearances may differ among the classes, their attitudes with regards to sex have a common root ; sex is animal, and degrading, not to be associated with "pure" love.

Limitations of Puritanism

O'Neill's understanding, of puritanism provides conscious motivation for the personae. The Mannons think in puritan categories.; they see their plight in these terms. But the playwright and the audience see their actions in a wider context that conflicts with but also in some sense explains, the puritan mentality. Puritanism does not clarify the darker matters that make the action, inevitable, that link crime to crime in necessary progress.

"Mourning Becomes Electra" : A Tragedy in Modern Sense

Eugene O'Neill is a one of great playwrights that America has ever produced. His plays reflect classical sense of tragedy coupled with modern psychology. His play "Mourning Becomes Electra" qualifies this statement on great extent. The classic and notorious problem about tragedy in modern appearance has been that the characters, not being over life-size but rather below it, excite pity without admiration and therefore without terror. Though O'Neill has talked of an "ennobling identification" with protagonists, he has only once tried to do anything about it: only in "Mourning Becomes Electra "are the characters over life-size. Unhappily this is no because of the size of their bones but, as it were, by inflation with gas, cultural and psychological.

One of the modern critics Schopenhauer declares that in "Mourning Becomes Electra" we find the true sense of tragedy that "it is not his own individual sins, i.e. the crime of existence itself". So devoted was he to this conception, that he permitted it to inform the entire trilogy. The pessimism of the Greeks may have been equally black, their tragedies just as aware of the crime of existence, still "They would have despised", as William James observed,

"A life set wholly in a minor key, and summoned it to keep within the proper bounds of lachrymosely".

The unfulfilment, exhaustion, and apathy which are significant possessions of O'Neill's tragedy are effectively manipulated in the play. The Greeks were never as contemptuous of life as to seek consolation in death, nor as afraid of death as to calm did their fears by promising themselves, have the fulfilment after death of all that they vainly yearned for in life. O'Neill is not to be censured for the predicament, in which he found himself, or for the fashion in which he chose to extricate himself, but rather for misinterpreting his dream. For however ingeniously he substituted the premises of a rationalistic psychology, however adeptly he interpolated his allegory, however glibly he spoke of fate and destiny, crime and retribution, guilt and atonement, his dream in tragedy was not the Greek dream.

The appearance of "Mourning Becomes Electra" subsequent to Krutch's estimate in 1929 of modern tragedy gave Crutch no cause to revise his assertion that the:

"Tragic solution of the problem of existence, the reconciliation to life by means of the tragic spirit is…. Only a fiction surviving in art".

Indeed, O'Neill's play bears out the statement by achieving precisely the opposite result: Electra offers a solution not to the problem of existence but to that of non-existence; it reconciles not to life, but to death. Nor did O'Neill invoke that Tragic Spirit which Krutch regarded as the product either of a "religious faith in the greatness of God" or of "faith in the greatness of man" although by 1932 it seemed to Krutch that he had satisfied this demand, that he had, in short, succeeded in investing man "once more with the dignity he has lost". He insisted, begging the question,

"The greatness of the plays lies in the fact that they achieve a grandeur which their rational framework is impotent even to suggestion".

In "Mourning Becomes Electra", he convinces, that human beings are great and terrible creatures when they are in the grip of great passions, and that the spectacle of them is not only absorbing but also and at once horrible and cleansing. Here, it seems Krutch is entirely wrong. Not only has he missed the "meaning" of O'Neill's trilogy, he has discerned in O'Neill's characters qualities that are mostly non-existent. They are characters, moreover, whose passions are infantile rather than great, are spectacle that is horrible but scarcely cleansing. Catharsis is a condition, which O'Neill seldom achieved, preferring, as he did, narcosis or necrosis. That the deficiencies of "Mourning Becomes Electra", when it is compared "with the very greatest works of dramatic literature" are limited only to its language is an opinion, which, if our judgments have been even moderately sound, has little to be said in its support. There is equally little to be said for Krutch's contrast of Ibsen and O'Neill and, wherein he finds that O'Neill avoided the central fault of Ibsen's tragedies, namely, that they are

"Too thoroughly pervaded by a sense of human littleness to be other than melancholy and dispiriting".

Having defined "true tragedy … as a dramatic work in which the outward failure of the principle personage is compensated for by the dignity and greatness of his character", Krutch concludes that "O'Neill is almost alone among modern dramatic writers in possessing what appears to be an instinctive perception of what a modern tragedy would have to be". Yet one has only to strip "Mourning Becomes Electra" of its spiritual malaise, its Freudian machinery, its self-conscious symbolism, its Gothic properties, its turgid style, to see how little better O'Neill has succeeded than Ibsen in satisfying Krutch's definition of "true tragedy". Ghosts, too, was a tragedy of family guilt in which the original scene is traced to the life- denying impulse. One side is happiness; on the other is "the source of the misery in the world": law, order, and duty. Living in the house polluted by her husband's profligacy, Mrs. Alving, the counterpart of Christine, revolts against the restrictive virtues which society has imposed upon her and which prevented Alving from finding "any outlet for the overmastering joy of life that was in him". Oswald, haunted by his father's sin, suffers not only physical consequences thereof, but repeats –

like Orin –the parents `behaviour. Where Orin is afflicted with a stubborn case of Weltschmerz, and complications induced by a wound in the head –the dowry of the Mannons in general, Ezra is particular –Oswald suffers from congenital syphilis –the indirect of the Mannons way of life, but the direct consequence of his father's dissolute actions. When, at the conclusion of the tragedy, Oswald locks himself and his mother inside their haunted house for paying out the family curse much as Lavinia is. Surely the madness of a paretic is not more melancholy and dispiriting than the masochism of a woman who denies herself the pleasure of dying.

More restrained than Krutch, George Jean Nathan never compared "Mourning Becomes Electra" "with the very greatest works of dramatic literature", but he did declare it to be "indubitably one of the finest play that the American theatre has known". Like Krutch, he mistook Weltschmerz for tragedy and ascribed purgative powers to hyper-emotionalism and to the manifestations of a neurotic sensibility. But Nathan came closer to the truth when he observed that O'Neill's "passionate inspiration", "the sweep and size of his emotional equipment and emotional dynamics" transcended the characters and the play. This is a euphemistic way of saying that "Mourning Becomes Electra" contains no adequate equivalent for the playwright's excess of feeling. It is a fault that is present in most of O'Neill's plays, and O'Neill himself was apparently aware of it when in "Mourning Becomes Electra" he consciously shunned "the many opportunities for effusions of personal writing about life and fate". If the trilogy is less effusive than some of the preceding plays, its grandiosity is threefold greater than most. If it contains less "personal writing", it is far from reticent concerning the author's conception of life and fate, a conception which suggests that the glow felt by Nathan to be spreading over all "the glow that is O'Neill" is less "Luminous and radiant" than feverish.

Mourning Becomes Electra follows the pattern of the Greek trilogy in the essentials." Discuss.

Suggestive Title

The title of the play itself suggests the relation of the play to the Greek drama. The story of the house of Atreus was set down by Homer, Pindar, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and diverse other Greek writers whose works are not extant. From this house shadowed by an ancient curse, Agamemnon, brother of Menelaus, goes forth to the war at Troy.

His wife, Clytemnestra, the sister of Helen, during her husband's absence takes for her paramour Aegisthus and shares the government of Argos with him. In due time Agamemnon having at the God's behest sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia and bringing with him Cassandra, Priam's daughter, returns, and is murdered by Clytemnestra and her lover. Electra, his daughter, is shamed and degraded and prays for the return of her brother Orestes, long ago sent out of the country by her mother and now become a man. Orestes returns, kills Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. He is pursued by the Erinyes,

and only after wandering and agony and a vindication of himself before the tribunal of Athena's Areopagus is he cleansed of his sin.

Bare Outlines

Mourning Becomes Electra begins with the mother and daughter, Christine and Lavinia, waiting there in the house of the Mannons, the return of Ezra Mannon from the war, which with Lee's surrender is about over. A thread of romance is introduced between Lavinia and Peter, and between Lavinia's brother, Orin, and Hazel, Peter's sister. Meanwhile, Captain Brant comes to call ; he ;pays a certain court to Lavinia, and she, acting on a cue from the hired man, who has been on the place sixty years, traps him into admitting that he is the son of one of the Mannons who had seduced a Canadian maidservant and been driven from home by his father, Lavinia's grandfather. She has all her data straight now. She has suspected her mother, followed her to New York, where Christine has pretended to go because of her own father's illness, but has in fact been meeting Adam Brant. Lavinia has written to her father and brother, hinting at the town gossip about her mother. We learn that Captain Brant had returned to avenge his mother but instead had fallen passionately in love with Christine, who loves him as passionately as she hates her husband. From this point the play moves on, with the father's hatred of the son, who returns it, the son's adoration of his mother, the daughter's and the mother's antagonism, the daughter's and father's devotion, to Christine's murder of her husband with the poison sent by Brant and substituted for the medicine prescribed against his heart trouble. Orin returns, after an illness from a wound in the head. Christine tries to protect herself in her son's mind against the plots of Lavinia. Lavinia, in the room where her father's body lies, convinces him with the facts ; they trail Christine to Brant's ship, where she has gone to warn him against Orin. Orin shoots Brant. Christine next day kills herself. Brother and sister take a long voyage to China, a stop at the southern isles, come home again. Substitutions have taken place, Lavinia has grown like her mother, Orin more like his father. Meanwhile, his old affair with Hazel, encouraged at last by Lavinia, who now wants to marry Peter, is cancelled ; he finds himself making an incestuous proposal to Lavinia and is repulsed by her. He shoots himself. In the end Lavinia speaking words of love to Peter, finds Adam's name on her lips. She breaks with Peter, orders the blinds of her house nailed shut, and goes into the house, to live there till her death. Justice has been done, the Mannon dead will be there and she will be there.

The Essential Pattern

Thus it is clear that Mourning Becomes Electra follows the pattern of the Greek trilogy in the essentials. The first play, entitled the Homecoming is closest to its original. It tells of the return of General Ezra Mannon (Agamemnon) from the Civil War, and of his murder by his wife, Christine (Clytemnestra), at the urging of her lover, Adam Brant (Aegisthus). And it ends with the confrontation of the mother by her daughter, Lavinia Mannon (Electra).

Difference Between the Two Plays

Physically, the chief difference of the modern play from its original is that Christine and her lover do not stab the husband in his bath ; she administers poison to him instead of the medicine he expects. But, if this difference of action seems minor, it points to a major difference of character, neither Ezra nor Christine Mannon shares the heroic stature of the Greek Agamemnon and Clytemnestra. Ezra seems less the conquering hero than the lonely old man, and his guilt is disproportionally small––it is not the cruelty and self-willed pride of the Greek ; it is only a puritanical failure to satisfy his wife in their love-relationship. And Christine shares neither the passionate hatred of Clytemnestra for her husband; nor her passionate love for Aegisthus. Rather she seems a neurotic, vindictive woman whose nature is poisonous rather than heroic. Although the first play explains the actions of the classical Agamemnon in modern psychological terms, it substitutes neurotic hatred for the full-blooded passion and violence of the original.

The Essential Outlines

The second play of the trilogy, entitled The Hunted also follows, the essential outlines of its Greek original. It centres upon the character of Orestes––now Orin Mannon, who has just returned from the war as this play begins. Confronted with the proof of his mother's guilt, Orin hunts down her lover and shoots him. But he does not murder his mother, as in the original Greek. Instead he tells her of her lover's death and confronts her with her guilt and with his own confused hatred of it, so that she is driven to commit suicide. The substitution of this suicide for the murder of the Greek original again emphasizes the anti-heroic nature of the modern protagonist. Nevertheless, in the case of Orin (Orestes), "the Furies" which were externalized in the Greek myth, now have been realized more dramatically in the tortured conscience of the modern "hero" and in the psychological confusions of his mind. And these psychological Furies have been motivated more fully by the modern incident of Orin's mad laughter and wounding in the war. Therefore Orin seems to be driven by the tortured conscience of all modern man, in their realization of the evil of world war.

Departures From the Greek Originals

The third play of the trilogy entitled The Haunted departs more radically and purposefully from the Greek originals. It centres upon the character of Electra rather than that of Orestes, and it ascribes to this new Electra the only heroism––and the only true tragedy––of the three plays. In the Greek, Electra had been married to a peasant farmer and had remained subordinate to her brother. But, in his earliest note for the future plays, O'Neill directed : "Give modern Electra "gure in play tragic ending worthy of character. In Greek story she peters out into undramatic married banality." And throughout the planning and writing the trilogy he consistently developed this new conception until "Electra" became the title figure.

The Change of Action

Moreover, in changing the character of Electra from the Greek original, O'Neill also changed the action and the dramatic conception of the final play. Now, Orestes can no longer find absolution from the Furies which drive him (as he does in the Greek) ; he accepts damnation for the evil of his nature, and commits suicide, concluding : "The damned don't cry !" But Electra triumphs over the evil of her heritage by recognizing it clearly, and by determining to live with it to the end : "I'm the last Mannon. I've got to punish myself." And she begins her penance by telling Hannah "to throw out all the flowers". She locks herself in with her memories : she will escape damnation by learning fully to understand her own past and how to "cry" or "mourn" for it. At the end the modern heroine regains her humanity by undertaking a tragedy greater than that of her ancestors. She, like her creator, begins her "long day's journey into night".

Mourning Becomes Electra is concerned with the fated family life of the Mannons. Discuss. (P.U 2004)

R. D. Skinner rightly observes that "Mourning Becomes Electra is the drama of a soul at mortal grips with the love of self, the deadly poison of the spirit that denies all creation because it would be self-creative, self-sufficient, both creator and creature, man: coequal with God."

The House of Mannon in this play is the summation of man in which the multitudinous characters that have gone before are only. pale, premonitory shadows of the realities at last revealed––the false prides, the timid abasements, the yearning for childlike peace, the struggles for freedom, exultant discoveries and crests of hope and the heartrending plunges into renewed darkness. Each of the male Mannon himself must die if the soul is to live, killed by, dying to his old self in the mystic formula of the poets and saints, if he is to be reborn to life and love. In this struggle to the death, it is only the spirit of the woman which lives on in solitary expiation, "until the curse is paid out and the last Mannon is let die." Behind the closed doors of that house, the feminine soul, last to die to itself, must find the secret of purgation in silence and alone, beyond the gaze of men, in the sanctuary of the immortal inner will, where only the breath of God may touch its darkness.

Main Threads of Plot

In the first play entitled The Hunted General Ezra Mannon, one of a long line whose wealth and position have been gathered from the sea, returns from the war at a time when his partly foreign wife, Christine, has secretly been giving her love to a sea captain, Adam Brant. She knows him to be the son of another Mannon who "disgraced" his family by marrying a French-Canadian servant girl. Brant is genuinely in love with Christine, but in first seeking her out his sole purpose was revenge on the present head of the house of Mannon. Christine's daughter Lavinia is devotee to her father with an

almost fanatical attachment, and doubly resents her mother's infidelity, partly because she herself is attracted to Brant, who resembles her father, and partly because she has always instinctively taken her father's part against her mother, whom she hates and of whom she is inwardly jealous.

Sinister Cloud of Love-of-Self

In the first play, Lavinia's brother, Orin, is still away in camp, recovering from a serious head wound which has weakened his whole nervous system. But we learn that Orin is as much devoted to his mother, of whom he constantly dreams in his illness, as Lavinia is devoted to her father. Yet between brother and sister there is a similar bond of deep attachment––part of that sinister cloud of love-of-self, as reflected in one's own family, which hovers over the ill-fated house. Lavinia lets her mother know that she has discovered her infidelity, but instead of-threatening to tell her father, offers to keep silent if her mother will send Brant away forever. Christine is quick to strike at the truth of Lavinia's action. "You wanted Adam Brant for yourself", she says accusingly, "and now you know you can't have him, you're determined that at least you'll take him from me! ...But if you told your father, I'd have to go away with Adam. He'd be mine still. You can't bear that thought even at the price of my disgrace, can you ?...I know you, Vinnie ! I've watched you ever since you were little, trying to do exactly what you're doing now ! 'You've tried to become the wife of your father and the mother of Orin ! You've always schemed to steal my place !" Of course Lavinia denies and resents these charges bitterly, but persists in her, determination until her mother, in desperation, promises to send Brant away.

A Strange Homecoming

The return of General Mannon is indeed a strange homecoming. In Lavinia alone he finds genuine pleasure and affection. But he has determined, during his long years of facing death, to rediscover the secret of life and to break down, if possible the barrier he has felt between himself and his wife, ever since the earliest days of their marriage. With great difficulty, he throws aside the reserve of years and tries to tell her of his loneliness and his love. But he faces only the mocking mask of a woman who has is already determined that the only way to free herself is to kill him. She has already arranged to have Brant send her some poisonous, tablets which she plans to give her husband instead of the medicine his doctor has prescribed for an increasing trouble of the heart. His heart disease will explain his death to world at large. She and Adam will be free.

In the intimacy of their first night together, when Ezra Mannon feels the false atmosphere of her pretended affection, she suddenly goads him with an open statement of her love for Brant, and tells him, moreover, Brant's true identity as one of the "outlawed" Mannons. The emotional strain brings on as she has planned, a severe heart attack. She substitutes for his medicine the poison Brant has sent her. But in his death agony, Ezra Mannon calls out for Lavinia who reaches his room just in time to see him point an accusing finger at Christine and cry out "She's guilty––not medicine !" This

miscarriage of her plans is too much for Christine. She faints before she can conceal the package containing the poisonous tablets. Lavinia finds them, and at last, like the children of the House of Atreus, knows the full measure of her mother's guilt. The play ends with Lavinia's cry to the dead man, "Father ! Don't leave me alone ! Come back to me! Tell me what to do!"

O'Neill's Long Journey

In even the first part of this trilogy, one finds, of course, innumerable links to the struggle of the past which have beset O'Neill's imagination. The strength of the Mannon family, for example, has' come from the sea. But it is also the sea, in the person of Captain Brant, which helps to kill Ezra Mannon. Ezra, in his great loneliness of soul, is not unlike any number of the lonely souls, old and young, who wander through the stages of the O'Neill's long journey, seeking but never finding understanding and completion.

Redemption From Self-Love

Christine herself is not of the Mannons. She is the unattainable "outsider" to those who love only themselves or the image of themselves. She can love Brant but only because, though, part Mannon, he is the son of another stock and, like herself, part outsider, "foreigner". He is despised of the proud Mannons, because he comes of a servant stock, and the Mannons cannot serve others, being without humility. Outsiders are poisoned to the self-love of the Mannons. Yet Christine is the mother of the Mannon children, of those who are destined to expiate the primal sin of the house. That which kills is also fated to be that which will bring new life, because it comes from without the charmed and deadly circle of self-love. In this, the playwright touches instinctively upon that astounding paradox of mankind's experience, that the redemption from man's self-love can be found only through the death of man himself at the hands of what is itself evil–– the outsider, the Caligula, the Pompeia, evil, in spite of itself, serving the ends of good.

Subtle and Terrific Struggle

The second part of the trilogy, The Hunted, comprises the revenge of Lavinia and Orin for their father's murder. Orin returns from the hospital camp two days after the tragedy while the body of Ezra is still laid out in his study. There is a subtle and terrific struggle between Lavinia and Christine for the control of Orin's weak will. Christine tries to mother him as of old, to play on his deep affection for her, and to warn him of the terrible charges he may hear from Lavinia. Christine tells him that Lavinia is really out of her mind. Intuitively, Orin feels a deep suspicion of his mother, but emotionally he cannot bear to think any evil of her. Deep in his heart, he is almost relieved at his father's death, as he can now have his mother entirely to himself, and be as a child completely immersed in her love. During the long and murderous days of the war, he has often had the vision, as he killed men, that it was "like murdering the same man over and over" and as if "the man was myself!" Their faces, be says, "keep coming back

in dreams––and they change to father's face––or to mine." To be rid of his father, and also of the man in himself, so that he could return to childhood in his mother's arms had become his half conscious obsession. He wants to be alone with his mother in the enchanted Islands of his dreams, with the whole world apart from them. Christine encourages this mood in the hope that it will make Orin her champion against Lavinia.

Old Image of Death

But Lavinia, with something of the severity of her dead father, holds him grimly to a realization of the truth. She makes him, in spite of himself, acknowledge his mother's guilt, and then, finding that alone might not be enough to move him to vengeance, plays upon his instant jealousy of Brant. The thought of another man claiming his mother's love is too much for him. He and Lavinia secretly follow their mother to her rendezvous with Brant on his ship, in Boston harbour, and overhear her plans to escape. When Christine has left, Orin enters Brant's cabin and kills him. As he does so, the same old image of death comes before him. It is as if he had again killed his father !

Lavinia's Assumption of Her Mother's Role

Orin and Lavinia return to the ancient house of Mannon to tell Christine what they have done. Orin, immediately under her spell again, now that Brant is dead, begs for her forgiveness. But it is too late. Christine goes into the house and shoots herself. Orin remains to the last under the cloud of desire to have her protecting arms about him. And then the new and final theme appears––the assumption by Lavinia of her mother's role. She takes the bewildered Orin in her arms and whispers soothingly to him, "You have me, have'nt you ? I love you. I'll help you to forget." Thus Christine's accusation is justified, that Lavinia wished to take her place.

The Ghosts of Parents

The third play, The Haunted, begins a year later, after Lavinia and Orin have completed a year's voyage to China and the Far East. In the far land of Kublai Kaan and the Princess Kukachin, a great change has taken place. Lavinia has lost the stern angularity of former days, in which she closely resembled her father, and has become strikingly like her mother. She even wears a dress of the same green colour her mother used to wear, instead of the black she once affected. Orin, on the other hand, who was formerly unable to hold the bearing of a soldier, now carries woodenly erect. "His movements and attitudes have the statue-like quality that was so marked in his father. He now wears a close-cropped beard in addition to his moustache, and this accentuates his resemblance to his father." The children are now living in the ghost of their parents.

Both Orin and Lavinia are aware of the change. In his moments of morbid bitterness, Orin even boasts of having become a Mannon and accuses Lavinia of having acquired a soul like his mother's "as if you were stealing her––as if her death had set you free––to become her!" But Lavinia, in spite of welcoming the change in herself, cries out "What

we need most is to get back to simple normal things and begin a new, life." Lavinia tries sternly to make Orin face his hunting ghost, to acknowledge fully to himself his mother's double guilt and her free choice of suicide. But the attempt is only partly successful.

Fresh Touch of Reality

A fresh touch of reality also comes into Lavinia's life through her friendship for Peter Niles, whom she has known since childhood. The thought of him has been growing, in her mind during the long months of her voyage. The sea has had a cleansing effect upon her. "The ship and the sea––everything that was honest and clean" has reminded her of Peter. And another thought has come to her, too. "Remember I'm only Mannon", she reminds Peter when they are at last together. The blood of the "outsider has been doing its work, to give her a new strength to face life. She now wants to marry Peter. But the spectre of Orin comes between them––Orin who is still sick with the old guilt of the Mannons, "possessed by the hate and death". Orin discovers Lavinia kissing. Peter, and jealousy seizes him. The woman who has taken the place of his mother cannot be permitted to love another man !

A Living Tenor For Lavinia

Orin becomes a living terror for Lavinia. His increasing sense of guilt makes him want to confess everything. He has allowed himself to become engaged to Peter's sister, Hazel Niles, but he is afraid to be alone with her and Lavinia is afraid to have them alone together. His guilty conscience might make him confess. He is secretly preparing a written confession of his crime–––and this Lavinia suspects rather than knows. She at last forces an admission from him, and then brother and sister lacerate each other with accusation. It is again as if the ghosts of Christine and Ezra were walking in the house. And then a deeper terror than -the dread of Orin's confessing intervenes. In his growing insanity and in his jealous determination to present Lavinia from marrying Peter, Orin sees Lavinia as neither mother nor sister but a woman, like the French––Canadian servant girl who was the mother of Brant. In an agony of revulsion and rage at _ this crowning revelation, Lavinia turns on Orin. "I wish you were dead !", she cries, "you're too vile to live ! You'd kill yourself if you. weren't a coward !"

Orin's Suicide and Lavinia's Self-Punishment

Slowly the idea takes possession of Orin's deranged mind. In death he can join his mother. He will be able to ask her forgiveness. He will find peace. He starts to rush from the room. Lavinia makes an attempt to stop him, but at that moment Peter- comes in and Orin escapes to his father's study. Lavinia throws herself hysterically into Peter's arms, murmuring "no one has the right to keep anyone from peace !" Peter, alarmed, starts to go after Orin, but Lavinia holds him tightly to her and talks against time. There is the sound of a shot. Orin has killed himself. Lavinia is the last of the Mannons. In the closing scene of the tragedy, after Orin's funeral, Lavinia is again in black. The resemblance to her mother has disappeared. She is filling the house with flowers for

Peter, whom she feels she must marry. She must escape forever from the house of Mannon. But Hazel, to whom Orin has hinted just enough to make her feel the terror of the Mannon story, comes to accuse Lavinia of the guilt of Orin's death and to plead with her to give up Peter. Lavinia is steadfast in her determination to marry him. But when he comes to her, she finds a growing suspicion and bitterness in his eyes. The dead are already standing between them. Almost in a frenzy, she asks him for his love, but even as she does so, the name of Adam, like the ghost of Adam Brant, escapes her lips. "I can't marry you, Peter", she cries in sudden defeat, "the dead are too strong !" And then, to drive him from her, she lies about herself. She takes a jealous word that Orin has dropped about a native in the far-off Islands they had visited and pretends the charge was true. As Peter loves her, horror-struck, she calls after him that it was a lie. But her cry is too feeble, too defeated. He does not hear. Lavinia is alone again with the Mannon dead.

Lavinia as Victim of Orin's Self-Love

To Seth, the old gardener, Lavinia confides her last resolve. There is nothing left to do but return into the house. "Don't go in then, Vinnie !" he exclaims in superstitious fright. But she is grimly determined now. "Don't be afraid", she says, "I'm not going the way Mother and Orin went. That's escaping punishment. And there's no one left to punish me. I'm the last Mannon. I've got to punish myself ! Living alone here with the dead is a worst act of justice than death or prison ! I'll never go out or see anyone ! I'll have the shutters nailed closed so no sunlight can ever get in. I'll live alone with the dead, and keep their secrets and let them hound me, until the curse is paid out and the last Mannon is let die." As she enters the house, to remain there in lifelong expiation, her movements become the wooden, angular embodiment of the Mannons.

Lavinia's Strange Cruel Smile

There is still pride left in the soul of Lavinia, and a "strange cruel smile of gloating over the years of self-torture" on her face as she begins her penance. But above and beyond the words of the playwright's description, there is feeling of deepest introversion, of the turning back of the feminine soul into its innermost depths, as if to discover, in death to herself, the one last chance of a new life. Beneath the Mannon mask of utter love of self flows the blood of the "outsider", that which brought death to all the males of the fated line, but may still find in the woman a chance for rebirth... "What we need most is to get back to simple normal things and begin a new life." That was Lavinia's cry after feeling the cleansing of the sea. One feels that in the deliberate, purposeful turning back into her past, Lavinia, the woman unlike the frightened childman who turned back to the maternal past, may discover the secret of living with fears until they are tamed, of opening her eyes to truth instead of mocking shadows, of finding tenderness in place of the sinister giants that seemed to block the agonizing path to maturity and peace.

In Mourning Becomes Electra past is synonymous with fate elaborate the statement. (P.U 2005)

The title of the play itself suggests the relation of the play to the Greek drama. The story of the house of Atreus was set down by Homer, Pindar, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and diverse other Greek writers whose works are not extant. From this house shadowed by an ancient curse, Agamemnon, brother of Menelaus, goes forth to the war at Troy. His wife, Clytemnestra, the sister of Helen, during her husband's absence takes for her paramour Aegisthus and shares the government of Argos with him. In due time Agamemnon having at the God's behest sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia and bringing with him Cassandra, Priam's daughter, returns, and is murdered by Clytemnestra and her lover.

Electra, his daughter, is shamed and degraded and prays for the return of her brother Orestes, long ago sent out of the country by her mother and now become a man. Orestes returns, kills Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. He is pursued by the Erinyes, and only after wandering and agony and a vindication of himself before the tribunal of Athena's Areopagus is he cleansed of his sin.

Bare Outlines

Mourning Becomes Electra begins with the mother and daughter, Christine and Lavinia, waiting there in the house of the Mannons, the return of Ezra Mannon from the war, which with Lee's surrender is about over. A thread of romance is introduced between Lavinia and Peter, and between Lavinia's brother, Orin, and Hazel, Peter's sister. Meanwhile, Captain Brant comes to call ; he ;pays a certain court to Lavinia, and she, acting on a cue from the hired man, who has been on the place sixty years, traps him into admitting that he is the son of one of the Mannons who had seduced a Canadian maidservant and been driven from home by his father, Lavinia's grandfather. She has all her data straight now. She has suspected her mother, followed her to New York, where Christine has pretended to go because of her own father's illness, but has in fact been meeting Adam Brant. Lavinia has written to her father and brother, hinting at the town gossip about her mother. We learn that Captain Brant had returned to avenge his mother but instead had fallen passionately in love with Christine, who loves him as passionately as she hates her husband. From this point the play moves on, with the father's hatred of the son, who returns it, the son's adoration of his mother, the daughter's and the mother's antagonism, the daughter's and father's devotion, to Christine's murder of her husband with the poison sent by Brant and substituted for the medicine prescribed against his heart trouble. Orin returns, after an illness from a wound in the head.

Christine tries to protect herself in her son's mind against the plots of Lavinia. Lavinia, in the room where her father's body lies, convinces him with the facts ; they trail Christine to Brant's ship, where she has gone to warn him against Orin. Orin shoots Brant.

Christine next day kills herself. Brother and sister take a long voyage to China, a stop at the southern isles, come home again. Substitutions have taken place, Lavinia has grown like her mother, Orin more like his father. Meanwhile, his old affair with Hazel, encouraged at last by Lavinia, who now wants to marry Peter, is cancelled ; he finds himself making an incestuous proposal to Lavinia and is repulsed by her. He shoots himself. In the end Lavinia speaking words of love to Peter, finds Adam's name on her lips. She breaks with Peter, orders the blinds of her house nailed shut, and goes into the house, to live there till her death. Justice has been done, the Mannon dead will be there and she will be there.

The Essential Pattern

Thus it is clear that Mourning Becomes Electra follows the pattern of the Greek trilogy in the essentials. The first play, entitled the Homecoming is closest to its original. It tells of the return of General Ezra Mannon (Agamemnon) from the Civil War, and of his murder by his wife, Christine (Clytemnestra), at the urging of her lover, Adam Brant (Aegisthus). And it ends with the confrontation of the mother by her daughter, Lavinia Mannon (Electra).

Difference between the Two Plays

Physically, the chief difference of the modern play from its original is that Christine and her lover do not stab the husband in his bath; she administers poison to him instead of the medicine he expects. But, if this difference of action seems minor, it points to a major difference of character, neither Ezra nor Christine Mannon shares the heroic stature of the Greek Agamemnon and Clytemnestra. Ezra seems less the conquering hero than the lonely old man, and his guilt is disproportionally small––it is not the cruelty and self-willed pride of the Greek; it is only a puritanical failure to satisfy his wife in their love-relationship. And Christine shares neither the passionate hatred of Clytemnestra for her husband; nor her passionate love for Aegisthus. Rather she seems a neurotic, vindictive woman whose nature is poisonous rather than heroic. Although the first play explains the actions of the classical Agamemnon in modern psychological terms, it substitutes neurotic hatred for the full-blooded passion and violence of the original.

The Essential Outlines

The second play of the trilogy, entitled The Hunted also follows, the essential outlines of its Greek original. It centres upon the character of Orestes––now Orin Mannon, who has just returned from the war as this play begins. Confronted with the proof of his mother's guilt, Orin hunts down her lover and shoots him. But he does not murder his mother, as in the original Greek. Instead he tells her of her lover's death and confronts her with her guilt and with his own confused hatred of it, so that she is driven to commit suicide. The substitution of this suicide for the murder of the Greek original again emphasizes the anti-heroic nature of the modern protagonist. Nevertheless, in the case of Orin

(Orestes), "the Furies" which were externalized in the Greek myth, now have been realized more dramatically in the tortured conscience of the modern "hero" and in the psychological confusions of his mind. And these psychological Furies have been motivated more fully by the modern incident of Orin's mad laughter and wounding in the war. Therefore Orin seems to be driven by the tortured conscience of all modern man, in their realization of the evil of world war.

Departures from the Greek Originals

The third play of the trilogy entitled The Haunted departs more radically and purposefully from the Greek originals. It centres upon the character of Electra rather than that of Orestes, and it ascribes to this new Electra the only heroism––and the only true tragedy––of the three plays. In the Greek, Electra had been married to a peasant farmer and had remained subordinate to her brother. But, in his earliest note for the future plays, O'Neill directed: "Give modern Electra "gure in play tragic ending worthy of character. In Greek story she peters out into undramatic married banality." And throughout the planning and writing the trilogy he consistently developed this new conception until "Electra" became the title figure.

The Change of Action

Moreover, in changing the character of Electra from the Greek original, O'Neill also changed the action and the dramatic conception of the final play. Now, Orestes can no longer find absolution from the Furies which drive him (as he does in the Greek) ; he accepts damnation for the evil of his nature, and commits suicide, concluding : "The damned don't cry !" But Electra triumphs over the evil of her heritage by recognizing it clearly, and by determining to live with it to the end: "I'm the last Mannon. I've got to punish myself." And she begins her penance by telling Hannah "to throw out all the flowers". She locks herself in with her memories : she will escape damnation by learning fully to understand her own past and how to "cry" or "mourn" for it. At the end the modern heroine regains her humanity by undertaking a tragedy greater than that of her ancestors. She, like her creator, begins her "long day's journey into night".

John Ashbery's Selected Poems

John Ashbery; 1927-Till Date

John Ashbery is recognized as one of the greatest twentieth-century American poets. He has won nearly every major American award for poetry, including the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Award, the Yale Younger Poets Prize, the Bollingen Prize, the Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize, the Griffin International Award, and a MacArthur "Genius" Grant. Ashbery's poetry challenges its readers to discard all presumptions about the aims, themes, and stylistic scaffolding of verse in favor of a literature that reflects upon the limits of language and the volatility of consciousness. In the New Criterion, William Logan noted: "Few poets have so cleverly manipulated, or just plain tortured, our soiled desire for meaning. [Ashbery] reminds us that most poets who give us meaning don't know what they're talking about."

Ashbery's style—self-reflexive, multi-phonic, vaguely narrative, full of both pop culture and high allusion—has become "so influential that its imitators are legion," Helen Vendler observed in the New Yorker. Although even his strongest supporters admit that his poetry is often difficult to read and willfully difficult to understand, many critics have commented on the manner in which Ashbery's fluid style conveys a major concern in his poetry: the refusal to impose an arbitrary order on a world of flux and chaos. In his verse, Ashbery attempts to mirror the stream of perceptions of which human consciousness is composed. His poetry is open-ended and multi-various because life itself is, he told Bryan Appleyard in the London Times: "I don't find any direct statements in life. My poetry imitates or reproduces the way knowledge or awareness come to me, which is by fits and starts and by indirection. I don't think poetry arranged in neat patterns would reflect that situation. My poetry is disjunct, but then so is life." His poems move, often without continuity, from one image to the next, prompting some critics to praise his expressionist technique and others to accuse him of producing art that is unintelligible, even meaningless.

Ashbery's poetry—and its influence on younger poets—remains controversial because of just this split in critical opinion: some critics laud what Paul Auster described in Harper's as Ashbery's "ability to undermine our certainties, to articulate so fully the ambiguous zones of our consciousness," while others deplore his obscurantism and insist that his poems, made up of anything and everything, can mean anything and everything. Reflecting upon the critical response to his poem, "Litany," Ashbery once told Contemporary Authors, "I'm quite puzzled by my work too, along with a lot of other people. I was always intrigued by it, but at the same time a little apprehensive and sort of embarrassed about annoying the same critics who are always annoyed by my work. I'm kind of sorry that I cause so much grief."

W.S. Di Piero described the reaction of critics to Ashbery's style as "amusing. On the one hand are those who berate him for lacking the Audenesque 'censor' (that little editing machine in a poet's head which deletes all superfluous materials) or who accuse him of simply being willfully and unreasonably perverse. On the other hand are those reviewers who, queerly enough, praise the difficulty of Ashbery's verse as if difficulty were a positive literary value in itself, while ignoring what the poet is saying." Helen Vendler offered her summary of the debate in the New Yorker: "It is Ashbery's style that has obsessed reviewers, as they alternately wrestle with its elusive impermeability and praise its power of linguistic synthesis. There have been able descriptions of its fluid syntax, its insinuating momentum, its generality of reference, its incorporation of vocabulary from all the arts and sciences. But it is popularly believed, with some reason, that the style itself is impenetrable. . . An alternative view says that every Ashbery poem is about poetry."

"The Painter" by John Ashbery

Introduction and Theme of the poem: - Ashbery's interest in painting led him to write this poem. The painter is fully representative of Ashbery's poetry. Ashbery uses a persona to reveal his poetic urge. The Painter is the mouthpiece of Ashbery. The poet uses cinematic images in the poem to make it as dynamic and visual as possible. The poem tells us that the painter is sitting between the sea and the tall buildings. He is attempting to create something impossible but remains unsuccessful. The people in the building encourage him to write common subject. He uses his wife as subject of his painting. He does it so exquisitely but again turns to his previous subject of sea. His efforts to paint the sea automatically are not realized and he is mocked by the people in the tall buildings. The painter is crucified by his subject. His desire of innovative and futuristic art remains only a prayer and longing. He is not able to achieve the extraordinary because of the ordinary demands of the audience.

The main theme of the poem is that innovator, modern and creative artists are crucified by the traditional and conventional people. This is not the only theme because the poem is to be understood at many different levels.

A CRITIQUE OF THE PAINTER

Ashbery's poems are abstract paintings in words.

Introduction: - John Ashbery uses painter as persona to present before us his conception of poetry. The painter like Ashbery is innovator and wants to capture the vitality of life rather than the mere surface transmit beauty of the same. The painter is the most representative of Ashbery's poems and it is a key to understanding Ashbery both as and poet and artist. The painter breaks down the traditional and orthodox restrictions on the art laid by the classicists and wants to steal the essence of art. Ashbery is no moralist and conceives the art for its own sake. As the bird sings for its own sake, Ashbery writes in the same fashion. The poem has been composed in Sestina.

A Sestina is a form of rhymed or unrhymed poem of six stanzas of six lines and a concluding triplet in which the same six words at the line-ends occur in each stanza in six different sequences, apart from the final triplet, in which each line contains two of these words, one at the middle and one at the end. There are many salient features of the poem that we can analyse as under.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THOUGHT

Symbolic elements: - The poem is highly symbolic and packed with symbols that it seems like an allegory. The poem is not imaginative rather it is concrete pregnant with symbolic allusions:

> **Sitting between the sea and the buildings**
> **He enjoyed painting the seas portrait.**
> **But just as children imagine a prayer**
> **Is merely silence, he expected his subject**

The sea is a symbol of creativity and the unexplored depths of human consciousness. It also resents the vitality and essence or life, which has been long ignored. The buildings and their architecture are the explored and achieved conditions of art. The painter symbolizes the creative and modern urge and the people in the buildings are traditional critics who fail to understand the philosophy of art.

Symbolically, the poem shows the condition of the artist sandwiched between two contrasting forces behind art; conventional, traditional and superficial approach on the one hand and modern, creative, experimental and innovative on the other. The modern artist is not restricted by the limited and restrictive view of life. He is the controller of his art and defines its parameters. He believes that art is all-powerful and vast and it cannot be conceived in a traditional narrow thinking. His analogy is child's prayer is not analogy only rather through it, he presents a philosophy of art. The artist should be a meditator and start art like a prayer. Ashbery knows;

> **To rush up the sand, and, seizing a brush,**
> **Plaster its own portrait on the canvas.**

is insane and even a common mind cannot entertain such an idea. So such conception of art in reality can be achieved only through prayer in silence. The difference between artificial art and vital art is presented by the artist with his back to the buildings and the face to the sea.

Subjectivity and Objectivity

> **There was no paint on the canvas**

Objective art is difficult to attain but it lends realism and universality to the artist's masterpiece and the objective art is not bound by the artist, his consciousness or his artistic ability, so the painter meditated for long but nothing appeared on the canvas. The painter wanted either to paint objectively or nothing at all. He was an iconoclast, his representation of art must be perfect otherwise; he will be just another artist in the echoes of the millions of artists in the world. But the people in the were urging the artist to

Try using the brush
As a means to an end. Select, for a portrait,
Something less angry and large, and more subject
To a painter's moods, or, perhaps, to a prayer

Because they were the upholders of the traditional art of subjectivity which was delimited by the artist's mind and couldn't survive in the limitless regions of the vast universe. This is the reaction of the traditional artists to the experimental nature of the modern artists.

Definition of Art: - The painter responds to the rationalists with a true conviction of a perfect artist in the following lines;

How could he explain to them his prayer
That nature, not art, might usurp the canvas?

The painter's conception of art is like that of a child's prayer which is a direct relationship between the artist and the art like that of a prayee to God. This concept cannot be materialized and explained to the traditionalists, for they cannot understand the artist's avant-garde approach. The painter's definition of artist that objective representation of reality must be the basis of art, the art confined by the artist's feelings and emotions is not true and genuine. Soul, spirit, vitality of life, the essence of reality are the features which the painter is aspiring in his portrait. The painter further asserts:

My soul, when I paint this next portrait
Let it be you who wrecks the canvas.

Political and Religious Allegory: - Allegory is fictional literary narrative or artistic expression that conveys a symbolic meaning parallel to but distinct from, and more important than, the literal meaning. The Painter is both a political and religious allegory. The pathetic state of the painter lends political and social interpretations of the poem. The Communist Manifesto, the Puritan Theocracy, The Martial Laws and Hitlarian and Fascistic authorities all crucify the innovators and curb freedom of expression of those who champion a new cause for the welfare of humanity or art. The line:

Try using the brush for a means to an end

Shows the selfishness of the political gains. The writer should be a representative of a political party as well as was the case in Russia which demanded the Socialist Realism. The painter was a genuine artist who opposed these political and Hitlarian manifestos and their restrictions on art. He was a free agent and wanted freedom in his art, so he could easily attempt his poetic vision, but this freedom is not allowed as Ashbery depicts:

The news spread like a wild fire thought the buildings
He had gone back to the sea for his subject
Imagine a painter crucified by his subject.

The visionary painter was crucified by the so called custodians of political beliefs who never allowed a novelty or change which will pose a danger to their established government and systems. The poem was written in 1956—a period of tussle in which the freedom of action and thought was restrained by the Russian Communists. The poem tells a story of a painter who was a visionary and pioneer of a new approach in art which practically meant an opposition to the existing system or order so he was crucified or burnt at the stakes by the politicians.

The word 'crucify' has religious connotation so the poem becomes a religious allegory too. And reminds us of the story of Christ who brought a system of theocracy as a welfare to humanity but was rejected by the selfish so called chiefs of Judaism and was commanded by Pontius Pilate to be crucified for the political gains of Roman Empire. In this way, the innovates are punished in a society of selfishness, greed and power which denies welfare to humanity.

Tragic Elements in the Painter: - Ashbery is very akin to T.S. Eliot and Robert Frost. Most of his poems are like theirs speaking of sense of uncertainty, the looming fear, gloom and loneliness.

The atmosphere of fear, gloom and loneliness is also visible. The painter is alone with sense of gloomy uncertainty in his art for perfection. The sea symbolizes loneliness too. The people in the buildings have alienated the painter for his self-chosen seemingly impossible task rather than supporting him in his quest for the objective representation of reality. The painter is the protagonist feeling conflict sandwiched between traditions and modernity. All modern tragedies show conflict of the protagonist with society and its established norms and tragically doomed for this Hamartia that the protagonist bears. The painter is the protagonist working as opposed to the demands and conventions of society. The society may accept him if he becomes rational enough to understand the mere creative vision doesn't suffice the creation. His Hamartia causes his crucifixion and ends the poem with tragic touches and a bit of Catharsis.

Style, Technique and Imagery: - The poem has been composed in an arresting and forceful. His technique to the poem is one such as employed by the abstract painters. So Ashbery's rightly gives the concept of his poetry in the following words:

"My poems are paintings in words.''

His approach in the poem is objective rather than subjective. The diction is simple and relevant to the subject. John Ashbery is a perfect craftsman like Alexander Pope, Spenser, Tennyson and Surrey-Wyatt, the American examples being Richard Wilbur and Robert Frost. He is renowned for artistic galore in his poetry. His diction is simple and colloquial and must conform to the themes and ideas presented in the poem. The painter is no exception. All these stylistic features are perfectly applicable to the poem. All the key words which point to the main theme of the poem have been wrapped at the end to give them extra significance.

The imagery is fresh and startling. The images of sea, canvas, portrait and prayer all contribute to the thematic development of the poem.

Conclusion: - The Painter is perfectly a representative of John Ashbery's poems and a key to understanding his concepts regarding poetry. In Painter, Ashbery achieves artistic perfection with simplicity of diction. The painter can be interpreted at many different levels of understanding that is the beauty and charm of the poem. The language, themes, imagery and style make the poem an exquisite piece of literature. The title of the poem is also radically, very few poems would have been written with such titles. Ashbery combines surrealistic techniques of painting with poetic grandeur.

John Ashbery's 'The Painter' as representative of the Avant-garde

Avant-garde (From French, "advance guard") refers to people or works that are experimental or innovative, particularly with respect to art, culture, and politics. Avant-garde represents a pushing of the boundaries of what is accepted as the norm or the status quo, primarily in the cultural realm. The notion of the existence of the avant-garde is considered by some to be a hallmark of modernism, as distinct from postmodernism. It is often related with surrealism.

The Surrealist movement was founded in Paris by a small group of writers and artists who sought to channel the unconscious as a means to unlock the power of the imagination. Disdaining rationalism and literary realism, and powerfully influenced by Sigmund Freud, the Surrealists believed the conscious mind repressed the power of the imagination, weighting it down with taboos. Influenced also by Karl Marx, they hoped that the psyche had the power to reveal the contradictions in the everyday world and spur on revolution. Their emphasis on the power of the imagination puts them in the tradition of Romanticism, but unlike their forbears, they believed that revelations could be found on the street and in everyday life. The Surrealist impulse to tap the subconscious mind, and their interests in myth and primitivism, went on to shape the Abstract Expressionists, and they remain influential today.

Ashbery's poems are 'abstract paintings in words'. Ashbery is the most creative of all avant-gardes. His poems justify what he advocates in his prose or theoretical criticism. In fact Ashbery's efforts were to unite the techniques of poetry and painting. While doing so he has to explain the similarities in these arts to their procedural outputs. In his view the practice of a painter is quite akin to a poet's.

The movements in painting therefore had their special link to the movements in poetry. The Pinter is written in the light of surrealist art. Surrealism is a technique which used fantastic images and incongruous juxtapositions in order to represent unconscious thoughts and dreams.

"Sitting between the sea and the buildings
He enjoyed painting the sea's portrait"

The touch of abstractism is seen in the painting of sea but in a poetic abstract way. What the painter wants to paint about sea is attempted by poets like Shelley in poetry. But the difference lies in the fact that the painting concerns our sense of seeing whereas poetry hearing and feeling as in 'But just as children imagine a prayer'. It was surrealism the painter was trying to adopt as a theory. The most controversial of all surrealist aspects is it aspect of automatism. Ashbery in these lines gives a view of painter's conception of this aspect. He wants the sea to rush up the sand and plaster its own portrait on the canvas. What comes next is Ashbery's rejection of this view, 'So there was never any paint on his canvas'. For him the possibility of automatism lies in its adopting some means. The canvas and brush are the means a painter adopts in painting. The means for a poet are the emotional overflow and conscious indulgence. What the people living in buildings advise him to do is the same Ashbery himself supports:

"Try using the brush
As a means to an end"

All poems are subject to automatism. But the automatism Ashbery defines is totally different from one the poets of generations have been practising. In his view, the selection of subject at least should not fall prey to automatism. The poet and the painter both should try to choose something intimate to their feelings and bents. The inability to choose such a subject is expressed in painter's inability to explain his choice to the people, 'How could he explain to them his prayer'. But to show the approach of the critics as genuine and practical, Ashbery presents his painter acting upon their suggestion, 'He chose his wife for a new subject'. The success this time though unexpected comes to the painter and the portrait gets appreciated by the critics. As if forgetting itself, the portrait, 'Had expressed itself without a brush'. It is in fact the practicability of theory that Ashbery wants to express. Surrealism in itself is not the genuine thing. If the painter or poet has mixed it with the artistic conscience it becomes genuine or practicable. The artistic conscience from art therefore should not be absent. All arts should be artistic in nature, and all artists should be artistical. Ashbery's avant-garde approach is in this way quite clear. All experimental and innovational work should

not cease to artistic. Surrealist conceptions are in fact the initial stages of all conceptions. It is the genius of an artist that makes them different from the conceptions of a common person. The artistic efforts in all works of art should always be there. It is the artistic effort that gives some idea or vision an artistic genre. All conception before being adopted in form or medium may look the same. But it is the artistic effort that gives them form or medium. Further, the form or medium should not be considered enough to give some conception its artistic identity. Colours and canvas should not be considered enough to make some idea a portrait. It should be the approach of painter that should help make it painterly. The painter forgot to understand this point and tried to paint the portrait of sea again.

> **'Slightly encouraged, he dipped his brush**
> **In the sea, murmuring a heartfelt prayer'**

In fact he forgot to understand that the portrait praised by the critics was painted up to the requirements of the medium. It was not the subject but the medium they had stressed upon. The sea is not less angry and large a subject. The sea is a subject, but to be less and large deals with the particularities of medium. So it was the medium they in fact talked about. The painter took it for subject and theory and started painted the portrait of sea again. The mode and attitude he adopted was again surrealist as in "My soul, when I paint this portrait'. If the news of his painting the sea spreads like a wildfire, it is because of painter's inability to understand the true spirit of a theory. When he came to his old angry and large subject, he had to be disappointed again. The disappointment had become his ultimate fate as in 'Imagine a painter crucified by his subject'. It simply means that the subject should not dominate and overcome the true spirit of an art. The medium and attitudes should always be accepted as true spirit of some art.

Ashbery's avant-garde views are not totally strange for art. What Eliot says about the importance of individual talent in the supremacy of tradition is proved. Tradition does not mean modes and attitudes. It should also be meant in the sense of medium. Canvas and brush are the media of painting. An artist should not transcend his media. It shall simply mean that he is misled in his concepts. If the painter had not been too exhausted to lift his brush, he might have painted something up to the requirements of theory. The theorists refused to accept his efforts. They simply thought it non-professional. To remain and survive in the limits of art is the first requirement of art. If the artist breaks these limits and gets out of art he will never be accepted. All indications of a subject began to fade and the fate of to be out of art is to be dead in art. The sea devoured the canvas and the brush means the subject needs some medium.

Basic concepts of art in 'The Painter'

In 'The Painter', Ashbery touches upon some of the basic concepts in imitative arts. He does not attempt a poetic reconciliation of the warring schools of criticism. Rather he presents a situation in which the artistic creativity may come in direct conflict with the

demands of modern society. The poem presents the situation of an artist who wants to paint the sea. His ambition is to present the sea rather than paint it. He wants that **"nature, not art, might usurp the canvas"**

Ashbery concludes that such an ambition would result in a total denial of modern urban values and would be met with violent rejection. Ashbery establishes a relation between the sea and the buildings in the very beginning of the poem. The artist sits between the symbols of nature and the urban jungle of cement and steel. He was enjoying his work and expected that his subject would easily yield to creative reproduction, but his expectations were thwarted. Reality refused to be captured so easily by art. Ashbery compares his ambition to children's view of prayer showing the simplicity of his desire. Ashbery contrasts the artist's expectation to realistic theory of art asserting that even the most naturalistic presentation of life is still not nature as it exists in a different medium which changes its attributes. The artist with this realization is unable to present reality and so **"there was never any paint on the canvas"**

Ashbery contrasts the artist with the people in the buildings. He emphasizes the basic difference between their modes of thinking. They want to "put him to work" desiring him to paint something less "angry and large", something "more subject to a painter's mood". It is obvious that they consider art to be an imitative skill in the service of urban, commercial interests. It is "more subject to…a prayer" or as one may say 'an order'. The concept of presentation of reality in the sense that reality may actually "usurp" the canvas is alien to them. The artist's choosing his wife for a subject and making her "vast" is Ashbery's way of defining bathos. Ashbery being a gay poet could hardly have expressed matrimonial love in any other way. However this time it was as if the portrait "Had expressed itself without a brush". With this encouragement the artist now arises to paint with seawater, letting the medium of reality to be the medium of artistic expression. This was as if the artistic creation would "wreck the canvas", putting an end to the illusion of presentation and letting the reality to be expressed without any alien medium of expression. This new mode of creation in which the artist is overtaken by his subject is blasphemous to the people in the buildings who consider it to be the case of "a painter crucified by his subject". Others declare it the egotistical expression of the artist's self and not presentation of reality. The work of the artist is such that: **"all indication of subject began to fade"**

Immaculate reality untouched with art is the final expression and provokes a destructive violent response form the people of the buildings. The portrait is tossed into the sea where it becomes one with its subject and thus the expression of the subject remains a prayer. The poem presents many contrasting views related to art and its relation to reality and society. Ashbery finds an appropriate locale for the presentation of ideological discord. The artist sits between the sea and the buildings, i.e., between nature and the urban civilization. The buildings are tall and overcrowded, apt representation of overpopulated urban scene. The tallness of the buildings also reflects the way the people look down upon the artist. But the artist has his back to the buildings. His independence of thought is met with advice from the buildings. People want to "put him to work".

Ashbery with his usual figurative way of presentation makes the artist paint his wife whom he makes **"vast, like ruined buildings"**

He very cleverly hides whether the portrait of the wife was made in paint on the canvas or if it was a real-life portrait. The poem makes use of figurative language throughout thus making every simple detail stand for a more complex thought related with theory of art. Phrases like "sea's portrait, plaster its own portrait on the canvas, the brush as means to an end, usurp the canvas. As if forgetting itself the portrait, had expressed itself without a brush, wrecks the canvas, crucified by his subject, all indications of a subject began to fade, to howl, that was also a prayer, the sea devoured the canvas and the brush", all have figurative meanings expressing or reflecting significant artistic concepts. Ashbery uses the word prayer several times, in this poem every time meaning something different. The artist's prayer and the people's howl which was also a prayer have contrasted meanings and so Ashbery uses the same word to mean different things to show how reality can be seen from many different perspectives.

Conclusively, Ashbery's interest in painting led him to write this poem. The painter is fully representative of Ashbery's poetry. Ashbery used a persona to reveal his poetic urge. The poet uses cinematic images in the poem to make it as dynamic and visual as possible. The Painter's desire of innovative and futuristic art remains only a prayer and longing. He is not able to achieve the extraordinary because of the ordinary demands of the audience. The main theme of the poem is that innovator, modern and creative artists are crucified by the traditional and conventional people.

Critically Analysis of the poem : The Painter

Ashbery makes a genuine effort to portray the poetic vision of an artist's mind by concentrating on the dictum "ut pictura poesis"--"as is painting, so is poetry". Through poetry he glorifies a mere painter's struggle to find his true artistic form and inclination towards a specific way of being creative in "The Painter".

"For some people the fear of inner torment is such that the desire to create has to be repressed: 'He does not embark on any serious pursuits commensurate with his gifts lest he fails to be a brilliant success. He would like to write or paint but does not dare to start' (Horney 107). Or if the desire to create is not repressed, the creative process will be wracked with anxiety or hampered by self torment." This quote from the book Therapeutic dimensions of autobiography in creative writing by Celia Hunt aptly captures to some extent the condition the painter in the poem goes through, who seems confused on whether to draw the painting of the sea or not. And how this feat of capturing the sea can be achieved.

A similar theme is also tackled by the great American poet, Emily Dickinson. In her short poem she writes: "Artists wrestle here! /Lo, a tint Cashmere! /Lo, a Rose! /Student of the Year! /For the easel here/Say Repose!" This poem lays bare the fact that the artist always juggles with his tools and crafts in order to create what he wants. For him to

relax is unthinkable likewise the painter in the poem faces a lot of troubles in making this special piece of art (the sea). The painter seems to self actualize himself by materializing the urge to paint a portrait of the sea which will give the chaos of his creative world a poetic and appeasing feeling.

Ashbery is known for his surrealist poetry and in "The Painter he uses his skill to masterfully create connections between varied images. Using the modified form of sestina (last words of the verses are mostly changed) he is able to make these images jump into a creative hotchpotch. But the irony of the poem is that the artist portrayed in the poem seems to go through a rough patch in his life yet the creativity by which the poet himself writes, speaks volume of about the work of art he produces; the poet is able to create with the painter in the poem a smooth imagery of an artist’s struggle towards his creative independence--a mere human’s effort to fight for what he deems right. In order to fulfill his creative vision he goes against all the odds set by the society. Ashbery was himself a painter and his surrealist automatic writing in the poem seems to give power to the automatic drawing the painter is trying to achieve in the poem, as the artist wishes: “he expected his subject / To rush up the sand, and, seizing a brush, / Plaster its own portrait on the canvas.

Interpretation of this poem is complicated. On the surface level one can judge what is happening but on a deeper level the reader may not be able to interpret the unfathomable depth. One reason quite evident is the surrealism employed. Just like the artist’s mind the poem is also free of conscious control. It takes on its own route and it paints with its own brush strokes with the artist’s creative vision.

Ashbery takes into account many aspects of syntax and rhyme in his poetry and one of it is the repetition of words. The reader may not notice immediately about it but after a careful examination it comes to light that, Ashbery repeats the word "canvas", "buildings", "brush", "subject", "prayer" seven times and "portrait" eight times in the poem. This repetition creates a surrealistic effect in the poem.

The painter in the poem is on the beach and contemplates his tempestuous subject. Sea here symbolizes the freedom, the chaos, the harmony of the waves and the creative space for the painter. The sea symbolizes freedom as it liberates the painter from the hustle bustle of the city life behind him (“the building”). The painter is like a child imagining a prayer. His innocent imagination muses over what to draw on his canvas. Though the painter loves to paint the sea but he is confused by the daunting question of how to draw and live in one’s own creative vision, how to capture the universe around us. Even though he has brush in his hand but his canvas seems empty, this paint-less canvas brings out the fact that the painter himself has lost his creative vision, or he is going through the phase of imagination blockage and he is unable to take a plunge into mind's eye where haphazard brushes could be waved like a magic wand and a beauty of its own kind would emerge into a classic piece of art. His lack of strength to take on a decision leads the people around him to take control of his mind. They ask him to make a portrait of “Something less angry and large”, that is to say; do not draw the sea due to

its turbulent nature and gargantuan effect which is unfathomable by human mind to capture. The painter seemed unable to convey "his prayer" to the people that he wants "nature, not art, [to] usurp the canvas".

The skillful painter then tries to paint his wife. He does that without really making a creative endeavour because she seemed a ruined building in the first place that is not something he would want to paint. He does make an attempt, though unwillingly. It is throttling to the painter as an artist is a free will creature and no matter what happens he has to go to his roots of desire that is he has to be a creative by not conforming to traditionalists. He has to fulfill his urge to create his own tradition. His desire to go back to the sea appears to be the only right thing to do.

"Imagine the painter crucified by his subject." signifies a powerful figure that could draw faultlessly the things he see, and be astonished and spiritualized by the creative vision he has with the drawing. The painter in the poem proves his creative vision and creative authority when "He provoked some artists leaning from the buildings"; suggesting their eagerness to stick to the roots; the traditional way of painting. The poet clearly implies that the traditional painters are bent towards following an authority by which they could judge the painter and his work.

The people, the critics and the painters of traditional sort did not appreciate the effort of the painter and thus life's way of taking the unconventional approach irrationally by not getting accepted by his own people fell upon the painter as they threw the portrait of the sea from the tallest building. This "portrait" symbolizes something that the people, the critics and the painters of his age were not able to handle the pressure posit on them by the painter or his creative vision of the sea. Such non-conformist and cavalier attitude is also visible in Ashbery's life, as he nonchalantly says that his goal is "to produce a poem that the critic cannot even talk about."

In the end of the poem "the sea devoured the canvas and the brush". It signifies that the portrait drawn by a mere artist cannot be fathomed by man himself because chaos of the sea is unfathomable and it was as if "his subject had decided to remain a prayer". Thus the freedom and turbulence the sea entails with it consumes man's creation as well. The chaos of the world cannot be painted in a canvas, at least people around them would not let the painter do that, yet his creative drive would urge him to create what he instinctively desires. Neither the painter would stop nor would the chaos around him end. The cycle of life would go on like this.

A CRITIQUE OF MELODIC TRAINS

Introduction: - The poem shows melodically sounding related series of thoughts that are developing in your mind. They are called Melodic trains for they have the power to transform the minds of people from some ordinary experience to some particular. The poem is a fine example of stream of consciousness technique.

The poem shows the complexity of thoughts as they pass through a sensitive mind of a poet. A poetic mind has a great capacity for associating this similar and distinct thought. That is why; the poem has more than one layer of meaning. The title itself suggests the thought process growing on within the poet's mind. The outer journey in her real train is paralleled by a symbolic train of thoughts and melodies, poetic ideas running through the mind.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THOUGHT

Vanities expressed through appearances: - The first thought or theme present in the poem is the expression of vanities through appearances, when the little girl in the stanza asks the poet what time it is:

> **A little girl with scarlet enameled fingernails**
> **Asks me what time it is—evidently that's a toy wristwatch**
> **She's wearing, for fun. And it is fun to wear other**
> **Odd things, like this briar pipe and tweed coat**

It is surprising how children satisfy their vanity with toys and fake objects, which cannot fulfill their need. The toy watch doesn't tell the time. It is not only children but adults also do the same and are caught up in vanities and appearances. The poet discovers that the color of his overcoat resembles the color of brown mountains; in fact the seams of his coat actually look like the white paths running down the slopes of the mountains. His thoughts drifting to his clothes suddenly discover that clothes are like a mask hiding the reality. Just as one cannot find out the reality under the clothes, we cannot find the reality of the appearances. The theme of appearance and reality and the vanities to satisfy one's self on fake foundations starts right from the beginning. Delight in seemingly beautiful objects without any special unity is what associates the elders with the youngers because psychologically, they are the same. Basic instinct, at all levels, remains the same all over the world regardless of race, age, region or nation. But it is very difficult to understand human psychology only by appearances. As far as the appearances are concerned, we are all children. This is only one of the ideas and feelings that the poet experiences while traveling in the train.

The process of meditation and Meaning in Life: - Though Melodic Trains is Ashbery's secondary work, yet it was hailed as 'Marvelous' by David Bromwich and 'great' by Hollander. The poem is highly personal and in the words of Huybernsz, 'throws the reader out of the poem'. According to one critic, the poem suggests 'the premise of this marvelous poem is a journey around New York City.' The opening metaphor is that of music which sets the poet in meditation and find meanings in life. The main purpose in life seems, how to live and what to do?

This process of meditation begins when a little girl asks the poet time. The poet is attracted towards the jagged peaks of the mountains by the seams of his coat and later caught up in the humdrum of everyday life. Rather than a meaning, the poet finds

confusion, crowds and tensions everywhere. A sense of entrapment encapsulates us, we find surrounded by troubles all around us and find no way out. The Pisa figures ultimately end this process of mediation and life seems a perpetual struggle against the odds of society. We keep oscillating between the complex beginning and peaceful end and sometimes, peaceful begging and complex and disturbing end.

Symbolic Elements – Melodic Trains as drama of life: - Only the wait in stations is vague and Dimensionless, like oneself. How do they decide how much Time to spend in each?

One beings to suspect there's no
Rule or that it's applied haphazardly.

Next the train takes turns like a pencil and the poet experiences that life too is like a train full of complexity and running to its destination – death. As in an ordinary journey, the strain stops at various stations for brief moments. We also pause at some state of life before turning into a new direction. The faces of the passengers standing outside the platforms of different stations melt into the faces of those million faces, the poet reads different expressions. Some carry on eternal sadness. Some reflect disillusionment with life and its receptive appearance; some show anxiety about the future. There are questions in every mind. Will the taxi be available; will someone come to welcome me? These and many others perplex the mind of travelers. As the following lines show:

Sadness of the faces of children on the platform,
Concern of the grownups for connections, for the chances
Of getting a taxi, since these have no timetable.
You get one if you can find one though in principle

These questions asked in ordinary life reflect those questions in the next world. The poet contemplates some spiritual and metaphysical issues at this point. The complexities of the world symbolize those of the hereafter and regarding the future of man in the next world. The is haphazard dimension in life which disturbs all routines and the same is to be found on the Day the Judgment when this haphazardness blends into a unique Death which rampages everything on the earth.

One of these issues is the role of chance in the course of life. Although, chance is just a segment of the total certainty, but chance govern a large part of our existence. The total existence of human activity is controlled by chance, which may be termed as Fate.

Chance, fate, stages of journey and chorus lets us enter into the drama of life which is more visible in the following remarkable lines:

It's as though a visible chorus called up the different
Stages of the journey, singing about them and being them

The train journey becomes a semblance to the drama in real life. As the play has acts and chorus as the character, so is the situation here. Every man and woman along with their family members act as chorus throughout all the stages of their life – tragic or comic may be.

Oneness and Identification
The platform or waiting to board the train are my brothers

In a way that really wants to tell me why there is so little Panic and disorder in the world, and so much unhappiness. If I were to get down now to stretch, take a few steps

Realizing the basic anxieties of the heart, the poet feels complete oneness and identification with the fellow travelers. Since this journey symbolizes life. It is a moment of human unity which the poet experiences. He wonders whether complete communication between the individual and community is possible. The journey of train is taken lightly by the little girl and the likes, but for the poet is a serious activity, perhaps a moment of contemplation which he identifies himself with the fellow travelers who also share the same problems and who are also human beings like himself. They are like brothers, as poet calls them and require our perfect sympathy and attention. And we need to convince each other because if there is little panic and disorder, why are we creating for ourselves. Sometimes, it is our attitude that makes us tense rather than the tension itself. The gap that exists between one man and the other in the modern period can be only bridged if communication barriers, such as alienation, estrangement and personal entrapment are removed.

The symbolic journey of the train ends when the poet receives a warm welcome and as the journey of the train stops, the melodic trains of his mind also stop as depicted in the following lines:

Of good fortune and colossal welcomes from the mayor and Citizens' committees tossing their hats into the air

Style, Imagery and Technique: - The poet employs a traditional image of train journey to denote life and its non-stop voyage. There are also associated images such as station, marking a temporary stopover and passengers representing fellow human beings. The images of toy and enameled nails signify the theme of false appearances and deceptions. This idea is further enhanced by the Big White Apples or the fumes of the train covering up the plat farm. The poem is a good example of stream of consciousness technique the poem's start immediately by the little girl's question about time began to express might issues like mortality, chance and time.

The poem is perfectly a representative of modern American Sensibility. The striking images of tweed coat and its seams and the enameled nails of the little girl are such powerful images that they transpose us to the very place in whose imagination, the poem was written. The natural imagery of date-palm trees and the Alps lend freshness

to poem in contrast to the artificial imagery of tweed coat and enameled nails. The image of Pisa Tower is a true reflective the modern man's psychological complexities. Melodic trains, in terms of images, techniques, symbols and style is a modern piece of poetry.

Conclusion: - Melodic Trains is a fine piece of poetry in which the poet addresses a number of issues, political, social, familial and psychological. It is a journey of life and the end of the journey ends in optimism and happiness on the typical note of 'Welcome Home!' Even then the complexities of life surround us because home introduces new problems for us, the end of the poem is only a temporary happy moment of life.

The poem imparts a deep philosophy of life. Life is full of restlessness, tensions and discontentment, but it is also true that most of the problems in life are caused by the insane attitude of modern man.

> **Clouds of anxiety, of sad, regretful impatience**
> **With ourselves, our lives, the way we have been dealing**
> **With other people up until now. Why couldn't**
> **We have been more considerate?**

Clouds of anxiety are scattered everywhere, at each stop. During these anxious moments, we create more trouble for other people and forget that there are also humans like us and demand our full sympathy and respect. The poet raises the issue of sympathy and its importance in everyday life. Haste and race has spread panic and disorder in our mechanical life. The hurry to reach home makes life only complex rather than solve any practical issue.

'Melodic Train' : A Post-Modern Poem reflecting Complexities of Urban Life

John Ashbery traces the factors, which directly influence and alter attitude of the modern man in day-to-day situations. Thus Ashbery brings before us the complexities of urban life, discussing the social, political and psychological issues along with personal trains of feelings of the poet.

The Melodic Trains is written in the perspective of modern American society. The social aspects are discussed on an emotional scale. The temperament, attitude and behaviour of modern man are dependent on circumstances and transubstantiations. The feelings of poet remain else-oriented. He does not feel anything irrelevant to his surroundings. The self is replaced by else all the time.

The first feelings he gives while sitting in the train are about the girl wearing enameled finger nails. A little girl with scarlet enameled fingernails asks me what time it is—evidently that's a toy wristwatch she's wearing for fun. And it is fun to wear other

Odd things, like this briar pipe and tweed coat

Like date-coloured Sierras with the lines of seams Sketched in and plunging now and then into unfathomable Valleys that can't be deduced by the shape of the person Sitting inside it—me,

What he feels about or for this girl is totally social or impersonal. He reckons his look and position from outside. The girl is not funny in herself. Likewise the poet is not funny in himself. He is funny for other people – and that too with respect to their own judgment. The way and the comparison he uses to convey his opinion about himself is however quite modern. In nature anyhow they are too American to be global. We can say that these are not the feelings of a common man. But they are expressed in so impersonal a way that they look familiar enough to be of a common man. The artistic involvement of the poet in the expression of these feelings makes them poetic and general.

The concept of distance however is dealt with a philosophical touch. It is also enhanced by a brisk comparison.

and just as our way is flat across
Dales and gulches, as though our train were a pencil
Guided by a ruler held against a photomural of the Alps
We both come to see distance as something unofficial
And impersonal yet not without its curious justification
Like the time of a stop watch

The distance is not without its curious justification yet it is unofficial and impersonal because the poet and the girl are not in their usual mood and behaviour. The words 'unofficial' and 'impersonal', however, seem opposites of each other. How one can be unofficial and impersonal at the same time? This is the question that we feel ourselves unable to solve. But this what the poet has taken as a model theme for his poem. The dilemma of a modern man is to be unofficial and impersonal at the same time. The people sitting in the train are unofficial because they are not on their usual places. And they are impersonal because they are involved with the other people going to their particular journeys separately. The distance or journey is like the time of a stop watch – right twice a day. It temporary and momentary. It makes one unofficial and impersonal at the same time. As the distance has a curious justification it is not dimensionless.

Only the wait in stations is vague and
Dimensionless, like oneself.

The wait in the stations on the other hand is vague and dimensionless. It is so because it was not calculated and perhaps is never calculated.

How do they decide how much Time to spend in each? One begins to suspect there's no Rule or that it's applied haphazardly.

The dimensionlessness of this wait is conveyed through the extrovert social behaviour of the people. One thinks about others when one is in trouble.

Thematically the poet has shifted himself from relaxed to tense feelings. This is what the modern poets practice very commonly. The themes are mostly sense, emotion and feeling oriented. These elements were there in the old poets also. But they had not made them the bases of their poems. Theirs were mostly thought oriented. It was the poetic thought that inspired them to write not the poetic feelings. The poetic thoughts aroused in them the poetic feelings and they wrote in a spontaneous over flow of powerful feelings. But it used to be thoughts they wrote not feelings. With the modern poets the things are different a little bit. Their feelings inspire them to write. These are the feelings they experience first not the thoughts. This is why the reader of a modern poetry will feel himself sensitively mature not thought wise. The theme of this poem is therefore the feelings of a modern man or so many modern men. The poet has conveyed their feelings through feelings not through thoughts.

Sadness of the faces of children on the platform, Concern of the grownups for connections, for the chances of getting a taxi, since these have no timetable.

It is not the thought that the taxis have no timetable but a feeling. The taxis of course have their timetable but the person speaking this thought is in a state of mind that suffices to convert his thoughts into feelings.

This approach towards themes and topics is very common in modern poets. What makes this approach truly American is the logical way they convey it to you.

You get one if you can find one though in principle
You can always find one,

This is further the style they convey their feelings and thoughts through. The interference of thoughts in the depiction of feelings however is imperceptibly constant. What Ashbery gives as a logical explanation of his feelings is felt as a piece of philosophy.

but the segment of chance
In the circle of certainty is what gives these leaning
Tower of Pisa figures their aspect of dogged
Impatience, banking forward into the wind.

We can say the style has rendered simple poetic feelings and thoughts to those of philosophical ones. But this is not true. One becomes philosophical when one feels and thinks so deeply. It is in fact the depth of feelings that is conveyed in so philosophical a mode not the philosophy itself.

In short any stop before the final one creates

Clouds of anxiety, of sad, regretful impatience
With ourselves, our lives, the way we have been dealing
With other people up until now. Why couldn't
We have been more considerate?

The outcome of deep feelings at the level of expression or thinking is philosophy. But at the level of feelings it is anxiety. The deeper we feel the more anxious we become.

The anxiety, however, results in an expression of modern attitude towards various directions. It seems as if the modern people are always ready to be annoyed and worried. The variance in thoughts and feelings has made them impatient with their surroundings. They seem no more tolerant and considerate. But actually it has become their second nature. It has become a part of their feelings and expressions. The sooner they get anxious the less latter they get relaxed.

These figures leaving the platform or waiting to board the train are my brothers in a way that really wants to tell me why there is so little Panic and disorder in the world, and so much unhappiness.

The lines though thematic in nature yet indicate the feelings of a person who see these people in such a tense condition. They are not philosophic in any way. They result from the complex interplay of feelings the modern poets are so adept in. This is what Ashbery wants to say – the complexity of modern mind at the level of sensitive sights. It seems as if the modern man starts thinking when gets tense and confused. In the same way the other men start feelings when they see tension and confusion. The problem is not of identity but of individuality. They do not know where they become different from others and similar to them. Why does the poet feel different from what the people at platform do? Because he is sitting in the train and the others are standing outside at the platforms. The difference in their resulted thoughts is the difference in their identity. What the poet feels in the above and the following lines is the crisis of identity. In the first stage he feels them unjustified. But in the second desirous to be one of them.

If I were to get down now to stretch, take a few steps
In the wearying and world-weary clouds of stream like great
White apples, might I just through proximity and aping
Of postures and attitudes communicate this concern of mine to them?

The poet's concern to the people is not of individuality but of identity – identity in the sense of similarity. But he is so much conscious of his position that he seems failed to find out any similarity. What he will do to them shall be a kind of aping. The description of the way he will get down and reach the people is however American. This attitude is symbolic of the attitude of whole nation – and perhaps of the whole modern community. The points of concern he wants to communicate are however very individualistic.

That their jagged attitudes correspond to mine,

That their beefing strikes answering silver bells within
My own chest, and that I know, as they do, how the last
Stop is the most anxious one of all, though it means
Getting home at last, to the pleasures and dissatisfactions of home?
These are the similarities that strengthen the individualities.

It's as though a visible chorus called up the different Stages of the journey, singing about them and being them: The visible chorus in the different stages of journey is not only particular about itself but also about the others. The members of chorus are different and similar at the same time.

Not the people in the station, not the child opposite me
With currant fingernails, but the windows, seen through,
Reflecting imperfectly, ruthlessly splitting open the bluish
Vague landscape like a zipper.

The difference is not that of the position but of scenic background the people sitting in train are covered in and the people waiting at platforms are not.

Each voice has its own Descending scale to put one in one's place at every stage: One need never know where one is Unless one give up listening, sleeping, approaching a small Western town that is nothing but a windmill.

This is how the people sitting in the train and those waiting at the platforms are the same. Their voices put them in one another's place and one loses ones identity in the clouds of anxiety.

Then
The great fury of the end can drop as a solo
Voices tell about it, wreathing it somehow with an aura
Of good fortune and colossal welcomes from the mayor and
Citizen's tossing their hats into the air.
To hear them singing you'd think it had already happened
And we had focused back on the furniture of the air.

In this perspective it looks very strange that the difference remained only up to the difference in position. As soon as the passengers get down they forget all their anxieties and worries. A new situation seems waiting to devour them. With the change in positions the people are transformed from one set of feelings to another – from one set of differences to another, from one set of similarities to another. Things seem taking place at momentary scales. The identities and individualities are but momentary. They seem depending on some particular sets of conditions and situations. The advantages and disadvantages are but timely. Change the positions and get the newer sets of identities. What the poet is in the beginning remains no more so in the middle and end. It simply

means the people sitting beside in the train and waiting at the platforms will also be different from their present ones.

The poem is so perfect in theme and treatment that it seems dealing with nearly all the modern problems and issues. The life of a modern man is hinted from all sides. The canvas though social in extension yet outlines with domestic contrasts.

Melodic Trains : Critical Evaluation

In the poem Melodic Train the narrator is boarding inside a train. There is a little girl beside him. He can see the scenes and people passing by as the train travels ahead. The journey doesn't end; nor is it any meaningful.

The poem is the sum totality of the ruminations of the speaker about anything that occurs to his mind, when it is provoked (consciously and unconsciously) to think about them. He 'happens to' think about many different types of things, some of which are important and the others are all nonsense. But why should one be selective? The speaker thinks about so many and all unrelated things, but he seems to be (perhaps not very conscious) mainly preoccupied with the ideas about the nature of reality, the human mind, life and anxiety, time and change.

In the first stanza, the random thoughts and ruminations of the man give us an almost clear idea about the occasion. Sitting in a train, he notices a little girl wearing nail polish, when she asks what time it is. He also notices that the child is also wearing a watch, but it is a toy watch, that tells the accurate time twice a day! This kind of description immediately tells us the nature of this special kind of poetic meditation. But, he compares himself with the girl when he says that it is fun for him to wear the kind of clothes he is wearing, as it is fun for the girl to put on a toy watch. But as he looks carelessly at his clothes, his mind indulges in another 'useless' thought; he feels that the stripes on his shirt are submerging into the valleys of the background color and coming out down there again! He links even that fantastic thought with his childhood memory of making a train out of a pencil and letting it run along the edge of a scale (perhaps with an imitative noise!)

In the middle of the third stanza, the subject abruptly changes. He begins to think about 'distance'. This kind of sudden changes of subject matter is typical of the free thought that goes on in the mind all day long. There is no logic, structure, grammar, rules or anything of the sort in the mind. The thought about time merges into a wonder about time. The speaker links time with the stopped watch again; the logic is however inverted. Then he somehow begins to think about 'wait'; "only the wait in stations is dimensionless, like oneself". After some time – it seems that the train has reached another stop – he talks about the sad faces of (homeless?) children. In the typical 'surrealistic' manner, he links (without any logical connection) taxis to the ruminations. Within this seemingly very serious, indeed philosophical concern about chance and the final stop (death) in life, however, there is something that cannot be sanely related to

the ongoing strain of thoughts: "…..circle of uncertainty is what gives these leaning tower of Pisa figures their aspect of dogged impatience, banking forward into the wind"!

After these many shifts in the subject of the poem, within stanzas and within the lines, and after many insignificant and unrelated issues coming and going randomly in and out of the poet's mind, he happens to think about one thing that is serious, starting at about line 32, but even that is told in an inverted manner: "why is there so 'little' panic and disorder in the world." He then thinks of how he can convey the many concerns and worries of his mind to others. As we move ahead, it becomes more and more difficult to untangle the threads of thoughts. "They become more and more jumbled, unrelated to each other in any way. What the reader needs to do is to go on guessing what the worry may be in the speaker's mind; and that is possible if we understand that he is a modern man vexed with many problems and a poetic sort of personality who meditates over them in an emotive manner. The poem develops to become more surrealistic; there are more fantastic ideas like "furniture of the air", as we read on.

The title of the poem suggests that it is about a train journey, and it really is in the literal sense. But with the rhythm of the train, there are also the rhythm of the thought process, and the rhythm of some kind of music. The poem is made of a set of unrelated ruminations, somehow anchored on a tentative situation of a train journey and somehow associatively related by the concerns of a man thinking over life, time, and chances and so on. The digressive "train" of thoughts is sometimes childish and sometimes philosophical, as the mind actually is.

The persona compares human gatherings of platforms with chorus singing about various stages of the journey of life. Here he is not concerned about the distinct faces of people standing on stops bout blurring faces lost in the landscape. Both people and scene become one and united. It is an implication of how human life is unified with nature, both being inseparably knitted together. One does not know his position because he is not aware of where he is while the train is moving. The poet now comes down to earth and pictures the atmosphere which surrounds him after he gets off the train; warm colossal welcomes from mayors and citizens and their choric song. He calls it the 'furniture of the air' which is a philosophical remark about human life; it is a dream too short lived.

Major themes in Ashbery's Poetry

Poet and critic, who has deeply influenced American poetry from the 1970s. Ashbery is the best-known poet of the "New York School." His work is characterized by originality, impressionistic elegance, and dark themes of death and terror as evidenced by his lines, 'The locking into place is death'. In the 1950s Ashbery adopted to his poetry techniques used by such abstract painters as Willem Kooning and Jackson Pollock.

In 'The Painter', we see surrealistic techniques employed. He also was interested in the music of John Cage and his poem, 'Melodic Trains' has been written in a musical-musing

style. Charles Altieri, in 'Self and Sensibility in Contemporary American Poetry', labels Ashbery "the major poet of our minor age". Ashbery himself commented in 'The Invisible Avant-Garde', that "Artists are no fun once they have been discovered" and it seems that his poetry is an attempt to elude what Eliot called "the lemon squeezing school of criticism". The main purpose of Ashbery's poetry as Ashbery himself asserted is:

"to record a kind of generalized transcript of what's really going on in our minds all day "

The best example is 'Melodic Trains' which is innovative and based on stream of consciousness technique recording a real transcript of our minds. Elusiveness perhaps best describes Ashbery's poetry. His poems are difficult reading for those weaned in the early 20th century poetry. Landscapes dominate Ashbery's poems. His pictures are always laid against the backdrops of vast landscapes, as the train is against the photomural of the Alps in Melodic Trains. Ashbery often writes by assuming a persona i.e. a character who narrates the story but who is distinctly not the poet. As a result we have many different personalities talking to us in his poetry and none of them can be confidently attributed to the poet himself. We have a good example of this in the traveler in a tweed coat and holding a briar pipe in Melodic Trains who may be Ashbery but he is soon lost in a multitude. By assuming this persona, Ashbery is able to bring in all the social voices he needs to paint the landscape of experience in American society. Ashbery substantiated this when he said. "Poetry includes anything and everything". It is very difficult to categorize either Ashbery himself or his poems. Though Ashbery is a 20th Century Post-modernist yet we find so much diversity in respect of his technique and subject-matter that at one end, he seems classic like Elizabethans and at another, he seems much like romanticists such as Wordsworth and Coleridge. But I think he is best reserved for his avant-garde approach as asserted in the following lines from 'The Painter':

> **"How could he explain to them his prayer**
> **That nature, not art, might usurp the canvas?"**

Another technique used by Ashbery is to echo other poets, to borrow their style, phrases or images to establish a link or to draw an ironical relation between their and his point of view. He has been known to echo Stevens, Eliot, Pound, and the Romantics. As David Perkins points out in On Ashbery's Predecessors "for both Stevens and Ashbery the imagination creates, destroys and immediately creates another vision of reality". We see this in 'The Painter' where the version of reality of the sea cannot be conveyed in paints and the artist needs a different medium to do that while his concern is that nature and not art might usurp the canvas. Sometimes Ashbery uses voices of other poets. David Perkins points out "he adopts or alludes to a style in order to invoke the tone of feeling associated with it….he exhibits the modern colloquial voices of different types of people". 'The Painter' thus seems to be a direct echo from Browning's many poems on the subject of art. We have echoes here of 'Fra Lippo Lippi' when the protagonist was criticized for finding his subjects in real life and was asked to make his portraits reflect the soul and

not the body. Ashbery's subjects are "not doings in the world but in the mind". In Melodic Trains the journey exists in the poet's mind and he mingles humour with pathos, resignation with hope, and maintains his relaxed, and wonderfully imaginative, speech despite premises that might have led to despair. The anguish of the passengers of the train is shared by the poet but their anxiety and "dogged impatience lead the poet to say:

> **"These figures leaving**
> **The platform or waiting to board the train are my brothers…."**

Ashbery's poetry brings us to strange metaphors and shifts in descriptions. The clouds of smoke in Melodic Trains are 'wearying and world weary' and look like 'great white apples'. The tweed coat with its pattern is likened to 'date-coloured Sierras' while the lines of seams plunge into 'unfathomable Valleys'. The figures may not always be this difficult as the anxiety-laden passengers on the platform look like Tower of Pisa figures though their 'dogged impatience' makes them look like determined birds 'banking forward into the wind'. In The Painter, the artist chooses his wife as a subject and makes her "vast like ruined buildings". Music is another quality of Ashbery's poetry. The optimistic tone of his poetry makes even trains to be melodic. Melodic Trains describes the anguish and anxiety of the journey in musical notes which end at a fanfare of celebration with music of human voices and clapping and all that.

Finally, John Ashbery is a modern poet who addresses the sensibility of the modern 201st century contemporary man. Themes like music, rebellion, art, consciousness and the habit of wrapping lines into paragraph-like stanza (which penetrate layer after layer deeper into anxieties, doubts, and false beliefs) is a recent invention. He is a craftsman like classicists and imaginative like romanticists and renowned for his simple colloquial diction. His metaphors are sometimes highly metaphysical and his poetry has a natural flow, varying in sound and effect according to the theme. All these make Ashbery a post-modern poet and establish him as a poet on sure foundations of contemporary American poetry.

Richard Wilbur's Selected Poems

Richard Wilbur; 1921-Till Date

Richard Purdy Wilbur (born March 1, 1921) is an American poet and literary translator. He was appointed the second Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress in 1987, and twice received the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, in 1957 and again in 1989.

Wilbur was born in New York City and grew up in North Caldwell, New Jersey. He graduated from Montclair High School in 1938, having worked on the school newspaper as a student there. He graduated from Amherst College in 1942 and then served in the United States Army from 1943 to 1945 during World War II. After the Army and graduate school at Harvard University, Wilbur taught at Wesleyan University for two decades and at Smith College for another decade. At Wesleyan, he was instrumental in founding the award-winning poetry series of the University Press. He received two Pulitzer Prizes for Poetry and, as of 2009, teaches at Amherst College. He is also on the editorial board of the literary magazine The Common, based at Amherst College.

When only 8 years old, Wilbur published his first poem in John Martin's Magazine. His first book, The Beautiful Changes and Other Poems, appeared in 1947. Since then he has published several volumes of poetry, including New and Collected Poems (Faber, 1989). Wilbur is also a translator, specializing in the 17th century French comedies of Molière and the dramas of Jean Racine. His translation of Tartuffe has become the Standard English version of the play, and has been presented on television twice. In addition to publishing poetry and translations, he has also published several children's books including Opposites, More Opposites, and The Disappearing Alphabet.

Continuing the tradition of Robert Frost and W. H. Auden, Wilbur's poetry finds illumination in everyday experiences. Less well-known is Wilbur's foray into lyric writing. He provided lyrics to several songs in Leonard Bernstein's 1956 musical, Candide, including the famous "Glitter and Be Gay" and "Make Our Garden Grow." He has also produced several unpublished works including as "The Wing" and "To Beatrice".

His honors include the 1983 Drama Desk Special Award and the PEN Translation Prize for his translation of The Misanthrope, both the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry and the National Book Award for Things of This World (1956), the Edna St Vincent Millay award, the Bollingen Prize, and the Chevalier, Ordre des Palmes Académiques. He was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1959. In 1987 Wilbur became the second poet, after Robert Penn Warren, to be named U.S. Poet Laureate after the position's title was changed from Poetry Consultant. In 1988, he won the Aiken Taylor Award for Modern American Poetry and then in 1989 he won a second Pulitzer, this one

for his New and Collected Poems. On October 14, 1994, he received the National Medal of Arts from President Bill Clinton. He also received the PEN/Ralph Manheim Medal for Translation in 1994. In 2003, Wilbur was inducted into the American Theater Hall of Fame. In 2006, Wilbur won the Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize. In 2010 he won the National Translation Award for the translation of The Theatre of Illusion by Pierre Corneille. In 2012, Yale conferred an honorary degree, Doctor of Letters, on Wilbur.

After the Last Bulletins

Introduction and Theme: - Wilbur is best known for his poetic intelligence and philosophy of life and this is well explicit in all his poems at large and in After the Last Bulletins in particular. Wilbur points to a very important fact of life of what is significant today may become insignificant tomorrow. He takes the newspapers for example and says that the newspapers which are fresh today and most welcome for and accepted for reading, become stale and useless the other day.

The poem is pictorial in nature, an example of imagery, which is a typical quality of Wilbur. He tells us what happens to the newspapers after they have been read thrown at different places. The editors publish the papers and fall into a delicious slumber, but their printed newspapers toss and tumble all over the city, get splashed by mud and torn by the spikes of railings. They are carried away by wind where it flows. They travel through streets, gutters and deserted places and faded insignificantly into nothingness. The papers, which are read enthusiastically in front of the eyes and placed securely on the shelves, are trampled down by feet after they have become outdated.

This is not the whole story. They are again printed and held important like the other day and this cycle keeps repeating all the times. The poet says that life is not motionless or stagnant. The old order is replaced by the new order. The old generation must give way for the new one. What is important today will fall into nothingness tomorrow. That is the way of the world. Things have worked the same way and will continue to be the same till the end. Things will keep like this forever. What is important in life is to keep pace with it.

A Critique of After The Last Bulletins

Introduction: - Richard Wilbur is a modern poet and chooses modern themes and topics. He lives in the scientific age, but he doesn’t speak about the scientific discoveries. He discusses facts of life. After the Last Bulletins is about various facts of life. The most importance aspect is of waste. Human efforts are geared towards collecting tons of information and provide it for the common mind. The people receive information and study it casually, throw it heartlessly. They don’t enjoy reading the newspapers.

This printing of newspapers is cycled every day and it is taken to be routine matter rather than a serious one. Even this producing of newspaper is not done for a noble cause, perhaps only for the sake of routine or business itself. There seems to be a waste

everywhere: in information technology, scientific knowledge and economic productivity. After The Last Bulletins criticizes man's preoccupation with modern media. Media has become very important in the 20th century and today its importance cannot be denied.

Though the poem is about Last Bulletins and the subsequent results yet it raises certain issues about the facts of life ranging from ignorance to knowledge, the blessing of sleep, waste in human life, degrading of human society and complexity of human nature. Some of these themes are obvious and are not easy to find out, but the rest of them difficult to understand thought the poem because of its ambiguity as is the case with most American poems because they are too intellectually designed for a common mind.

Development of Thought

Abundance of knowledge and ignorance: - The poet speaks about the abundance of knowledge in the modern age. The production of newspapers and their presence everywhere actually symbolizes the abundance of knowledge scattered around and easily accessible to human mind. We do utilize this information and keep ourselves in touch with day-to-day happenings, but it is the irony of our life that despite this craze for gathering and collecting information, man's knowledge of truth has really not improved. Man is as ignorant as he was before this abundance. Even if he has acquired this knowledge through various sources, he uses it in counter attitudes and opposites. We do collect facts, but we ignore the spiritual reality behind them. So we can say that man has advanced in the field of information technology, but he is spiritually declined. The more information he has, the more ignorant he has come to be. Despite this abundance of information which is flying all around, human nature is not understood and real peace is sought in the everyday activities.

Emergence of a New World:-

> **After the last bulletins the windows darken**
> **And the whole city founders readily and deep,**
> **Sliding on all its pillows**
> **To the thronged Atlantis of personal sleep,**

The ocean of sleep is very calm like the Atlantis. In sleep, a new world of ideas open up in which the poem addresses some issues. The concept of new world and a new power is furthered through the imagery of winds, which rise as soon as we sleep and turn off our lights. In sleep, a new word emerges. This is the world of agitations and questions, which arise from our inner self in sleep, which challenge the people who are proud of their knowledge. Perhaps it is due to these that we drown ourselves in daily activities to avoid the prick of our conscience. In the world of nature, a new power is awakened and begins to act. The furious activities of the wind defy all the false achievements, vanities and superfluities of daily life. The wind shows absolute disregard for the newspapers and magazines of which we are proud. The wind ruthlessly tears them into shreds, flinging

them. This new world in sleep questions our knowledge and challenges our achievements and shows powerless we are in nature.

Wilbur's naturalism is fully explicit here when mocks at the collective knowledge of human existence and renders it a waste in front of the mystical and religious consciousness, which should be the ultimate aim of our life.

Corruption of Media:-

> **And the wind rises. The wind rises and bowls**
> **The day's litter of news in the alleys. Trash**
> **Tears itself on the railings,**
> **Soars and falls with a soft crash,**

The winds rise and hurl the newspapers into the streets. Newspapers become insignificant and before the power of nature. Nature is truth and media is corruption and falsehood. When falsehood strikes against truth, it perishes. The same is the case with the newspapers, they are torn apart by the winds and battered against the surfaces and the newspapers are unable to defend themselves, because they are corrupt and strengthless. Thus the winds reject all the media. They fly like uncontrolled flight.

Vanities and Real Character: - The flying newspapers reach the park where we find plenty of human beings who have been symbolized here as the statue and the winds slap the newspapers on the face of the statue, as the poet says,

> **Unruly flights**
> **Scamper the park, and taking a statue for dead**
> **Strike at the positive eyes,**
> **Batter and flap the stolid head**
> **And scratch the noble name. In empty lots**
> **Our journals spiral in a fierce noyade**

Statues are motionless symbols of human vanity. The wind attacks the statue and slaps their faces. Here lies a lesson for man that decline is our ultimate fate. Greatness is too sought in character, not in status otherwise they will be attacked by nature. Characters, good behavior, attitude and action will keep us alive even after death. Weather and winds demolish constantly. They don't accept our standard of greatness and reputation. Greatness lies in character and morality rather than in actual appearances and motionless outlook.

Immortality of Human Existence: - In empty spaces, newspapers gather our ideas, notions and general facts into the blank spaces. All the things in columns are meaningless. All the natural elements are cursing human beings. The law of nature is that we are mortals. Immortality is not for publicity. To whom are we propagating that we are immortal and after all why? We are violating the laws of nature. Night is always

heavy on mortals if there is no good in us. We fear darkness as suggested in the following line:

After the last bulletins the windows darken

We are mortal. That is truth and reality. We must accept reality and modern world is the world of appearances. We even try to present realities as appearances.

Insignificance of Newspapers: - Newspapers are important in our life, but the poet challenges their importance. The poet discusses that there is no point of printing the papers because a lot of energy is consumed and wasted in their production, as their ultimate goal is destruction. The newspapers go waste. They lack the universality of literary taste. Works of literature abide even today after many centuries. Shakespeare's Dramas, Milton's poetry and Jane Austen or Dickens' novels are afresh even after centuries. The only reason being they were mostly written for public awareness or societal change and development. They are universal, but the newspapers are insignificant because their basic aim is propagation, instigation, plot mongering and rigging. They are insignificant; therefore, they are tossed about in the dirty places of town.

Conclusion: - 'Wilbur is a rebel'. This is an apt and just assessment of Tony Heywood. Wilbur's subjective bent is that he challenges the established norms. Here again, he satirizes the newspapers. But he also discusses that change is the spice of life otherwise, something significant today will become insignificant tomorrow. If a proper charm is not maintained in the quality of a commodity, its value diminishes. This is what we can say about After The Last Bulletins in economic terms. However, the poem is a good example of modern poetry and perfect representative of Wilbur's subject matter and technique. His imagery is unique and striking. The mundane topic of newspapers, exploited for serious purpose is the ample proof of Wilbur's genius in this poem.

Marginalia

Introduction and Theme: - The poem is philosopising an important reality of life and puts forward his statement which is scientifically true that all forces of life are centrifugal (i.e. tending away from centralisation, as of authority). The force of life is pressurised to the borders or poetically speaking, to the margins of life. Because our energies and qualities lie in the center of life, we cannot utilize then in the best possible manner. Our dreams, visions, desires do lie in the center, but it is a reality of life that their achievements are centrifugal. The reality of life is developing or progressing from the center outwards.

We have our dreams, desires, myths and visions of a standard life, but we cannot materialize our dreams because the force of life is centrifugal and all our dreams lie in the center of our mind.

The basic idea of the poem is that things concentrate at the edges … all other details seem to present of a cinematic presentation of the idea. The poet gives an example of pond, then of sleep and finally concludes that our sleep takes us away from the world of reality to the world of imagination which is replete with all sorts of desires, but we cannot perform during sleep to get our desires. The end of our journey is death and our energies are expanding towards this goal.

A Critique of Marginalia

Introduction

> **Things concentrate at the edges; the pond-surface**
> **Is bourne to fish and man**

Things concentrate at the edges is the basic message of the poem. The poet brings round this point to his readers in a graphic manner using the example of water pond and sleep both of which are examples common enough for an average mind to understand. But the philosophical point, which the poet makes, is unique and seldom touched upon by the poets. This is a typical quality of modern poets especially Americans who tend always tend to choose striking topics for their poems. Marginalia tends to present the reality that things exert their pressures to the edges and this is amply proven by the men and fish along with other botanical life in the water which are driven by the centrifugal force to the edges rather than staying in the center (centripetal). Sleep also takes us from the conscious world to the unconscious world, which is an example of centrifugal force in life.

The poem has imaginative quality along with realistic touches. There seems to be a clash between imagination and reality. It is a fact that center is important for the generation of products and results, but all its energies are pressured to the edges, so for the existence of life, life must pace along with time and naturally progress ahead for better and standard life.

The progress and advancement of life lie in the coping with the rim of whirlpool rather than enjoying its center.

Development of Thought

An Attack on the traditional concept of Nucleus: - Wilbur is not simply a poet, but a philosopher who attacks the traditional concept of central significance of nucleus. Traditionally people have upheld the importance of center and nucleus. That is why Theodore Roethke hails Wilbur in the followings words, "Not a graceful mind - that's a mistake - but a mind of grace, an altogether different and higher thing."

Scientifics have discovered that the death of nucleus is the death of whole cell. They have believed in the centripetal forces rather than the centrifugal ones, but Wilbur challenges and says:

Things concentrate at the edges;

What he means is that complexity, richness, beauty and ugliness of the world exists not at its center but at its boundaries. It is the boundaries, which have held the center tight. Though the center is an emissary of light, knowledge and development yet our riches are centrifugal in the words of Wilbur. So the most important area for progress is not the center but the edges, which are ever expanding, evolutionary and revolutionary.

The Limits of Man and Animal: - He uses a number of images to drive home his idea. He uses zoological and botanical imagery very common in modern American poetry introduced by the advancement of science. Wilbur says,

The pond-surface
Is bourne to fish and man

He uses the image of pond, its surface and edges. Edges serve as the ultimate boundaries separating the world of the fish from that of human beings – the world of land differed from the waterly world. It is not the centeral water of the pond which defines the limits of man and the fish. Their limits are symbolised by the borders – the edge of the pond.

Not only this zoological, but also the botanical life such as slime, moss, impure vegetation or décor, music or pattered light, in other words all the beauties and ugliness all concentrate at the edges as ascertained by Wilbur in the following lines:

In textile scum and damask light, on which
The lily-pads are set; and there are also
Inlaid ruddy twigs, becalmed pine-leaves,
Air-baubles, and the chain mail of froth

Dreams vs Reality: - The poem nicely presents the theme of dream and reality, knowledge and ignorance, sleep and everyday life, fact and imagination and the opposite forces:

Descending into sleep (as when the night-lift Falls past a brilliant floor), we glimpse a sublime

Décor and hear, perhaps, a complete music,
But this evades us, as in the night meadows
The crickets' million round song dies away

The poet supports a state of mind which is conscious and unconscious at the same time, half-way between sleep and awake, imagination and reality. Again these points ascertain that the deeper we go in sleep, or higher we ascent to imagination we will find the reality at the edges not in the center. Music heard becomes appealing, the more we head towards the farthest boundaries of the song and hear that a chorus is singing for us.

Complexity and High End of Life: - As Marginalia is a thought-provoking poem, the poet marginalizes and philosophizes life. According to the poet, life is an ocean, which ends in a whirlpool. All our qualities are centrifugal and cannot stay in the center; they must have an outlet towards the borders for sustenance.

Our riches are centrifugal; men compose
Daily, unwittingly, their final dreams,
And those are our own voices whose remote
Consummate chorus rides on the whirlpool's rim,
Past which we flog our sails, toward which we drift,
Plying our trades, in hopes of a good drowning.

Whatever do, whatever our professional skills, interests and hobbies are, life finally moves towards the whirlpool of death. Each human being in life has a tiny boat, which is set on sail on the ocean of life. E very one is using his particular skills plies his boat. He weaves a web of his future dreams and desires. These visions and dreams are out human experiences. The goals and targets are set for us and they call us for a deceptive center. We drown while moving towards the unknown region of death.

Style, Imagery and Technique: - Wilbur’s style is modern and perfect. The sentences are short, the poem runs like an essay giving an introduction, presenting and developing an argument and concluding the presented material with a final message. Wilbur has touched upon a scientific topic and reinforced it with natural imagery. The scenic imagery of water pond and the things grown upon them has been fully exploited not only for the aesthetic pleasure for a romantic mind, but also supporting the main argument presented. The image of sleep is superbly presented to give the poem a dream-like quality and further enhance the point discussed earlier. Doubtlessly, Wilbur technically proves himself a perfect craftsman in this poem. Technically, the poem is a masterpiece of English literature.

Conclusion: - Marginalia is a state of mind catalysed the social changes and hybrid cultures. Though we are awake and asleep which are the two contrary states of human mind, but the best ends can be achieves in hypnotic states. Life is going on and its force which is centrifugal will continue drawing things at its edges, but until and unless exploited properly, our riches will only remain dreams and visions and we cannot materialize them. In society, everything is in motion and the best resources lie at the edges. The glory of man is to lift himself up to the standard and achieve that Sublime and Décor that Wilbur speaks of. Though the margins are at the highest point, yet diligent and constant state of mind can achieve that unattainable target.

Still Citizen Sparrow

Introduction and Theme: - Still Citizen Sparrow is a direct shot to the modern civilized people who uphold the views that vulture is an ugly and evil animal. The poet counters the argument and believes that although vulture is believed to be a filthy and dirty animal, yet she is endowed with the rarest qualities ever gifted to any other bird.

It is vulture, which hovers the whole sky and watches natural environment and keeps it clean. Vulture was also present at the time of Prophet Noah when he preached his people and was rejected by them. Ordered by Allah, he built a boat, his people jeered at him, but he put all samples of living organism in his boat. The Great Deluge appeared and destroyed every non-believer. The same vulture was with him when Noah's boat landed at the mountain and initiated a new age of enlightenment. People never come to terms with vulture, but the poet gives a long speech containing good words on the qualities of this animal. The poet avers that some animals though look ugly outside, yet are beautiful for their traits. The real beauty is of good action, not of outer physical charm.

Because vulture builds a new world by cleaning the environment, it is associated with the prophet Noah who also built a new world. In this way, vulture becomes symbolic of the beginning of a new world of faith and gives us message that we must also be builder of a new world in which we should contribute as much as we can.

A CRITIQUE OF STILL CITIZEN SPARROW

Introduction: - The poet supports the creature, which is thought to be the ugliest creature. The poet attacks the common perception of people about this bird and presents his arguments in favour of this animal. He gives the bird masculine qualities and addresses him as 'He' rather than 'It', which shows the importance of vulture in the poet's mind and in the human kingdom. Though vulture looks ugly, bald-headed and always living on dead rotten flesh of various stinking animals, yet it has a beauty which no animal, bird or human being can match. That virtuous or beautiful quality is cleanliness, which according to Islam is half completion of faith.

The Sparrow is still citizen only outwardly beautiful, but performing no practical function in society. On the other hand, the great responsibility of disposing of the city waste is left on the vulture. The also criticizes the modern man who whose angle of vision needs to corrected and who may welcome clean and beautiful guests at his home, but shun the trash collectors, as a result of whose efforts, the environment is made clean and beautiful.

The bravery of vulture is also evident when the whole earth was submerged in water and this vulture flew and flew over the surface of water, this venture could have killed the sparrow, but it was vulture who sacrificed for them all (other animals, bird and humans beings) and made the earth once again a living abode by cleaning the rotten stinking

flesh. This is the real inward virtue of vulgar for which he should be remembered rather than for his physical appearance.

Development of Thought

The physical description of the vulture: - If we see the vulture cruising in the sky, its movement is so attractive, its wings so wide, it looks almost regal. It doesn't have to move its wings. None among the birds is so powerful and fine vulture. The poet says,

> **And at the tall**
> **Tip of the sky lie cruising. Then you'll see**
> **That no more beautiful bird is in heaven's height,**
> **No wider more placid wings, no watch fuller flight;**
> **He shoulders nature there, the frightfully free,**

It seems so free and bearing the burden of the world upon his shoulders because its wings and shoulders are so strong. The ordinary world of birds cannot imagine the way it flies up in the air. The poet's description of the vulture develops a soft corner among the human beings for the vulture and we begin to love this bird for his not only physical qualities, but also moral virtues.

Double Standards of People: - Still Citizen Sparrow is an animal poet is highly symbolic and satirical of modern man's angle of perception, which he is habitual to adopt. The poet says,

> **Pardon him, you**
> **Who dart in the orchard aisles, for it is he**
> **Devours death, mocks mutability,**
> **Has heart to make an end, keeps nature new.**

The poet attacks the sparrow angrily and tells the sparrow to mind his language about the vulture and be respectful to him. The sparrow lives in orchards, wide and open furrows. How can you judge the real worth of vulture? Ordinary people and birds are afraid of the rotten dead meat of animals; vulture is courageous and takes up steps to perform the last rituals of the dead beings. But we are timid; we stay back and simply mock the people who perform such great duties. We are selfish and cowardly and they are brave and responsible. It is a tribute to vulture because he cleans what we have made dirty and evil by our own actions and actually the dirt have expelled from our existence and so we are dirty, not those who are also forward to clean. This is their highness and dignity and they deserve our respect. These people include: gutter cleaners, dusters, trash collectors and sweepers who don't find respectable status in our society while they are more respectable than us. We only dandy our beauty and boast of our physical appearance and don't even imagine how filthy dirty nature will become without their existence.

The poem exposes the double standards of people. We respect those who spread rubbish, but hate those who clean it. Actually, dirty are the people who spread dirt and respectable are those who clean it. The whole society is in disorder.

Religious Symbolism: - The poet uses religious symbolism to bring round the same theme and point. He says,

Thinking of Noah, child heart, try to forget
How for so many bedlam hours his saw
Soured the song of birds with its wheezy gnaw,
And the slam of his hammer all the day beset

Noah was regarded mad by people, but the hero's intelligence and understanding is far more superior to that of an ordinary man. The other birds kept on chirping, but the hero was not deflected from his mission. People called him crazy, but he didn't stop. So man should be committed to his mission. Self-restrain is important. Noah's journey was not pleasant when he looked down he saw destruction and death everywhere. It was only a heroic mind that could feel this pain. The poet through this religious symbol wants to bring before us an important point. The world is divided into two kinds of people: those who observe and those who perform, those who talk and those of act, those of sleep and those who wake and those of think and those who act. It is unto us what line of race we want to choose.

Talk and Action: - Sparrow symbolizes talk and vulture symbolizes action. Throughout the poem, the poet uses various words to keep the sparrow shut, which is at all times babbling and chirping aimlessly. The poet satirically attacks the sparrow,

Pardon him, you
Who dart in the orchard aisles, for it is he
Devours death, mocks mutability
And he further says,
4–.Forgive the hero, you who would have died
000070p-
To Ararat

Action speaks louder than words could be taken as the message of the poem. The sparrow's repeated chirpings produce no healthy effect on the environment; rather it may distract the attention of those who are busy with their studies or engaged in a serious task. Merely talks bring no results; action in human life is important which brings development and welfare. Our nature is constantly in change, this change causes pollution, filth and stench, which can only be resolved with proper action. Vulture shoulders responsibilities effectively and puts humanity to shame for its passivity and lethargic state.

Style, Technique and Imagery: - Wilbur's approach in this poem is fresh and fine. He uses animal imagery like Ted Hughes, but his treatment is different. The symbol of Noah bracketed with the Vulture is superb and reinforces the concept. The poem has been divided into four line stanzas each one bringing up a new aspect of vulture, his qualities and function. The rhyme scheme is striking and classical. The four-line stanza rhymes as a b b a. The diction is forceful and proves the poet's point of view effectively. The diction and use of such words as: lumber, cruise, rotten office, frightfully free, the slam of his hammer and rocked give a cinematic vision of the overall story of the vulture's world.

Conclusion: - Still Citizen Sparrow is a thought-provoking poem and proves intellectual genius of Wilbur who is famous for writing, which we may call intellectual poems. The poet believes that we must give the devil his due. Though vulture is physical ugly and is found on trash eating dirty items, but there are also two sides to everything and we must take up the good side. We must look at the bright side of the picture rather than the black one.

Adrienne Rich's Selected Poems

Adrienne Rich; 1929-2012

Poet and essayist Adrienne Rich was one of America's foremost public intellectuals. Widely read and hugely influential, Rich's career spanned seven decades and has hewed closely to the story of post-war American poetry itself. She has progressed in life (and in her poems) from young widow and disenchanted formalist, to spiritual and rhetorical convalescent, to feminist leader and leader of a newly-defined female literature."

Beginning with Snapshots of a Daughter-in-Law: Poems 1954-1962 (1963), Rich's work has explored issues of identity, sexuality and politics; her formally ambitious poetics have reflected her continued search for social justice, her role in the anti-war movement, and her radical feminism. Utilizing speech cadences, enjambment and irregular line and stanza lengths, Rich's open forms have sought to include ostensibly "non-poetic language into poetry."

Adrienne Rich was born in 1929 in Baltimore, Maryland. Her father was a renowned pathologist and professor at Johns Hopkins; her mother was a former concert pianist. Rich's upbringing was dominated by the intellectual ambitions her father had for her, and Rich excelled at academics, gaining her degree from Radcliffe University. In 1953 she married Alfred Conrad, an economics professor at Harvard. She had three children with him, but their relationship began to fray in the 1960s as Rich became politically aware—she later stated that "the experience of motherhood was eventually to radicalize me." Rich's work of the 1960s and '70s begins to show the signs of that radicalization. Moving her family to New York in 1966, Rich's collections from this period include Necessities of Life (1966), Leaflets (1969), and The Will to Change (1971), all of which feature looser lines and radical political content. David Zuger, inPoet and Critic, described the changes in Rich's work: "The twenty-year-old author of painstaking, decorous poems that are eager to 'maturely' accept the world they are given becomes a ... poet of prophetic intensity and 'visionary anger' bitterly unable to feel at home in a world 'that gives no room / to be what we dreamt of being.'"

Conrad died in 1970 and six years later Rich moved in with her long-term partner Michelle Cliff. That same year she published her controversial, influential collection of essays Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Institution and Experience (1976). The volume, following on the heels of her masterpiece Diving Into the Wreck, ensured Rich's place in the feminist pantheon. Rich was criticized by some for her harsh depictions of men; however, the work she produced during this period is often seen as her finest. In Ms. Erica Jong noted that "Rich is one of the few poets who can deal with political issues in her poems without letting them degenerate into social realism." Focusing on the title poem, Jong also denies that Rich is anti-male. A portion of the poem reads: "And I am

here, the mermaid whose dark hair / streams black, the merman in his armored body. / We circle silently / about the wreck. / We dive into the hold. / I am she: I am he." Jong commented, "This stranger-poet-survivor carries 'a book of myths' in which her/his 'names do not appear.' These are the old myths ... that perpetuate the battle between the sexes. Implicit in Rich's image of the androgyne is the idea that we must write new myths, create new definitions of humanity which will not glorify this angry chasm but heal it."

Through over sixty years of public introspection and examination of society and self, Adrienne Rich has chronicled her journey in poetry and prose. "I began as an American optimist," she commented in Credo of a Passionate Skeptic, "albeit a critical one, formed by our racial legacy and by the Vietnam War...I became an American Skeptic, not as to the long search for justice and dignity, which is part of all human history, but in the light of my nation's leading role in demoralizing and destabilizing that search, here at home and around the world. Perhaps just such a passionate skepticism, neither cynical nor nihilistic, is the ground for continuing."

Diving into the Wreck

Introduction and Main Theme: -Diving into the Wreck is Adrienne Rich's most celebrated poem. It is unanimously called epic of our modern times. The poet gives a description of the sea and her dive into the sea, the various things observed and particular experiences underwent are all beautifully narrated and described. The poem is also adventurous because it I based on the search for a wreck.

Here Diving into the Wreck is not a simple adventure story, but Rich has a very serious account to relate. On the onset, it is a story of a diver going into the water to observe a wreck, but as the seawater is deep and mysterious so are the meanings of the poem. Basically the poem is the struggle for women rights in the male-dominated society. The poem is representative of not only Rich's ideals, but also the changing conditions of American at the time when the poem was written.

Rich becomes androgyny [1] and wants to observe the damage that was done to the female race and the treasures that prevail in their rights. Her struggle for the voice of rights is single-handed.

[1]. Androgyny: medical term that shows characteristics of both sexes – male and female. Rich becomes Androgynous: again a medical term relating to or exhibiting both female and male sex organs but with a predominantly female appearance.

A Critique of Diving into the Wreck

Introduction: - Wrecked ship. Ruins of a wrecked ship at the bottom of the sea are explored in "Diving into the Wreck," the title poem of the collection. Although it is not named, the Atlantic Ocean is probably the sea that houses the wreck that the speaker of

the poem explores. The wreck and the sea are not named because they must be inclusive, not exclusive. The primary symbol of the poem, representing unrecovered female history, seeks to identify with all its readers, as the final stanza reinforces:

We are, I am, you are
a book of myths in which
our names do not appear

The image of the sea is a metaphor of life as sea is full of wreckages; the world too is full of ruins. One glance around will bring back countless pictures of destruction. Diving into the Wreck provides the angle of perception about the wreck from both the male and the female side. It is androgyny that investigates the wreck, not female or male alone. The poem is hailed as an epic of the modern times. It statement is fully justified by the technical merits of the poem and the subject matter.

Development of Thought

Quest for Fact or Myth: - According to Margaret Atwood, the wreck she is diving into, in the very strong title poem, is the wreck of obsolete myths, particularly myths about men and women. She is journeying to something that is already in the past, in order to discover for herself the reality behind the myth,

the wreck and not the story of the wreck
the thing itself and not the myth."

What she finds is part treasure and part corpse, and she also finds that she herself is part of it, a "half-destroyed instrument." As explorer she is detached; she carries a knife to cut her way in, cut structures apart; a camera to record; and the book of myths itself, a book which has hitherto had no place for explorers like herself.

This quest-the quest for something beyond myths, for the truths about men and women, about the "I" and the "You," the He and the She, or more generally (in the references to wars and persecutions of various kinds) about the powerless and the powerful--is presented throughout the book through a sharp, clear style and through metaphors which become their own myths. At their most successful the poems move like dreams, simultaneously revealing and alluding, disguising and concealing. The truth, it seems, is not just what you find when you open a door: it is itself a door, which the poet is always on the verge of going through.

Depth of the Poem: - According to Nancy Milford, In Diving into the Wreck she enters more deeply than ever before into female fantasy; and these are primal waters, life-giving and secretive in the special sense of not being wholly revealed. The female element and a diver may dive to plunder or to explore.

First having read the book of myths,

and loaded the camera,
and checked the edge of the knife-blade,
I put on
the body-armor of black rubber
the absurd flippers
the grave and awkward mask.
Alone and crippled by her equipment, she is descending, she is having to do this,
and there is no one
to tell me when the ocean
will begin

And even though the mask of the diver is powerful the point of the dive is not the exercise of power in self-defense.

the sea is not a question of power
I have to learn alone
to turn my body without force
in the deep element

She came "to explore the wreck." And what is the wreckage; is it of marriage, or of sex, or of the selfhood within each? Is it the female body, her own? This is the place.

And I am here, the mermaid whose dark hair
streams black, the merman in his armored body
We circle silently
about the wreck
we dive into the hold.
I am she: I am he

Moving in deeply private images, circling darkly and richly into the very sources of her poetry, she is, as she says, "coming-home to. . .sex, sexuality, sexual wounds, sexual identity, sexual politics":

we are the half-destroyed instruments
that once held to a course
the water-eaten log
the fouled compass
We are, I am, you are
by cowardice or courage
the one who find our way
back to this scene
carrying a knife, a camera
a book of myths
in which

our names do not appear.

Dreaming of the person within the poem: she walking toward me, naked, swaying, bending down, her dark long hair falling forward of its own weight like heavy cloth shielding my face and her own, her full breasts brushing my cheek, moving toward my mouth. The dream is the invention of the dreamer, and the content of the dream moves in symbols of sustenance and of comfort. The hands of that diving woman become our own hands, reaching out, touching, holding; not in sex but in deliverance. That is the potency of her poetry: it infuses dreams, it makes possible connections between people in the face of what seems to be irrevocable separateness, it forges an alliance between the poet and the reader. The power of her woman's voice crying out, I am: surviving, sustaining, continuing, and making whole

we move together like underwater plants

The meaning of Wreck: - Deborah Pope in finding the meaning of the wreck states, the wreck represents the battered hulk of the sexual definitions of the past, which Rich, as an underwater explorer, must search for evidence of what can be salvaged. Only those who have managed to survive the wreck--women isolated from any meaningful participation or voice in forces that led to the disaster--are in a position to write its epitaph and their own names in new books.

Rich's Approach to the Wreck: - "Diving into the Wreck" presents a less privatized, more mythologized version of the theme in "Waking in the Dark." Rich again creates a setting that merges the ruinous state of modern civilization with the damaged sexuality of the self. The poet begins the exploration alone, but she suggests that others have risked such journeys toward clarification. In a passage that Rich and most readers now find problematic, the solitary explorer modulates into an androgyne as she

approaches the wreck:
the mermaid whose dark hair
streams black, the merman in his armored body
... I am she: I am he....

Speaking, feeling, and seeing for both sexes, the poet wants to witness

"the wreck and not the story of the wreck
the thing itself and not the myth."

Margaret Atwood notes that the wreck is "beyond salvation though not beyond understanding" (239), but the poem actually offers very little analysis of the wreck and quite a bit of explanation of how the wreck is approached, how the inquiry is carried out, and how the explorer understands the mission and her/himself. Other than describing the wreck of the self and of culture as the drowned face" and the half-destroyed instruments

that once held to a course
the water-eaten log / the fouled compass,

The poem focuses on the process and attitude of the explorer. Even the motive is vague and not necessarily pure:

We are, I am, you are
by cowardice or courage
the one who find our way
back to this scene
carrying a knife, a camera
a book of myths
in which
our names do not appear.

Diving into the Wreck offers a metaphor for the crisis and necessity that could only be called a detached "it" in "Trying to Talk with a Man": "Coming out here we are up against it" (my emphasis). Yet as Cary Nelson has noted, "Diving into the Wreck" is hardly a concrete or thoroughly grounded poem since the androgyny it supplies oversimplifies sexuality and is itself a myth (156).

For Nelson, the poem "demonstrates that one can suppress difficult feelings by mythologizing them" in "stylized and abstract" ways (156); however, the poem's attention to the process of exploring the wreck and not to the analysis of the wreck is significant for both Rich's feminist theory and her poetic practice. The poem has cleared ground, and unlike "When We Dead Awaken," it stops before it reconstructs anything, satisfied with creating a new signifying space rather than overly desperate to fill it. In fact, the ending returns us to the beginning of the poem and prepares for another exploration by again mentioning the knife, the camera, and the book. As Werner says, the poem continually makes ready "for the descent which we are, then and now and perpetually, just beginning" (175). In its mythologized, abstract way, "Diving into the Wreck" conveys the dialectic between the epic feminist vision and the lyric feminist vision, as the diver and the wreck of culture coincide in the image of the "drowned face." While the modulation of the lyric "I" into the androgynous "we" presents problems, the strategy allows Rich to avoid the potential egotism of realistic self-dramatization and to expose the myth that the absence of "our names" signifies we are somehow unafflicted by the reductive sexual ideologies that prevail. Like many others in the volume, this poem raises the question of origin, of "where the split began" ("Waking in the Dark"): the poem privileges neither an external nor an internal site as the source of bifurcation, and it avoids hypostatizing a lost unity. Even the androgyny of the diver suggests not an original unity but the common bond of incompleteness, loss, and disrepair shared by all selves.

Past and Present: -The better poems of Adrienne Rich always exact a certain price from anyone willing to participate in their vision. This is also true in the case of Diving

into the Wreck. The kind of political awareness she advocates may cost a loss of personal freedom. The voyage into new territory may require us to adopt a generalized, mythic identity. The reader who accepts her vision uncritically has probably repressed the real anxieties accompanying self- recognition and personal change. The enthusiasm for her efforts to create a myth of androgynous sexuality is a typical case. To applaud the androgynous psyche or to announce this as its historical moment is easier than actually living out its consequences: "I am here, the mermaid whose dark hair / streams back, the merman in his armored body ... I am she: I am he." We all have more varied sexual impulses than we can act on, but will Rich's romanticized androgynous figure, "whose drowned face sleeps with open eyes," help bring them any closer to realization? While that is not a criterion one would ordinarily apply to all poetry, it is relevant in Rich's case. Unlike Roethke, she cannot take pleasure in the powerlessness of poetic solutions to social and historical conflicts. Her poetry continually testifies to her need to work out possible modes of human existence verbally, to achieve imaginatively what cannot yet be achieved in actual relationships. Moreover, she hopes that poetry can transform human interaction. Yet perhaps that is not, after all, the point, at least in poems like "Diving into the Wreck," despite its call for "the thing itself and not the myth." For what we have here is the myth, as Rich herself has now implicitly acknowledged: "There are words I cannot choose again: humanism androgyny". "Such words," she goes on to say, "have no shame in them." They do not embody the history of anguish, repression, and self-control that precedes them. "Their glint is too shallow"; they do not describe either the past or the life of the present. As Rich has recently written of bisexuality, "Such a notion blurs and sentimentalizes the actualities within which women have experienced sexuality; it is the old liberal leap across the tasks and struggles of here and now." Indeed "Diving into the Wreck" demonstrates that one can suppress difficult feelings by mythologizing them. It may be that both Rich and her readers are relieved to have their fear and their desire conjoined in symbols so stylized and abstract.

Conclusion: - Words are purposes and maps. They are intentions we have toward each other, whether we are aware of those intentions or not; they are ways toward and away from each other. This is such a brilliant and beautiful poem, one of Rich's best. (The other great one for me is "Splitting.") There is deep sadness here, and a sense of being broken by a life that is much more powerful and vaster than our intentions had led us to believe when we thought we could set goals and reach them. So what can we do? Throw away the myths and seek what treasure remains in the devastation of our dreams. And the treasure is there, obscured, but there. The fact that the book of myths will remain, but our names will not appear in it is very hopeful. Further, I believe that the poem is one of the great poems of our time. It is a poem of disaster, with a willingness to look into it deeply and steadily, to learn whatever dreadful information it contains, to accept it, to be part of it, not as victim, but as survivor. The wreck represents the battered hulk of the sexual definitions of the past, which Rich, as an underwater explorer, must search for evidence of what can be salvaged. Only those who have managed to survive the wreck--women isolated from any meaningful participation

or voice in forces that led to the disaster--are in a position to write its epitaph and their own names in new books.

Aunt Jennifer's Tigers

Introduction and theme: - Aunt Jennifer's Tigers is a poem fully representing Adrienne Rich's feminist ideas as well as her concept of art. This is also an autobiographical poem that reflects the deep recesses of Adrienne Rich's mind and also the social mould in which she was thrown as a result of which she gives full vent to her feminist feelings in Aunt Jennifer's Tigers.

First, important theme to be running in the poem is the male-dominated society which leaves women with no choice but marry and be resigned to her fate whatever it is and wants woman to be hush regarding her rights. Women are taken as nothing but commodity to be possessed by others. They are projected to be having no emotions of their own and so they must be dominated by the supreme authority of man. The poem also shows the urge of woman to break away the above shackles laid down by society for her and fulfil her desires of freedom. The tigers also represent art, which has permanent value as compared to the short-lived life of the artist who dies but whose art remains in the world. Aunt Jennifer's Tigers is a fine example of feminist poetry, which holds a banner of protest against the patriarchal society.

A Critique of Aunt Jennifer's Tigers

Introduction: - Aunt Jennifer's Tigers is a fine example of feminist poetry with imperialistic and psychological tensions of the 20th century in which especially women find themselves as insecure and afraid of the Patriarchal social authorities. This is also a visionary poem, which dreams of a happy and fearless life free of male domination, which may give equal and parallel opportunities to the womankind so that they can progress without being hampered by the social male constraints. Aunt Jennifer appears as a symbol of the oppressed women and also the nations dominated by imperialistic powers.

Poem also shows the routine life of a woman anywhere in the world. Jennifer like any woman is sitting embroidering her screen may be for her marriage is thinking about her future and the household duties followed by it. Her end of life is also similar and reminiscent of a woman's common lot.

The poem is packed with a number of themes, images symbols and various stylistic merits, which we may discuss as under:

Development of Thought

Fight for the Rights:-

They do not fear the men beneath the tree;
They pace in sleek chivalric certainty

Aunt Jennifer's Tigers is also ironical because most of the women issues emerge not mainly because of male domination, but because of their own urge to get themselves free. Though male domination over women is a factor yet it is their desire to forget their feministic features and behave like men or become like men. Aunt Jennifer's Tigers is a fight for the equal rights. Aunt Jennifer wishes for a tiger's life free of jungle law where she may define the law and lay restrictions and scope for the womankind. She breaks away from the 20th century traditions in which woman is nothing but a sex symbol. Her prancing tigers exhibit her desire to let loose her ambitions and materialise them.

Women, be they American or Pakistani, are propagating against men and want to break away from the (secure) circles they have laid about them, but I fail to understand what equal rights these women are striving to find because they already possess the rights they must have. I personally believe that most of the tensions for women are not created by men but by themselves. It is the woman who wants to play the role of man, they have forgotten their sense of womanhood, they don't know it means to be a woman, they think they can replace men, but they don't try to understand that God didn't create man and woman equal. They are physically, emotionally, domestically and socially as different as two poles of the world. God created women equal in terms of their reverence, status and importance, but the problem is that women don't want to excel in second priority of divine creation rather they want to improve in the former aspect that is where they are mistaken and this is what destroys them in society and it is unnatural desire. It is actually that women themselves are responsible for their sense of inferiority and male domination.

Dark Aspect of Married Life:-

The massive weight of Uncle's wedding band
Sits heavily upon Aunt Jennifer' hand
When Aunt is dead, her terrified hands will lie
Still ringed with ordeals she was mastered by.

Aunt Jennifer's Tigers paints a decidedly dark portrait of a married woman's life in the domestic sphere. Patriarchal society, oppression and female helplessness are all delicately chided in this powerful poem. By examining the way Rich uses metaphor to further her purpose, we will unearth the deeper and multi-layered implications of this well-known piece.

In the first stanza, we are introduced to the sympathetic protagonist of the poem, Aunt Jennifer. Instead of describing her, however, Rich chooses to establish Aunt Jennifer's ownership of Tigers and continues to describe them. The tigers are vivacious and vividly portrayed. The tigers are colorfully described as "bright" and seeming full of energy; they happily "prance across the screen.

Aunt Jennifer is described as conducting needle work with a piece of wool. ” We then realize that this menial, domestic task is made difficult by the “massive weight” of the wedding ring that Aunt Jennifer is wearing.” This is a particularly daunting notion as usually we thing of death as although tragic in many senses, ultimately a liberator. “Completely free and fearless of the men below them, the tigers "pace in sleek chivalric certainty. Where the first stanza serves as a medium to explain what the tigers represent, the second stanza tells us who Aunt Jennifer is, and what she represents. So in order to create something to stand up against the patriarchal society in which she lived, Aunt Jennifer decided on masculine creatures. Aunt Jennifer and her tigers are in fact polar opposites, her tigers are everything that she isn’t and wishes to be. ”

In a possibly subconscious attempt to live vicariously through free and happy beings, Rich’s protagonist, Aunt Jennifer, has created tigers. However, under the oppressive world that she lives in, even this relatively symbol embroidery seems somewhat of a daunting task, for “even the ivory needle is hard to pull. However, Aunt Jennifer’s oppression is so extreme that not even death will grant her freedom. ” As the poem unravels, we realize these tigers serve as a sharp contrast to the psyche of Aunt Jennifer. In a very bittersweet closing couplet, the tigers are described as eternal beings, having the freedom to forever “go on prancing, proud, and unafraid. In short, she says that even in death, she will be oppressed by patriarchal society, or “ringed with the ordeals she was mastered by. Here, we begin to really appreciate the juxtaposition between Aunt Jennifer and her tigers. Sedentary and listless, Aunt Jennifer represents an oppressed housewife lacking the ability to stand up for herself.

Aunt Jennifer – a symbolic character: - Who is Aunt Jennifer? Does she even exist? I had to ask myself these questions before even going further into the poem. The answers opened the door to a deeper meaning behind Aunt Jennifer's Tigers. Based on Adrienne Rich's background I believe Aunt Jennifer did exist. However, Aunt Jennifer was not Rich's aunt. Aunt Jennifer represented women all over the world, particularly women in American, who were caught under the oppressive hand of a patriarchal society. Adrienne Rich was perhaps one of those women. Rich, one of the most influential poets of her time, dealt with controversial issues such as sexuality, race, language, power, and women's culture. Her passion in this area forced her to look and challenge the standard and the norm. The popular cliché that refers to marriage as that old "ball and chain" takes on a more serious meaning with Rich as she reveals, through the simple lines of Aunt Jennifer's Tigers, a woman's struggles with expression, rebellion, and a society where power is defined as masculine. This poem tells of "Aunt Jennifer", who is the symbol of feminism in this particular poem. This poem offers an image of power revealed and restrained by domestic arts. This is shown in the case that she is restrained by her husband's wedding band, thus revealing that she Aunt Jennifer was expected to be a devoted and domesticated wife. Aunt Jennifer living her part in a man's world is forcing her into a role that she does not fit naturally. Aunt Jennifer symbolises oppressed women, imperialistically dominated nations and weakness.

Feminist conflict: - According to Deborah Pope, the poem shows a conflict in the feminist mind. The fearful, gloomy woman waiting inside her darkening room for the emotional and meteorological devastation to hit could be Aunt Jennifer, who is similarly passive and terrified, overwhelmed by events that eclipsed her small strength. "Aunt Jennifer's Tigers" is, however, an even clearer statement of conflict in women, specifically between the impulse to freedom and imagination (her tapestry of prancing tigers) and the "massive weight" of gender roles and expectations, signified by "Uncle's wedding band." Although separated through the use of the third person and a different generation, neither Aunt Jennifer in her ignorance nor Rich as a poet recognizes the fundamental implications of the division between imagination and duty, power and passivity.

Oppression, Rebellion and Immortality:-

When Aunt is dead, her terrified hands will lie
Still ringed with ordeals she was mastered by.
The tigers in the panel that she made
Will go on prancing, proud and unafraid.

According to Thomas B. Byars, Rich's own remarks on this poem, in "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision" , are an important starting place; she discusses how even in a formal and consciously distanced poem of her early period, she can discover clear (if latent) feminist concerns.

Perhaps most interesting, however, is the fact that the needlework tigers, like Rich's poem itself, are ineffectual as rebellion, because the very means of their rebellion are inscribed in the oppressor's language, and thus reveal an unhealed split in the psyche of the oppressed.

The tigers display in art the values that Aunt Jennifer must repress or displace in life: strength, assertion, fearlessness, fluidity of motion. And the poem's conclusion celebrates the animal images as a kind of triumph, transcending the limited conditions of their maker's life. Accepting the doctrine of "ars longa, vita brevis," Rich finds in her character's art both persistence and compensation; she sees the creations as immortalizing the hand that made them, despite the contrary force of the oppressive structure of Aunt Jennifer's conventional marriage, as signified by the ring that binds her to her husband. This doctrine is utterly consonant with what was, according to Rich, "a recurrent theme in much poetry I read [in those days]. . . the indestructibility of poetry, the poem as vehicle for personal immortality" (Blood 168). And this more or less explicit connection helps show how deeply implicated Rich herself was in Aunt Jennifer's situation and her achievement, despite the "asbestos gloves" of a distancing formalism that "allowed me to handle materials I couldn't pick up barehanded" (Lies 40-41).

The problem, however, is that the tigers are clearly masculine figures--and not only masculine, but heroic figures of one of the most role-bound of all the substructures of

patriarchy: chivalry. Their "chivalric certainty" is a representation by Aunt Jennifer of her own envisioned power, but it is essentially a suturing image, at once stitching up and reasserting the rift between her actual social status an her vision. Aunt's name, after all, echoes with the sound of Queen Guinevere's; her place in chivalry is clear. Her tigers are only Lancelots, attractive because illicit, but finally seducing her to another submission to the male. So long as power can be envisioned only in terms that are culturally determined as masculine, the revolutionary content of the vision, which was all confined to a highly mediated and symbolic plane in any case, will remain insufficient. Indeed, the fact that assertion against the patriarchy is here imagined only in terms set by the patriarchs may be seen as this poem's version of the tigers' "fearful symmetry." And the "Immortal hand or eye" that framed their symmetry is not Aunt Jennifer's framing her needlework, but patriarchy's, framing Aunt Jennifer.

Symbolism in Aunt Jennifer's Tigers: - The poem is packed with symbolism from the first to the last. Introduction of the tigers, how they are prancing across a screen symbolizes Aunt Jennifer, roaming in a world freely; although it is telling of a screen she crafted. The tigers are bright topaz denizens because they are different in the world, and are not just plain, (green), like everyone else. This symbolizes Aunt Jennifer's individual thinking, and how she is different. The tigers don't fear the men beneath the tree because Aunt Jennifer did not fear men at first and was living as an independent individual with her own mind.

The tigers are slowly walking elegantly, showing that they are confident and 'chivalric' (gentlemanly)---this may show that Aunt Jennifer knows she is fine without having to be married. This line is telling of Aunt Jen's fingers 'fluttering' through her wool--this is just an allusion using an activity she likes to do, to tell of how she was roaming freely and happily before marriage. The ivory needle is a symbol for how hard it is to keep yourself independent and essentially a free-thinker when you are married. Uncle's wedding band on her finger is massive because he is strict towards how she should be a domesticated wife and not a free soul. It "sits heavily upon her hand" because her marriage has taken a toll on her, and she can feel it heavily on her heart and soul. When Aunt Jen dies, she will die as a lonely and depressed woman, and her hands are terrified because they never got to be free again.

Jen's hands stand as a symbol of her body, in that she was tired and sick from the ordeals (being a housewife) that she was mastered by [her husband--making her act this way] The tigers are a symbol of what will be left of Aunt Jen's existence after her death, in that she never got to "prance" as proud and unafraid when she was married and was constrained by what women were expected.

Style and Imagery: - Visual imagery predominates in the first stanza. We learn that the speaker is a niece or nephew from the title and the first line, but we actually learn very little about Aunt Jennifer herself. Instead we see the tapestry that she is weaving and the tigers that "prance" across it. The two action verbs "pace" and "prance emphasize the strength of these animals, while the vividness of their "topaz" color draws

attention to their striking presence. The aabb rhyme scheme mimics the rhythm of their movement. The word "denizens" has a negative connotation that links with the dark picture of "Uncle" in the second stanza.

In the second picture we shift to a visual picture of Aunt Jennifer. The alliteration "fingers fluttering" suggests her physical weakness; she is so feeble that she has trouble manipulating the needle "through her wool." In the last part of the stanza we find out that her troubled marriage has had something to do with her condition. The words "massive weight suggest oppression, as do the words "Sits heavily." The end rhymes "band" and "hand" also indicate that being married has kept this woman down. The point of view here would seem to be that of a woman, indicating that the speaker is the niece rather than Aunt Jennifer's nephew.

In the third stanza, the speaker projects into the future, and suggests that once she is dead, Aunt Jennifer will continue to be encumbered by her earthly marriage. Her hands will still be "terrified," suggesting that "Uncle has been so abusive that his reach will exceed human limitations. The word "ringed "has a double connotation—indicating not only the ring that "sits heavily" on her hand, but the difficulties in her life that will continue to surround her. The "tigers in the panel" will also go on forever, but by contrast they will continue into infinity as fierce, arrogant beings. The alliteration in the last line of "prancing" and "proud" heightens our sense of the irony in this poem, because they are so much stronger than the woman who created them.

Technique: - It is difficult to depict a primary poetic technique within this poem. The reason being that, many devices are used to bring forth the message that Rich has embedded within it. However, symbolism is the most prominent. The poem is set in a traditional format, using simple rhyme and meter to give the reader a sense of formality. Adrienne Rich's "Aunt Jennifer's Tigers", depicts an audacious woman trapped within a timid and suppressed life. Marriage and the culture that supports it have effected the character in this poem greatly. Reality seems inescapable because of the ring that "sits heavily upon Aunt Jennifer's hand". The tapestry that Aunt Jennifer is creating in the poem, is very symbolic of her potential. When you picture a tiger, the words power, fluidity, nobility, and strength may accompany that image. Those same words accompany the hidden life of Aunt Jennifer.

The first stanza opens the poem with a truly bold image of tigers as "They pace in sleek chivalric certainty". The tigers obviously have a very significant symbolic purpose in this poem. They portray the fearlessness, assertion and power, that Aunt Jennifer displaces in order to lead her conventional life

Conclusion:- Aunt Jennifer's Tigers is a fabulous poem may also be serving a wife of a colonial officer (Uncle) and being repressed because of his hard attitude. Though Jennifer is unable to change the patriarchal system, she, to some extent, contributes to the rebellion against this system which leaves women but no options to perform in society. The poem is remarkable for its style technique, imagery, symbolism and theme – a

typical quality of Adrienne Rich as a modern poet. Aunt Jennifer's Tigers being a rebellious in nature is an autobiographical poem at the same time because the repressed and dominated personality of Jennifer parallels Adrienne Rich's. In short, the poem is to be understood at so many different levels that its single interpretation is not possible.

Final Notation

Introduction and Theme: - Final Notations is thematically an ambiguous poem. The poem is not understood because of the flowing imagery or stylistically presented issues, but because of the reader's individual perception of the poem. We can say that unlike Aunt Jennifer's Tigers, which has a few fixed themes and issues, Final Notations is infinite in its interpretations.

Final Notation is a cultural, political and personally emotional poem which has been written in a simple and neat style with careful economy of words. The poet is experiencing new lifestyles, sexual issues, motherhood tensions, friendship or even doctor patient relationship. Final notations shows the last message of the poet or the New World Order of a colonial power when it has controlled a territory or is coming to control it.

In short, we can say that Final Notation shows us things which are difficult at first become easy, things which are strange at one time, become familiar at another, things which may seem painful, but become joyful and pleasant which encountered and things which people apparently looking disgusting in the first impressions, later become our heart and soul with the passage of time.

A Critique of Final Notations

Introduction: - This is a fine, simple and little piece of poetry. The speaker is taken to be a lover and the addressee is the beloved. The lover is telling the beloved how to make love. The relationship between man and woman is very complex and this is the point to which the poem alludes.

The poem also shows a pregnant woman who is going to be operated on by her doctor and the doctor is giving instructions to the patients on how to react in this operation or is trying to reassuring the patient so that the seemingly difficult operation for the patient should be completed without any complication.

The poem has layers of meanings and open to various interpretations and the reader should be feel at large to interpret the poem at whatever level he wants. However, the approach suggested for the reader is three-fold. The first is male-female relationship, doctor-patient relationship and the policy of the colonial powers with the poor nations. Though some people might not agree, the poem does have imperialistic allusions in it structure and the American dominating attitude towards the world at large.

The poem is structurally simple, but thematically complex. The language is neat and no difficult word used, but the use of structure is ambiguous.

Development of Thought

Doctor-Patient relationship: - The only complete analogy and supposition found in the poem is that a pregnant woman is lying before the doctor, may be to be delivered or her first visit to the doctor regarding her pregnancy. When the doctor is giving her instructions about the new experience. Though it looks difficult, yet

> **It will touch through your ribs, it will take all your heart**
> **It will not be long, it will occupy your thought**

The procedure is not long. Normally, it takes a few minutes unless complications arise. The child seemingly so disturbing and troubling in the belly of the mother after a short time and struggle on part of the woman will be delivered. As she says,

> **It will be short, it will take all your breath**

The procedure may be difficult for some women who are taking this first experience, but it is very simple if it taken to be so. The few months of pregnancy are touching and delicate, special care needs to be taken, the overall trouble becomes a reward for the mother. As the doctor is says,

> **It will be simple; it will become your will.**

The disturbing child in the belly ironically becomes the passion, will and the centre of full attention for the mother. The wants to get rid of the child during the delivery, but after the child is born, it becomes the most important thing of the world for her.

Lover and beloved relationship:-

> **It will not be simple, it will not be long**
> **It will take little time, it will take all your thought**
> **It will take all your heart, it will take all your breath.**
> **It will be short, it will not be simple.**

A young girl, running towards teens, feels a number of strange romantic and ideal desires, looks for partners and once finding a partner becomes terrified at the idea of physical relationship. As the woman, however bold or open-hearted, is naturally shy and repressed, is unable to understand the nature of the first physical union. Ultimately the responsibility is left to the lover who in a small and brief style tries to explain the importance and process of this newfound physical relationship. The nature of this relationship is not simple, but once experienced, it will bring abundance of joys in the life the partner. This physical relationship may be the first one in the life of unmarried

woman or may be the first on the first marriage night in which the lover is trying to make physical contacts. Thus things seemingly looking dangerous or troubling are sometimes sweet in actual experience.

Sexual Harassment in the Final Notations:-

> **It will touch through your ribs, it will take all your heart**
> **It will not be long, it will occupy your thought**
> **It a city occupied, as a bed is occupied**
> **It will take all your flesh, it will not be simple**

The modern world is the age of harassment especially for women. The young girls let loose for various experiences in the name of freedom and modernity or broadmindedness fall a prey to such harassment where studs try to encourage these young modern girls into such physical activities. These studs gradually make women slave to their own appetites; they occupy their bed like a ruler occupies a city. They leave them no options but be ruled and controlled by their passions. The studs use various tactics to convince their new prey of the physical contact. The newborn and uncontrolled desires in women ultimately lead them astray without proper management or responsibility of their parents.

Theme of Eagerness and Oneness in Love

> **It will be short, it will take all your breath**
> **It will be simple, it will become your will**

Final Notations can also be taken to be a pure love poem in which the poet wants to achieve pure love regardless of the metaphysical speculations of Donne or casualness of Surrey-Wyatt in a concise and simple language. The most important point in lovemaking is eagerness and wilfulness. It is not difficult to achieve this state if sure determination and seriousness is show. This seriousness leads to oneness of the lovers when love becomes a passion or will of the two.

Unfaithfulness of the lover

> **You are coming into us who cannot withstand you**
> **You are coming into us who never wanted to withstand you**
> **You are taking parts of us into places never planned**
> **You are going far away with pieces of our lives**

The lover has left her beloved and went on to establish relations with some other woman and as a result he leaves a note behind giving her instructions that she should forget him. The above lines are an ample proof of this interpretation. The beloved outbursts into the above lines. The repetition of 'coming into' reinforces the idea of establishing relation with the beloved first and the phrase 'pieces of life' symbolises faithlessness and

quit love on part of the lover. The love once developed in the beloved by the lover is disintegrating and those pieces are being shared by the lover with somebody else.

Style, Imagery, Symbolism and Technique: - The style of the poem is simple. There is no stylistic ambiguity. The only ambiguity lies in the nature of theme or the message of the speaker and also the identity of the speaker and the addressee needs to be resolved by different speculations from the reader. The themes of the poem range from personal to social, medical, psychological, political and emotional.

The repetition of different lines and words show intensity and importance of the theme (though theme is not directly addressed by the poet, it is to be explicated by the reader on the strength of his speculation. The lines are erratic which symbolise the complexity of the theme, again whatever it may be.

The title has been made ambitious. Does it related to music, dictation or what? In short, the poem is not rich in great images or symbols. The only thing important about the poem is complexity and that is what it is rich in.

Conclusion: - Cutting the long story short, we can say that the poem depends on the experience of the reader for various interpretations. The complexity of the poem is also caused by the extreme subjectivity in the poem. The poem is too personal to understand in its true perspective. This complexity is the typical characteristic of modern American poetry which is based on confessional and experimental nature of their artists.

Gabriel

Introduction and Theme: - The poem tells us about the meeting of two strangers who share many things with each other. There are certain reasons or perhaps things remain unsaid on part of the lovers for which they are separated. The nature of the person is gentle and dangerous at the same time.

The poem also shows the hollowness of modern age, which has become materialistic and has quite the religious ways and manners in the 20th century. All the things have come to be questioned including religion in the 20th century. The angel is bright and dark at the same time. The people are kind and poisonous. These contradictions are the results of the 20th century.

The poem shows a turn of events in the life of people. Those happy at one times become different or sad at the other. Things favourable today become unfavourable tomorrow and people take to new possessions. Adrienne Rich is a product of the 20-century that is fraught with tensions and confusions. Man in this century is suffering and undergoing various battles. He is enslaved by the materialistic system of the contemporary powers and he is in chains as W.B. Yeats says,

Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold

Mere anarchy is loosed upon the earth

And the remedy is the Second Coming of Christ to rid man of the contemporary chains of materialism, faithlessness and bondage. Gabriel is the messenger thought whom Christ sends a message to the poet.

A Critique of Gabriel

Introduction:-The poem in its simplicity tells us that the world is devastated and the people have become corrupt so the inspiration of Christ is important for the salvation of humanity. A new faith is necessitated for the survival of the world.

Adrienne Rich, being a poet, spends most of her time reading poetry and when she reads poetry this time, new ideas emerge in her mind those, which never emerged before. The angle appears which shows sympathy towards her. She experiences various troubles of the 20th century and finally finds their solutions in the divine inspiration through the message of Gabriel sent by Christ according to their faith as salvation for humanity in the confused times.

Though the poem has religious significance, the poem is also taken to be purely on love foundations. Gabriel is the poet's previous lover which for reasons left her, but has come back to join her.

Development of Thought

Gabriel as a symbol of Revelation and Salvation: - Gabriel is traditional known as the Angel of Revelation who brought revelation to all the prophets in the world. In this poem, Gabriel does stand for revelation, but he also symbolises Christ who sends Gabriel to the poet for salvation, the poet who in turn stands for humanity. Humanity in the form of poet has taken many turns. The Two Great World Wars have shattered the values cherished by the 19th century and even the previous centuries. These wars devastated the structure of the world. There is anarchy ruling the world. It seems that no goodness is left in the world as the poet cries in the beginning,

There are no angels yet
Here comes an angel one
With a man's face

The exploitive nature in the world surprises the poet that no angels are left in the 20th century of science and materialism and she is amazed to an angel in her room. The angel bears a young man's face. It is Gabriel who awaited by the poet for revelation. The poet has faith in the power of Christ that he could never have left the world in its inertia because he is a benevolent prophet. So he sends Gabriel as a symbol of himself so that he may give the poet a message to renew the world once again in its former shape. But

the poet is not used to angels in this materialistic age, so she is terrified when she sees the angel,

But he doesn't say that His message
Drenches his body
He'd want to kill me
For using words to name him

This shows that the poetess has no touch of spirituality. She is occupied with all the knowledge of the world, but she is spiritually hollow. Even the poet's attitude towards Gabriel is casual as she says,

I get your message Gabriel
Just will you stay looking
Straight at me

This is not usually the behaviour of man before an angel if one becomes visible. The angel, Gabriel being a symbol of truth and revelation, comes with a definite message to convey to humanity but humanity is not even ready to listen or act upon what he might say. Poet symbolising humanity is even doubtful of the identity of the angel.

Lost and Found Love: - The poem has another strand apart from its religious connotations. The second strand of the poem is lost and found love. Gabriel also symbolises lost love, which is ultimately found. The meeting between the poet and her previous lover starts in the following manner,

Here comes an angel one
With a man's face young
Shut-off the dark
Side of the moon turning to me
And saying: I am the plumed
Serpent the beast
With fangs of fire and a gentle
Heart

She recognises that he is her past lover who left her and now he has come in the shape of an angel, though the inner reality of the lover is perceived by the poet and she does understand how poisonous he was and could be. The Gabriel symbolising a handsome man who comes to meet his beloved (with inner bad intentions or a bad past) whom he left. The poet is so terrified may be at her past experience with the lover when she says that

He'd want to kill me

For using words to name him

The poet wants to remain busy in her studies and contemplation of the world affairs and political and social tensions rather than get involved into his love affair again because he previously deceived her. As she says,

I sit in the bare apartment
Reading
Words stream past me poetry
Twentieth-century rivers

Apart from his newborn love for the poet, the so-called angel is not behaving in a manner that a lover should. Importance of communication cannot be denied in love but this lover is silent.

The angel is barely
Speaking to me

Certainly, because of the 20th confused times and lack of assurance on part of the lover, the poet cannot be blamed and especially she has been previously deceived by him or some one like him. As she has lost faith in love, she finds all men equal. She says,

He stood or someone like him
Salutations in gold-leaf
Ribboning from his lips
Today again the hair streams
To his shoulders

His physical appearance is as charming as it was before. The word Gabriel appears satirical and ironical because he has come with a motive perhaps (of sexual nature) rather than true love. The poet also feels mixed feelings of joy and terror. Rather than speaking or communicating love,

We glance miserably
Across the room at each other

It's true there are moments
Closer and closer together
When words stick in my throat
'the art of love'
'the art of words'

I get your message Gabriel
Just will you stay looking
Straight at me
Awhile longer

At such times, the art of love is important because mere facial expressions perhaps don't work. But in the present situation, the Gabriel's attitude seems based on a sexual motive rather than real love. He has come back with the motive of establishing physical relationship, but the poet understands his games and satirically says,

I get your message Gabriel
Just will you stay looking
Straight at me
Awhile longer

The poet understands the motives of men and she rejects seemingly beautiful and inwardly serpent like Gabriel. He is a fake lover and not a true Gabriel who believes in revelations and truth.

Conclusion: - Gabriel is a thought-provoking poem which highlights current tensions in the 20th century and the importance of truth and revelation for the salvation of this downtrodden humanity. Gabriel becomes before us a symbol of divinity as well as a secular **symbol** of a young man with a fantastic expression on the face wrapped with inward lust.

Technically, Gabriel is a superior poem which has used the image of Gabriel beautifully and its relevant to the changing conditions of the world. The poem is based on a socio-political background. Though the atmosphere is that of a love poetry, the poem is remarkable for its ironical images. Taken in view the feminism of those days the poem seems fit to be studied in the light of Rich's passion for the liberation of women.

All About Linguistics.

The Nature of Language and Linguistics

Introduction

Language is Almighty Allah's special gift to mankind. Without language human civilization would have remained an impossibility. Language is ubiquitous (ever present). It is present everywhere–in our thoughts and dreams, prayers and meditations, relations and communication. Besides being a means of communication, and storehouse of knowledge, it is an instrument of thinking as well as a source of delight (e.g. singing).

It transfers knowledge from one person to another and from one generation to another. Language is also the maker or unmaker of human relationships. It is the use of language that 'Italics a life bitter or sweet. Without language man would have remained only a dumb animal. It is our ability to communicate through words that makes us different from animals. Because of its omnipresence, language is often taken for granted.

Definition of Language

Since linguistics is the study of language, it is imperative for linguist to know what language is. Language is a very complex human phenomenon; all attempts to define it have proved inadequate. In a nut-shell, language is an 'organised noise' used in actual social situations. That is why it has also been defined as 'contextualised systematic sound'.

In order to understand a term like life, one has to talk of the properties or characteristics of living beings (e.g. motion, reproduction, respiration, growth, power of self-healing, excretion, nutrition, mortality, etc. etc.). Similarly, the term language can be understood better in terms of its properties or characteristics. Some linguists, however, have been trying to define language in their own ways even though all these definitions have been far from satisfactory. Here are some of these definitions:

According to Robins: "***Language is a symbol system based on pure or arbitrary conventions... infinitely extendable and modifiable according to the changing needs and conditions of the speakers.***"

According to this definition, language is a symbol system. Every language selects some symbols for its selected sounds. The English sound /k/ for example has the symbol k for it. These symbols form the alphabet of the language and join in different combinations to form meaningful words.

The system talked of here is purely arbitrary (random) in the sense that there is no one to one correspondence between the structure of a word and the thing it stands for. The combination p.e.n., for example stands, in English, for an instrument used for writing. Why could it not be e.p.n. or n.e.p.? Well, it could also be e.p.n. or n.e.p. and there is nothing sacrosanct (sacred) about the combination p.e.n. except that it has now become a convention—a convention that cannot be easily changed.

As stated here, language conventions are not easily changed, yet it is not impossible to do so. Language is infinitely modifiable and extendable. Words go on changing meanings and new words continue to be added to language with the changing needs of the community using it.

According to Sapir: "***Language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols."***

There are two terms in this definition that call for discussion: human and non-instinctive. Language, as Sapir rightly said, is human. Only humans possess language and all normal humans uniformly possess it. Animals do have a communication system but it is not a developed system. That is why language is said to be species-specific and species-uniform.

Also, language does not pass from a parent to a child. In this sense it is non-instinctive. A child has to learn language and he/she learns the language of the society he/she is placed in.

According to Hall: "***Language is the institution whereby humans communicate and interact with each other by means of habitually used oral-auditory arbitrary symbols."***

This definition rightly gives more prominence to the fact that language is primarily speech produced by oral-auditory symbols. A speaker produces some string of oral sounds that get conveyed through the air to the speaker who, through his hearing organs, receives the sound waves and conveys these to the brain that interprets these symbols to arrive at a meaning.

According to Noam Chomsky: ***"A language is a set (finite or infinite) of sentences, each finite in length and constructed out of a finite set of elements."***

Chomsky meant to convey that each sentence has a structure. Human brain is competent enough to construct different sentences from out of the limited set of sounds/symbols belonging to a particular language. Human brain is so productive that a child can at any time produce a sentence that has never been said or heard earlier.

According to Wardaugh: ***"A language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols used for human communication."***

According to Bloch and Trager: "***A language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group cooperates."***

Both these definitions prominently point out that language is a system. Sounds join to form words according to a system. The letters k, n, i, t join to form a meaningful 'word knit, whereas combinations like n-k-i-t, t.k.n.i. or i.n.k.t. do not form any meaningful or sensible combinations. Although initially the formation of words, as said earlier, is only arbitrary, convention makes them parts of a system. Words too join to form sentences according to some system. A sentence like: Cricket is a game of glorious uncertainties is acceptable but one cannot accept a string of words like: a game is of cricket uncertainties glorious. It is in this sense that language is said to be a system of systems.

According to Derbyshire: "***Language is undoubtedly a kind of means of communication among human beings. It consists primarily of vocal sounds. It is articulatory, systematic, symbolic and arbitrary."***

Derbyshire, while accepting that language is the property of human beings and that it is primarily speech, brings out the point that it is an important means of communication amongst humans. Before the start of civilization, man might have used the language of signs but it must have had a very limited scope. Language is a fully developed means of communication with the civilized man who can convey and receive millions of messages across the universe. An entire civilization depends on language only. Think of a world without language—man would only continue to be a denizen of the forest and the caves. Language has changed the entire gamut of human relations and made it possible for human beings to grow into a human community on this planet.

Characteristics of Language

Language is a Means of Communication

Language is a very important means of communication between humans. One can communicate his or her ideas, emotions, beliefs or feelings to the other as they share a common code that makes up the language. No doubt, there are many other means of communication used by humans e.g. gestures, nods, winks, flags, smiles, horns, short-hand, Braille alphabet, mathematical symbols, Morse code, sirens, sketches, maps, acting, miming, dancing etc. But all these systems of communication are extremely limited or they too, in turn, depend upon language only. They are not as flexible, comprehensive, perfect and extensive as language is. Language is so important a form of communication between humans that it is difficult to think of a society without language. It gives shape to people's thoughts and guides and controls their entire activity. It is a carrier of civilization and culture as human thoughts and philosophy are conveyed from one generation to the other through the medium of language. Language is ubiquitous in the sense that it is present everywhere in all activities. It is as important as the air we breathe and is the most valuable possession of man.

Animals too have their system of communication but their communication is limited to a very small number of messages, e.g. hunger, fear, and anger. In the case of humans, the situation is entirely different. Human beings can send an infinite number of messages to their fellow beings. It is through language that they store knowledge, transfer it to the next generation and yoke the present, past and the future together.

Language is Arbitrary

Language is arbitrary in the sense that there is no inherent relation between the words of a language and their meanings or the ideas conveyed by them (except in the case of hieroglyphics where a picture of an object may represent the object). There is no reason why a female adult human being be called a "woman" in English, "aurat" in Urdu, "zen" in Persian and "femine" in French. Selection of these words in the languages mentioned here is purely arbitrary, an accident of history. It is just like christening a new born baby who may be christened John or James. But once a child is given some name in a purely arbitrary manner; this name gets associated with the child for his entire life and it becomes an important, established convention. The situation in the case of the language is a similar one. The choice of a word selected to mean a particular thing or idea is purely arbitrary but once a word is selected for a particular referent, it comes to stay as such. It may be noted that had language not been arbitrary, there would have been only one language in the world.

Language is a System of Systems

Language is not an amorphous, a disorganised or a chaotic combination of sounds. Any brick may be used anywhere in a building, but it is not so with sounds or graphic symbols standing for the sounds of a language. Sounds are

arranged in certain fixed or established, systematic order to form meaningful units or words. Similarly, words are also arranged in a particular system to frame acceptable meaningful sentences. These systems operate at two levels: phonological and syntactical.

At the phonological level, for example, sounds of a language appear only in some fixed combinations. There is no word, for example, that starts with bz–, lr– or zl– combination. There is no word that begins with a /ŋ/ sound or ends in a /h/ sound. Similarly words too combine to form sentences according to certain conventions (i.e. grammatical or structural rules) of the language. The sentence "The hunter shot the tiger with a gun" is acceptable but the sentence "the tiger shot a gun with hunter the" is not acceptable as the word order in the latter sentence does not conform to the established language conventions.

Language is thus called a system of systems as it operates at the two levels discussed above. This property of language is also termed duality by some linguists. This makes language a very complex phenomenon. Every human child has to master the conventions of the language he or she learns before being able to successfully communicate with other members of the social group in which he or she is placed.

Language is Primarily Vocal

Language is primarily made up of vocal sounds only produced by a physiological articulatory mechanism in the human body. In the beginning, it must have appeared as vocal sounds only. Writing must have come much later, as an intelligent attempt to represent vocal sounds. Writing is only the graphic representation of the sounds of the language. There are a number of languages which continue to exist, even today, in the spoken form only. They do not have a written form. A child learns to speak first; writing comes much later. Also, during his life time, a man speaks much more than he writes. The total quantum of speech is much larger than the total quantum of written materials.

It is because of these reasons that some linguists say that speech is primary, writing is secondary. Writing did have one advantage over speech—it could be preserved in books or records. But, with the invention of magnetic tapes or audio-cassettes, it has lost that advantage too. The age-old proverb 'pen is mightier than the sword' does not hold much ground when one finds that the spoken words, at the beck and call of a really good orator, can do much more than a pen. Just think of Mark Antony's speech in 'Julius Caesar' that inspired the whole mob into action and spurred them on to a mood of frenzy to burn and kill the enemies of Julius Caesar. A number of modern gadgets like the telephone, the tape recorder, the Dictaphone, etc. only go to prove the primacy of speech over writing.

Language is a Social Phenomenon

Language is a set of conventional communicative signals used by humans for communication in a community. Language in this sense is a possession of a social group, comprising an indispensable set of rules which permits its members to relate to each other, to interact with each other, to co-operate with each other; it is a social institution. Language exists in society; it is a means of nourishing and developing culture and establishing human relations. It is as a member of society that a human being acquires a language. We are not born with an instinct to learn a particular language––English, Russian, Chinese or French. We learn a language as member of the society using that language, or because we want to understand that society, or to be understood by that speech-community. If a language is not used in any society, it dies out.

Language is thus a social event. It can fully be described only if we know all about the people who are involved in it, their personalities, their beliefs, attitudes, knowledge of the world, relationship to each other, their social status, what activity they are engaged in, what they are talking about, what has gone before linguistically and non-linguistically, what happens after, what they are and a host of other facts about them and the situation they are placed in.

Language is Non-instinctive and Conventional

No language was created in a day out of a mutually agreed upon formula by a group of humans. Language is the outcome of evolution and convention. Each generation transmits this convention on to the next. Like all human institutions languages also change and die, grow and expand. Every language then is a convention in a community. It is non-instinctive because it is acquired by human beings. Nobody gets a language in heritage; he acquires it, and everybody has been provided with an innate ability to acquire language. Animals inherit their system of communication by heredity, humans do not.

Language is Systematic

Although language is symbolic, yet its symbols are arranged in a particular system. All languages have their system of arrangements. Though symbols in each human language are finite, they can be arranged infinitely; that is to say, we can produce an infinite set of sentence by a finite set of symbols.

Every language is a system of systems. All languages have phonological and grammatical systems, and within a system there are several sub-systems. For example, within the grammatical system we have morphological and syntactic systems, and within these two sub-systems we have several other systems such as those of plural, of mood, of aspect, of tense, etc.

Language is Unique, Creative, Complex & Modifiable

Language is a unique phenomenon of the earth. Other planets do not seem to have any language, although this fact may be invalidated if we happen to discover a talking generation on any other planet. But so far there is no evidence of the presence of language on the moon. Each language is unique in its own sense. By this we do not mean that languages do not have any similarities or universals. Despite their common features and language, universals, each language has its peculiarities and distinct features.

Language has creativity and productivity. The structural elements of human language can be combined to produce new utterances, which neither the speaker nor his hearers may ever have made or heard before any, listener, yet which both sides understand without difficulty. Language changes according to the needs of society. Old English is different from modern English; so is old Urdu different form modern Urdu.

Language has a Duality

The language that human beings use consists of two sub-systems - sound and meaning. A finite set of sound units can be grouped and re-grouped into units of meaning. These can be grouped and re-grouped to generate further functional constituents of the higher hierarchical order. We can produce sentences through this process of combining units of a different order. Animal calls do not show such duality, they are unitary.

Language has a Productivity

A speaker may say something that he has never said before and be understood without difficulty. Man uses the limited linguistic, resources in order to produce completely novel ideas and utterances. Fairy tales, animal fables, narratives about alien unheard of happenings in distant galaxies or nonexistent worlds are perfectly understood by the listeners.

Language has a Displacement

One can talk about situations, places and objects far removed from one's present surroundings and time. We often talk about events that happened long time ago and at a distant place; bombing incident in Ireland's Londonderry twelve years' back, for instance; or the sinking of the Spanish Armada in the sixteenth century. Bees, of course, perform dances about the source of nectar that is also removed from the place of dance (beehive). But they cannot convey what happened in the previous season through their dance features. Human beings, however, can narrate events in which they were not involved.

Language is Both Linguistic & Communicative Competence

A language is an abstract set of psychological principles and sociological consideration that constitute a person's competence as a speaker in a given situation. "These psychological principles make available to him an unlimited number of sentences he can draw upon in concrete; situations and provide him with the ability to understand and create entirely new sentences. Hence language is not just a verbal behaviour; it is a system of rules establishing correlations between meanings and sound sequences. It is a set of principles that a speaker masters; it is not anything that he does. In brief, a language is a code which is different from the act of encoding; it is a speaker's linguistic competence rather than his linguistic performance. But mere linguistic or communicative competence is not enough for communication; it has to be coupled with communicative competence. This is the view of the sociolinguists who stress the use of language according to the occasion and context, the speaker and the listener, the profession and the social status of the speaker and the listener. That language is the result of social interaction established truth.

Language is Human & Structurally Complex

No species other than humans has been endowed with language. Animals cannot acquire human language because of its complex structure and their physical inadequacies. Animals do not have the type of brain which the human beings possess and their articulatory organs are also very much different from those of the human beings. Furthermore any system of animals' communication does not make use of the quality of features, that is, of concurrent systems of sound and meaning. Human language is open-ended, extendable and modifiable whereas the animal language is not.

Definition, Nature and Scope of Linguistics

Introduction

Linguistics is a growing and interesting area of study, having a direct hearing on fields as diverse as education, anthropology, sociology, language teaching, cognitive psychology and philosophy. What is linguistics? Fundamentally, it is concerned with the nature of language and communication.

Definitions of Linguistics

According to G. Duffy: ***"Linguistics observes language in action as a means for determining how language has developed, how it functions today, and how it is currently evolving."***
According to S. Pit Corder: ***"Linguistics is concerned with the nature of human language, how it is learned and what part it plays in the life of the individual and the community."***
According to Jean Aitchison: ***"Linguistics tries to answer two basic questions: What is language and How does language work."***
According to Victoria A. Fromkin: ***"The scientific study of human language is called linguistics".***

Linguistics is the scientific study of language. By this we mean language in general, not a particular language. If we were concerned with studying an individual language, we would say 'I'm studying French... or English,' or whichever language we happen to be studying. But linguistics does not study an individual language; it studies 'language' in general.

According to Robins (1985): ***"Linguistics is concerned with human language as a universal and recognizable part of the human behaviour and of the human faculties, perhaps one of the most essential to human life as we know it, and one of the most far-reaching of human capabilities in relation to the whole span of mankind's achievements."***

Does this not sound a little abstract? It is, because there is no way of studying 'language' without referring to and taking examples from particular languages. However, even while doing so, the emphasis of linguistics is different. Linguistics does not emphasise practical knowledge or mastery of a particular language. Linguists may know only one language, or may know several, or may even study a language they do not know at all. What they are trying to study are the ways in which language is organised to fulfill human needs, as a system of communication. There is a difference between a person who knows many languages (called a polyglot), and a linguist, who studies general principles of language organisation and language behaviour, often with reference to some actual language or languages. Any language can be taken up to illustrate the principles of language organisation, because all languages reveal something of the nature of language in general.

We can say that linguistics is learning about language rather than learning a language. This distinction is often explained as the difference between learning how a car works and learning how to drive a car. When we learn how to drive a car, we learn a set of habits and do some practice—this is similar to learning how to speak a language. When we learn how the car works, we open up its mechanism, study it and investigate the relationship of its parts to one another. This is similar to what we do in a scientific study of language, or linguistics: we investigate the mechanism of language, its parts and how all these parts fit together to perform particular functions, and why they are arranged or organised in a certain manner. Just as while driving a car, we are using its various components, while speaking a language we are using the sounds, words, etc. of that language; behind these uses is the mechanism which enables us to do so. We study language because it is important for us to understand this mechanism.

Linguistics as a Science

Linguistics can he understood as a science in both general and specific terms. Generally, we use the term ***'science'*** for any ***knowledge that is based on clear, systematic and rational understanding***. Thus we often speak of the 'science of politics' or statecraft, or 'the science of cooking'. However, we also use the term 'science' for the ***systematic study of phenomena enabling us to state some principles or theories regarding the phenomena***; this ***study proceeds by examination of publicly verifiable data obtained through observation of phenomena***, and **experimentation**; in other words, it is **empirical and objective**. Science must also provide **explanation after adequate observation of data, which should be consistent,** i.e. there should be **no contradictions** between different parts of the explanation or statement; and economical, i.e. a precise and non-redundant manner of statement is to be preferred.

Let us apply these criteria of science to linguistics. Linguistics studies language: ***language is a phenomenon which is both objective and variable.*** Like natural phenomena in the physical world, it has a concrete shape and occurrence. In the same way as a physicist or chemist takes materials and measures their weights, densities etc. ***to determine their nature, the linguist studies the components of language***, e.g. *observing the occurrence of speech-sounds, or the way in which words begin or end*. ***Language, like other phenomena, is objective because it is observable with the senses***, i.e., *it can be heard with the ear, it can be seen when the vocal organs are in movement, or when reading words on a page.*

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="3">'Science'
is defined as a knowledge that is based on clear, systematic and rational understanding</td><td>Systematic study of phenomena enabling us to state some principles or theories regarding the phenomena,</td></tr>
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Observation leads to processes of classification and definition. In science, each observable phenomenon is to be given a precise explanation. Its nature has to be described completely. Thus, for example, the chemist classifies elements into metals and non-metals; a biologist classifies living things into plants and animals. In the same way***, linguistics observes the features of language, classifies these features as being sound features of particular types, or words belonging to particular classes on the basis of similarity or difference with other sounds and words.***

But while linguistics shares some of characteristics of empirical (experimental) science*, it is also a* ***social science because it studies language which is a form of social behaviour and exists in interaction between human beings in society****. Language is also linked to* ***human mental processes****. For these reasons, it cannot be treated always as objective phenomena.*

In empirical sciences, the methods of observation and experimentation are known ***as inductive procedures that phenomena are observed and data is collected without any preconceived idea or theory, and after the data is studied, some theory is formulated*.** This has been the main tradition in the history of ***western science.*** But there is an opposing tradition the tradition of rationalism, which holds that the mind forms certain concepts or ideas beforehand in terms of which it interprets the data of observation and experience. According to this tradition, ***the deductive procedure is employed in which we have a preliminary hypothesis or theory in our minds which we then try to prove by applying it to the data.*** This procedure was considered to be unscientific according to the empirical scientists because they felt that pre-existent ideas can influence the kind of data we obtain i.e. we search only for those pieces of data that fit our theory and disregard others and therefore it is not an objective method.

We can, however, ***reconcile these two procedures***. *There are aspects of language which we can observe quite easily and which offer concrete instances of objective and verifiable data. At the same time, we need to create hypothesis to explain this data, so we may create tentative or working hypothesis to explain this data, which we may accept, reject or modify as we proceed further. With such an open attitude, we may collect more data*. This alternation of inductive and deductive procedures may help us to arrive at explanations which meet all the requirements of science, i.e. they are exhaustive, consistent and concise.

Thus, ***linguistics is both an empirical science and a social science***. In fact, it is a human discipline since it is concerned with human language; so it is part of the study of humanities as well. This includes the study of literature, and appreciation of the beauty and music of poetry. In understanding language, humankind can understand itself. Moreover, since every branch of knowledge uses language, linguistics is central to all areas of knowledge. In regard to linguistics, the traditional distinctions of science, art and humanities are not relevant. As Lyons puts it***, linguistics has natural links with a wide range of academic disciplines***. To say that linguistics is a science is not to deny that, by virtue of its subject matter, it is closely related to such eminently human disciplines as philosophy and literary criticism.

Scope of Linguistics

Linguistics today is a subject of study, independent of other disciplines. Before the twentieth century, the study of language was not regarded as a separate area of study in its own right. It was considered to be a part of studying the history of language or the philosophy of language, and this was known not as linguistics but as philosophy. So 'Linguistics' is a modern name which defines a specific discipline, in which we study language not in relation to some other area such as history or philosophy, but language as itself, as a self-enclosed and autonomous system, worthy of study in its own right. It was necessary at the beginning of the growth of modern linguistics to define this autonomy of the subject; otherwise it would not have been possible to study the language system with the depth and exhaustiveness which it requires. However, now we acknowledge that while linguistics is a distinct area of study, it is also linked to other disciplines and there are overlapping areas of concern.

The main concern of modern linguistics is to describe language, to study its nature and to establish a theory of language. That is, it aims at studying the components of the language system and to ultimately arrive at an explanatory statement on how the system works. In modern linguistics, the activity of describing the language system is the most

important and so modern linguistics is generally known as descriptive. But linguistics has other concerns as well, which fall within its scope and these include historical and comparative study of language. These differ from the descriptive approach in their emphasis; otherwise, these approaches also involve description of language.

Levels of Linguistic Analysis

In studying language which is the subject-matter of linguistics, we mark or sub-divide the area in order to study it in an analytical and systematic way. Language has a hierarchical structure. This means that it is made up of units which are themselves made up of smaller units which are made of still smaller units till we have the smallest indivisible unit, i.e. a single distinguishable sound, called a phoneme. Or we can put it the other way round, and say that single sounds or phonemes combine together to make larger units of sounds, these combine into a larger meaningful unit called a morpheme; morphemes combine to form larger units of words, and words combine to form a large unit or sentence and several sentences combine or interconnect to make a unified piece of speech or writing, which we call a text or discourse. At each stage (or level), there are certain rules that operate which permit the occurrence and combination of smaller units. So we can say that rule of phonology determine the occurrence and combination of particular phoneme, rules of word-formation cover the behaviour of particular morphemes; rules of sentence-formation determine the combination and positioning of words in a sentence. Each level is a system in its own right. It is important to remember that, because of the existence of rules at each level, we can analyse each level independently of the other. This means that if we study one level, e.g. phonology or the sound-system, we need not necessarily study another level, say that of sentence-formation. We can study phonology on its own, and syntax on its own. Although these levels are linked in that one is lower in the hierarchy and another is higher in the hierarchy, and the higher level includes the lower, still each level is independent because it has its own rules of operation that can be described, analysed and understood.

We can represent these levels in the following manner, with each level of analysis corresponding to each level of the structure of the language:

Levels of Analysis	**Levels of Structure**
Phonetics and Phonology	Sound Letters (Graphology)
Morphology	Word Formation
Syntax	Sentence-Formation
Semantics	Meanings
Discourse	Connected Sentences

A careful look at the above diagram will show that the levels of language structure are not completely separate from one another. In fact, there are important and vital linkages between the levels. In earlier studies, it was supposed that phonology, the level of sound structure, had no link whatsoever with semantics or the level of meaning structure. Now we know that links between these levels are far more complex than we had earlier accepted. With regard to discourse, we can see that it is made up of all the levels of language working together, while semantics incorporates analysis of meaning at the level of both words (word-meaning) and of sentence-meaning.

However, we can study these links only after we describe and analyse structure at each level separately. Thus ***Phonetics studies language at the level of sounds****:*

How sounds are articulated by the human speech mechanism and received by the auditory mechanism, how sounds can be distinguished and characterised by the manner in which they are produced.

Phonology studies the combination of sounds into organised units of speech, the formation of syllables and larger units.

It describes the sound system of a particular language and the combination and distribution of sounds which occur in that language. Classification is made on the basis of the concept of the phoneme, i.e. a distinctive, contrasted sound unit, e.g. /m/, //, /p/. These distinct sounds enter into combination with others. The rules of combination are different for different languages.

Though phonology is considered to be the surface or superficial level of language (as it is concrete and not abstract like meaning), there are some aspects of it such as tone which contribute to the meaning of an utterance.

Morphology studies the patterns of formation of words by the combination of sounds into minimal distinctive units of meaning called morphemes.

A morpheme cannot be broken up because if it is, it will no longer make sense, e.g. a morpheme 'bat' is made up of three sounds: /b/ /æ/ and /t/. This combination makes up the single morpheme 'bat' and if broken up, it will no longer carry the meaning of 'bat'. Words can be made up of single morphemes such as 'bat' or combinations of morphemes, e.g. 'bats' is made up of two morphemes: 'bat' + 's'. Morphology deals with the rules of combination of morphemes to form words, as suffixes or prefixes are attached to single morphemes to form words. It studies the changes that take place in the structure of words, e.g. the morpheme 'take' changes to 'took' and 'taken'––these changes signify a change in tense.

The level of morphology is linked to phonology on the one hand and to semantics on the other. It is clear in the above example of 'take' that the change to 'took' involves a change in one of the sounds in this morpheme. It also involves a change in meaning: 'take' means the action 'take' + time present and 'took' means the action 'take' + time past. Thus morphological changes often involve changes at the levels of both sound and meaning.

Syntax is the level at which we study how words combine to form phrases, phrases combine to form clauses and clauses join to make sentences. The study of syntax also involves ***the description of the rules of positioning of elements in the sentence such as the nouns/noun syntax phrases, verbs/verb phrases, adverbial phrases, etc***. A sentence must be composed of these elements arranged in a particular order. Syntax also attempts to describe how these elements function in the sentence, i.e. what is their role in the sentence. For example, the word 'boy' is a noun. However, in each of the following sentences, it functions in different roles:

(a) The boy likes cricket

(b) The old man loved the boy.

In sentence (a), it functions as the subject of the sentence

In sentence (b), it functions as the object.

A sentence should be both grammatical and meaningful. For example, a sentence like 'Colourless green ideas sleep furiously' is grammatically correct but it is not meaningful. Thus, rules of syntax should be comprehensive enough to explain how sentences are constructed which are both grammatical and meaningful.

Semantics deals with the level of meaning in language. It attempts to analyse the structure of meaning in a language, e.g. how words similar or different are related; it attempts to show these inter-relationships through forming 'categories'. Semantics tries to give an account of both word and sentence meaning, and attempts to analyse and define that which is considered to be abstract. It may be easy to define the meanings of words such as 'tree' but not so easy to define the meanings of words such as 'love' or similar abstract things. This is why semantics is one of the less clearly definable areas of language study.

An extension of the study of meaning or semantics is pragmatics. ***Pragmatics deals with the contextual aspects of meaning in particular situations.*** As distinct from the study of sentences, pragmatics considers utterances, i.e. those sentences which are actually uttered by speakers of a language.

Discourse is the study of chunks of language which are bigger than a single sentence. At this level, we analyse ***inter-sentential links that form a connected or cohesive text***. Cohesion is the relation established in a sentence between it and the sentences preceding and following it, by the use of connectives such as 'and', 'though', 'also', 'but' etc. and by the manner in which reference is made to other parts of the text by devices such as repetition or by use of pronouns, definite articles, etc. By studying the elements of cohesion we can understand how a piece of connected language can have greater meaning that is more than the sum of the individual sentences it contains.

In addition to these levels of linguistic analysis, we also study ***Graphology which is the study of the writing system of a language and the conventions used in representing speech in writing***, e.g. the formation of letters Lexicology studies the manner in which lexical items (words) are grouped together as in the compilation of dictionaries.

Linguists differ according to what they consider as included in the scope of linguistic studies. Some consider the proper area of linguistics to be confined to ***the levels of phonology, morphology and syntax***. This can be called a ***Micro-linguistic perspective***. However, some take a ***broader or macro-linguistic view which includes the other levels of analysis mentioned above, as well as other aspects of language and its relationship with many areas of human activity.***

Branches of Linguistics

The core of linguistic studies is the study of language structure at different levels as discussed above. In the growth of modern linguistics as an autonomous field of knowledge, it has been necessary to emphasize this aspect of linguistics, since no other field of study describes language structure systematically and completely.

However, there are many areas of human activity and knowledge in which language plays a part and linguistics is useful in these areas. The study of language in relation to the many areas of knowledge where it is relevant, has led to the growth of many branches of linguistics. Thus the scope of linguistics has grown to include these branches. Linguistics can be classified into two major branches according to language scholars:

Theoretical linguistics is the branch of linguistics that is most concerned with developing models of linguistic knowledge. The fields that are generally considered the core of theoretical linguistics are syntax, phonology, morphology, and semantics. Although phonetics often informs phonology, it is often excluded from the purview of theoretical linguistics, along with psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics. Theoretical linguistics also involves the search for an explanation of linguistic universals, that is, properties all languages have in common.
Applied Linguistics the study of language-related issues applied in everyday life, notably language policies, planning, and education. It is the application of linguistics theories to evaluate the language problems arisen from other professions like sociology, psychology, ethnology, geography, neurology, biology, and history etc.

Various branches of linguistics have grown because language is intimately related both to the inner, world of man's mind and to the outer world of society and social relationships. Each of these aspects has led to the study of psycho-linguistics and sociolinguistics respectively.

(a) Psycholinguistics

Since language is a mental phenomenon, it is mental processes which are articulated in language behaviour***. Psycholinguistics studies these mental processes, processes of thought and concept formation and their articulation in language, which reveal a great deal about the structures of human psychology as well as of language***. 'Cognitive' psychology is the area which explores how meanings are understood by the human brain, how syntax and memory are linked, how messages are 'decoded' and stored. Psycholinguistics also studies ***the influence of psychological factors such as intelligence, motivation, anxiety etc. on the kind of language that is understood and produced.*** For instance, in the case of errors made by a speaker, there may be psychological reasons which influence comprehension or production that are responsible for the occurrence of an error. Our perception of speech sounds or graphic symbols (in writing) is influenced by the state of our mind. One kind of mental disability, for example, results in the mistakes made by children in reading when they mistake one letter for another (Dyslexia). Psycholinguistics can offer some insights and corrective measures for this condition.

Psycholinguistics ***is concerned with the learning of language at various stages: the early acquisition of a first language by children and later stages in acquisition of first and other languages***. Psycholinguists ***attempt to answer questions such as whether the human brain has an inborn language ability structured in such a way that certain grammatical and semantic patterns are embedded in it, which can explain how all human beings are capable of learning a language***. This exploration may lead us to determining whether all the languages in the world have some 'universal' grammar that lies in the mind of every human being and is transformed in particular situations to produce different languages. Psycholinguistic studies in language acquisition are very useful in the area of language teaching because they help

teachers to understand error production and individual differences among learners and thus devise appropriate syllabi and materials for them.

One specialized area within psycholinguistics is Neurolinguistics that studies the physiological basis of language and language disorders such as aphasia, loss of memory, etc.

Another relation of language with mind is that of logic. It was held by some ancient philosophers that the human mind is rational and capable of thinking logically and, therefore, language too is logically ordered and rational. Others held that, just as irrationality is present in the mind, irregularity or anomaly is present in human language. Since then there has been a debate about the nature of language and the relation between language and logic. One of the problems discussed by **philosophers of language** is whether language can be an adequate medium for philosophical inquiry. Since all our thoughts are known to us through language, we must examine the kind of language we use when we approach philosophical issues and analysis.

(b) Sociolinguistics

The branch of linguistics that deals with the **exploration of the relation between language and society is known as sociolinguistics, and the sociology of language**. Sociolinguistics is based on the fact that language is not a single homogeneous entity, but has different forms in different situations. The changes in language occur because of changes in social conditions, for example, social class, gender, regional and cultural groups. A particular social group may speak a different variety of a language from the rest of the community. This group becomes a speech community.

Variation in language may occur because the speakers belong to a different geographical region. Taking the example of English, we find that it is not a single language but exists in the form of several varieties. One kind of English is called R.P. (or Received Pronunciation). This kind of English is used in the south west of England and particularly associated with the universities of Oxford and Cambridge and the BBC. It is an educated and formal kind of English. But there are other varieties of English, such as the English that is spoken in the north of England, in Yorkshire and Lancashire; in Scotland(Scottish English); Wales (Welsh English), etc. A less educated variety of English is that spoken by working class people in London often called Cockney English. Then there are the varieties of English spoken by people of different countries around the world, e.g. American English, and Australian English.

Sociolinguistics is the study of language variation and change–how varieties of language are formed when the speakers belong to a geographical region, social class, social situation and occupation, etc. Varieties of a language that are formed in various geographical regions involve a change in the pronunciation as well as vocabulary. Such changes result in the formation of a distinctly different variety of the language or a **dialect.** Sometimes these changes may be present within the same geographical region due to the social differences between different economic sections, e.g. working class and aristocracy. These changes result in **class-dialects**.

In sociolinguistic studies, we consider the linguistic features of these dialects, e.g. syntax variations such as 'I've **gotten** it' or 'I ain't seen nothing' and lexical variations such as 'lift' (British English) to 'elevator' (American English). The study of the demarcation of dialect boundaries across a region and of specific features of each dialect is called **dialectology.** One dialect may be demarcated from another by listing a bundle of

features which occur in a particular region. The point at which a certain feature (of pronunciation or vocabulary) ceases to be prevalent and gives way to another feature is a dialect boundary or 'isogloss'. Dialects may acquire some importance and prestige and evolve into distinct languages. This usually happens when they are codified, e.g. in written and literary forms, and their grammar and lexicon is standardized. Usually this happens when the dialect is given political and social importance. That is why it is said 'A language is a dialect with an army, and navy'. Sociolinguists chart the evolution of such changes.

Variation in language may also be due to the specific area of human activity in which language is used. Again taking the example of English, this language is used in different fields—of law, religion, science, sports etc. In each of these areas there is a specific vocabulary and manner of use of English, which defines the legal language, the scientific language etc. This variety of language according to its **use**, is called **register**. Sociolinguists examine the particular characteristics of different registers, i.e. legal register, scientific register, etc., to see how these differ. This kind of study is useful because it enables us to understand how language-use is tied to a social context. The notion of register is important in showing that language use in communication is not arbitrary or uncontrolled, but is governed by rules of situational and contextual appropriateness.

The sociology of language includes the study of attitudes to language held by social groups, for instance, they may consider some languages or dialects as more (or less) important. It includes the planning of language education, e.g. which languages should he the medium of instruction, which language should be taught as second language; and language policy, i.e. which languages are legally and constitutionally recognised and what status they are given. The sociology of language is thus linked with other aspects of our social world, the political, economic, educational, etc.

(c) Anthropological Linguistics

The evolution of language in human society and its role in the formation of culture; is another aspect of language society and culture, this is studied in anthropological linguistics. The structure of language has a social and cultural basis in the same way as other customs, conventions and codes such as those related to dress, food, etc. Each culture organises its world its own way, giving names to objects, identifying areas of significance or value and suppressing other areas. Language becomes a way of embodying the world view and beliefs of a culture, and the things that culture holds sacred; for example, a culture in which family relationships occupy the most significant position will have many kinship terms in their language, with each relationship specified by a particular term. If you compare the kinship terms in English such as grandfather, grandmother, uncle, aunt, etc. with kinship terms in Urdu**,** you will find that there are many more such terms in Urdu specifying particular relationships such as a paternal / maternal grand-father.

Similarly, terms specifying colours, emotions, natural phenomena, and so on are differently organised in every culture, and reveal a great deal about that culture. The study of these specific cultural elements is called the ethnography of a culture. A specific way of communication in a culture is thus studied as the ethnography of communication.

Anthropological studies have explored the relation between language and culture. Language is invented to communicate and express a culture. It also happens that this language then begins to determine the way we think and see

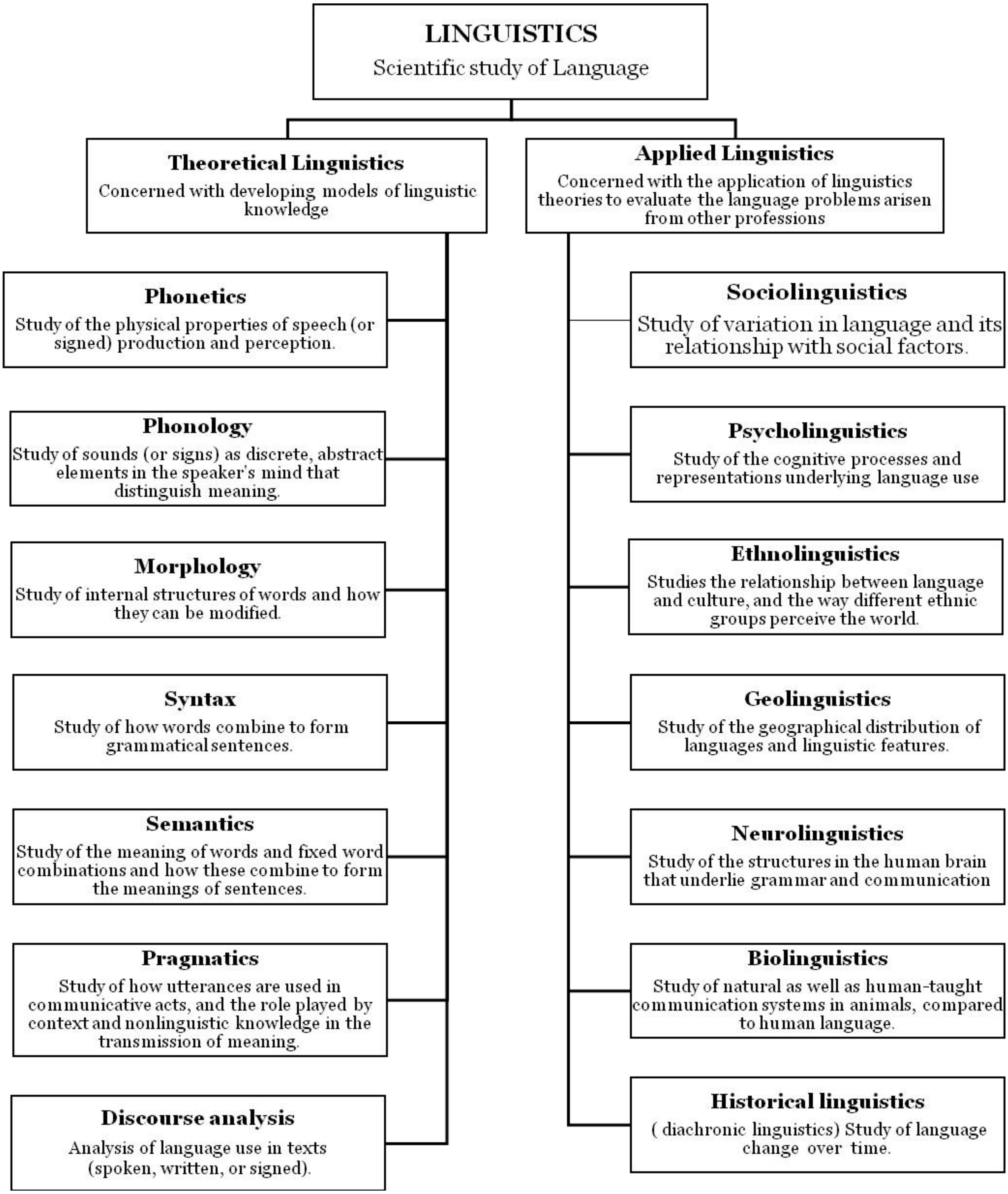
the world. Since this language is the means by which we understand and think about the world, we cannot go beyond it and understand the world in any other way. This is the view expressed by the linguist **Whorf** whose hypothesis is that we dissect nature along the lines laid by our native language. There is still a debate about this, but it is true that to some extent we are hound to see the world according to the terms specified by our own language. These aspects of language and culture are still being discussed by anthropological linguists, philosophers of language and ethnographers.

(d) Literary Stylistics

The study of variation in language and the use of language in communication has also led to new ways of studying literary texts and the nature of literary communication. If you consider again the notion of register discussed above, you may realise that register is in fact a kind of language that is considered appropriate for a particular subject matter, e.g. the style of a religious sermon, the style of sports commentary. Similarly we may use this notion to describe the style of a literary work. That is, we may describe its features at the levels of phonology, syntax, lexis, etc. to distinguish it from other texts and to appreciate how it achieves some unique effects through the use of language. This kind of study is called **literary stylistics.**

Literary writers use the system of language in their own way, i.e. they create a style. This is done by deliberate **choice** (e.g. out of a whole range of words available, they choose one which would be particularly effective), sometimes by **deviation** from or violation of the rules of grammar (e.g. 'he danced his did' in Cummings' poem). Poets and even prose writers may invert the normal order of items in a sentence (e.g. 'Home is the sailor…') or create a pattern by **repetition** of some items (e.g. the sound /f/ in 'the furrow followed free'). By these and other devices, they are able to manipulate language so that it conveys some theme or meaning with great force and effectiveness.

In literary stylistics, we read the text closely with attention to the features of language used in it, identifying and listing the particular features under the heading of 'lexis', 'grammar', 'phonology' or 'sound patterns'. When we have obtained a detailed account of all these features, we co-relate them or bring them together in an interpretation of the text. That is, we try to link **'what** is being said' with **'how** it is being said,' since it is through the latter that writers can fully express the many complex ideas and feelings that they want to convey. Stylistic analysis also helps in a better understanding of how metaphor, irony, paradox, ambiguity etc. operate in a literary text as these are all effects achieved through language and through the building up of a coherent linguistic structure.


LINGUISTICS
Scientific study of Language
Theoretical Linguistics
Concerned with developing models of linguistic knowledge
Applied Linguistics
Concerned with the application of linguistics theories to evaluate the language problems arisen from other professions
Phonetics
Study of the physical properties of speech (or signed) production and perception.
Phonology
Study of sounds (or signs) as discrete, abstract elements in the speaker's mind that distinguish meaning.
Morphology
Study of internal structures of words and how they can be modified.
Syntax
Study of how words combine to form grammatical sentences.
Semantics
Study of the meaning of words and fixed word combinations and how these combine to form the meanings of sentences.
Pragmatics
Study of how utterances are used in communicative acts, and the role played by context and nonlinguistic knowledge in the transmission of meaning.
Discourse analysis
Analysis of language use in texts (spoken, written, or signed).
Sociolinguistics
Study of variation in language and its relationship with social factors.
Psycholinguistics
Study of the cognitive processes and representations underlying language use
Ethnolinguistics
Studies the relationship between language and culture, and the way different ethnic groups perceive the world.
Geolinguistics
Study of the geographical distribution of languages and linguistic features.
Neurolinguistics
Study of the structures in the human brain that underlie grammar and communication
Biolinguistics
Study of natural as well as human-taught communication systems in animals, compared to human language.
Historical linguistics
(diachronic linguistics) Study of language change over time.

Human-Animal Communication

Language is primarily human. It is humans alone that possess language and use it for communication. Language is, in that sense, species-specific–it is specific only to one set of species. Also, all human beings uniformly possess language. It is only a few deaf and dumb persons who cannot speak. Thus language is species-uniform to that extent. Animals also have their own system of communication but communication between them is extremely limited.

It is limited to a very small number of messages. The first principle is that language relates to communication between human beings, not between animals. Language shows certain inherent features of design. These features set it apart from other forms of communication; particularly animal communication. The famous American linguist, ***Charles Hackett has found key properties of language or design features which as a whole don't appear among animals: these are the design features of language. These are seven: duality, productivity, arbitrariness, interchangeability, displacement, specialization and cultural transmission. Animal communication can never encompass all the properties of human communication***. In this regard, Bertrand Russell's dictum is appropriate*: "No matter how eloquently a dog may bark, he cannot tell you that his parents were poor but honest".*

Human Language	**Animal Communication**
Unlimited	Limited and finite
Open system	Closed system
Extendible	Inextendible
Flexible and varied	Non-inflexible
Non-intrinsic	Instinctive
Acquired	Inherent
Creativity	Non-creativity
Recurrent	Repetitive
Has grammaticality	No grammaticality
Cognitively behavioral	Only behavioral
Descriptive & narrative	No-descriptive

Firstly, ***language has phonological and grammatical duality***. We have small meaningless sounds and turn them into a number of sequences to produce millions of meaningful utterances. This is the most economical feature of language.

Secondly, ***productivity refers to the creative capacity of language users to produce an endless number of new sentences, in contrast to the communication systems of individuals which are limited to set formulas and are thus***

'unproductive'. Chomsky calls it Creativity. It means that we can create sentences which we have never spoken or heard of. Animals don't possess this quality.

Thirdly, ***in language, the role of the speaker and hearer can be exchanged without any problem. Any user of the language is both a listener and a speaker***. In the animal world, some are endowed with the ability while others are not.

Fourthly, Human Speech is a specialized activity. We can talk about an exciting experience while at the same time doing something else like peeling potatoes.

Fifthly, ***a human being, for example, can talk about the past, the present or the future, of an event that happened nearby or thousands of miles away***. An animal cannot do that. When a dog produces a certain sound, it generally refers to the present.

Man is said to ***be intimately disposed to learn a language***. His innate competence helps him master the unique features of a specific language. Thus language is transmitted from generation to generation. Animals don't learn their call systems from elders. Their knowledge is inherent.

Language is both ***species-specific and species-uniform***. We acquire our native tongue by cultural transmission. It is by means of our native tongue that we receive cultural transmissions that we learn and adapt. This is the spiral that has driven human development. Animal communication differs from human communication in many ways as illustrated in the chart.

Furthermore, ***language makes use of discrete symbols while animal communication systems are often continuous or non-discrete***. One can clearly distinguish between /k/, /æ/ and /t/ in the word cat but one cannot identify different discrete symbols in the long humming sound that a bee produces. A bee's dance or a cock's crow is today the same that it was two hundred years ago. It is not so in the case of language. Language is changing, growing every day and new words are coming up. Human language is far more structurally complex than animal communication. Human language is complex while there is no complexity in Lamb's cry.

In short, there is a great difference between the two species yet in many ways, ***humans interpret the behaviour of domestic animals, or can command them.*** Humans have behaviors that resemble animal's interspecific communication. Some of our bodily features - eyebrows, beards and moustaches - strongly resemble adaptations to producing signals. Humans also often seek to mimic animals' communicative signals in order to interact with the animals. For example, humans often close their eyes towards a pet cat to establish a tolerant relationship. Stroking, petting and rubbing pet animals are all actions that probably work through their natural patterns of interspecific communication.

Principles and Major Concepts of Linguistics

Saussure and His Main Contributions

Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) was a Swiss linguist who occupies an important place in the history of linguistics and is generally considered the founder of modern linguistics. It was he who first of all emphasized the importance of viewing language as a living phenomenon. He was the founder of a "theoretic foundation to the newer trend in linguistics study," and European scholars have seldom failed to consider his views when dealing with any theoretical problem. Jonathan Culler (1976) says, "Ferdinand de Saussure is the father of modern linguistics, the man who reorganized the systematic study of language and language in such a way as to make possible the achievements of twentieth-century linguists. This alone would make him a Modern Master: master of a discipline which he made modern."

De Saussure's contribution to modern linguistics was responsible for three key directions in the study of language. He distinguished between Synchrony and Diachrony, between langue and parole, between signified and signifier and between syntagmatic and paradigmatic. He also contributed by describing the distinction bet6ween syntagmatic and paradigmatic, the theory of associative value. Saussure's contributions to linguistics are given below:

Synchrony and Diachrony

Synchrony: - Saussure proposed that language as a system of signs be studied as a complete system at any given point in time. Like chess, the important part of language is how pieces move and the positions of all pieces relative to one another. The shape of each piece is only important in that its potential can be recognized.

A synchronic relationship is one where two similar things exist at the same time. Modern American English and British English have a synchronic relationship.

Diachrony: - Diachrony is the change in the meaning of words over time. For example in the way that 'magic' meant 'good' in youth culture for a period during the 1980s (and, to a lesser extent, beyond). It is thus the study of language in terms of how it visibly changes in usage. It is based in the dictionary meaning of words.

A diachronic relationship is where related things exist separated by time. 12th century English and 21st century English have a diachronic relationship.

Synchrony and Diachrony in Linguistics

According to the method, range or scope of its study, or the focus of interest of the linguist, Linguistics can be classified into different kinds, the chief of which are Diachronic Linguistics and Synchronic Linguistics.

Diachronic linguistics is the kind in which we study the historical development of language through different periods of time. For example, we study how French and Italian have grown out of Latin. The changes that have occurred in language with the passage of time, are also studied under this kind of linguistics; therefore, it is called historical linguistics.

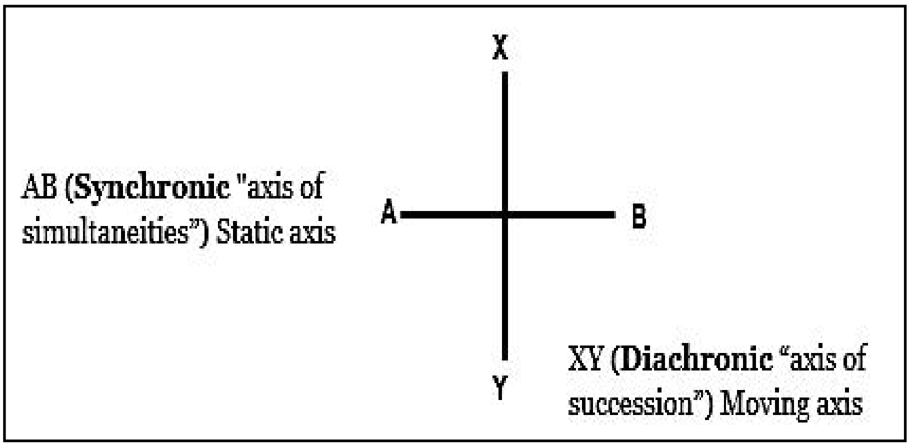
Synchronic linguistics is not concerned with the historical development of language. It confines itself to the study of how a language is spoken by a specified speech community at a particular point of time. It is also called 'descriptive' linguistics. Diachronic linguistics studies language change, and synchronic linguistics studies language states without their history.

According to C.F. Hockett: ***"The study of how a language works at a given time, regardless of its past history or future destiny, is called descriptive or synchronic linguistics. The study of how speech habits change as time goes by is called historical or diachronic linguistics"***

The distinction synchrony and diachrony refers to the difference in treating language from different points of view. Though the historical character of a language cannot be ignored, its present form being the result of definite historical processes, changes and transformations, it is necessary for a complete understanding of it to concentrate on the units of its structure at the present moment. Some scholars do not see the two approaches apart. They assert that it is a mistake to think of descriptive and historical linguistics as two separate compartments. However, on the whole the two areas are kept apart and one is studied to the exclusion of the other. Synchronic statements make no reference to the previous stages in the language. Linguistic studies in the nineteenth century were historical in character; they originated as part of the general historical investigations into the origins and development of cultures and communities, especially West Asia, Egypt, etc. Such philological researches viewed language at different stages of its progress and attempted to understand relations among different languages. Language families were discovered and genetic affinities identified. For Zhirmunsky, Diachronic linguistics was a great discovery of the 19th century:

"Which developed so powerfully and fruitfully from the 1820s to the 1880s. This discovery enabled linguists to explain modern languages as a result of law-governed historical development".

On a closer look one realizes that without a good synchronic (descriptive) work, valid historical (diachronic) postulations are not possible; in other words, a good historical linguist needs to be thorough descriptive scholar too.



The figure above shows the distinction. Diachronic axis (x-y) has been considered moving and the synchronic axis static. It was Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Sassure who first coined these terms and established the distinctions. As the Russian linguist V.M. Zhirmunsky observes, 'In de Saussure's conception, synchrony is language considered as a system of static oppositions resting on a single temporal plane, a static two dimensional cross-section". The principles that introduce this dichotomy enable us to obtain, according to Wilkins, 'particularly accurate information about a language in its current usage'. For Saussure, Historical considerations are irrelevant to

the investigation of particular temporal states of a language. But Saussure's analogy of chess breaks at the point that players determine the course of any particular game that is being played in opposition to one another and with reference to a recognized goal. As far as we know, there is no directionality in the diachronic development of languages.

Signifier and Signified

Description: - Saussure's 'theory of the sign' defined a sign as being made up of the matched pair of signifier and signified.

Signifier: - The signifier is the pointing finger, the word, the sound-image. A word is simply a jumble of letters. The pointing finger is not the star. It is in the interpretation of the signifier that meaning is created.

Signified: - The signified is the concept, the meaning, the thing indicated by the signifier. It need not be a 'real object' but is some referent to which the signifier refers. The thing signified is created in the perceiver and is internal to them. Whilst we share concepts, we do so via signifiers. Whilst the signifier is more stable, the signified varies between people and contexts. The signified does stabilize with habit, as the signifier cues thoughts and images. The signifier and signified, whilst superficially simple, form a core element of semiotics.

Saussure's ideas are contrary to Plato's notion of ideas being eternally stable. Plato saw ideas as the root concept that was implemented in individual instances. A signifier without signified has no meaning, and the signified changes with person and context. For Saussure, even the root concept is malleable.

The relationship between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary (Saussure called this 'unmotivated'). A real object need not actually exist 'out there'. Whilst the letters 'c-a-t' spell cat, they do not embody 'catness'. The French 'chat' is not identical to the English 'cat' in the signified that it creates (to the French, 'chat' has differences of meaning). In French, 'mouton' means both 'mutton' and a living 'sheep', whilst the English does not differentiate.

Saussure inverts the usual reflectionist view that the signifier reflects the signified: the signifier creates the signified in terms of the meaning it triggers for us. The meaning of a sign needs both the signifier and the signified as created by an interpreter. A signifier without a signified is noise. A signified without a signifier is impossible.

Syntagmatic and Paradigmatic

Introduction: - Ferdinand de Saussure saw the linguistic sign at once as static and dynamic or developing. The pairing of terms, synchrony-diachrony; form-substance; langue-parole as sets of contrasting relations amply demonstrates this concept. The idea is to highlight and demonstrate two dominant properties of a linguistic sign, one linear and the other arbitrary. La langue is thus more stable and predictably organised than la parole which displays freedom and dynamism which is not rule-governed, therefore unpredictable. Similarly, de Saussure put forward the concepts of syntagmatic and what he at that time called 'associative relations'.

Syntagmatic: - In **Syntagmatic** relations the syntagme is seen as any 'combination of discrete successive units of which there are at least two, with no limit on

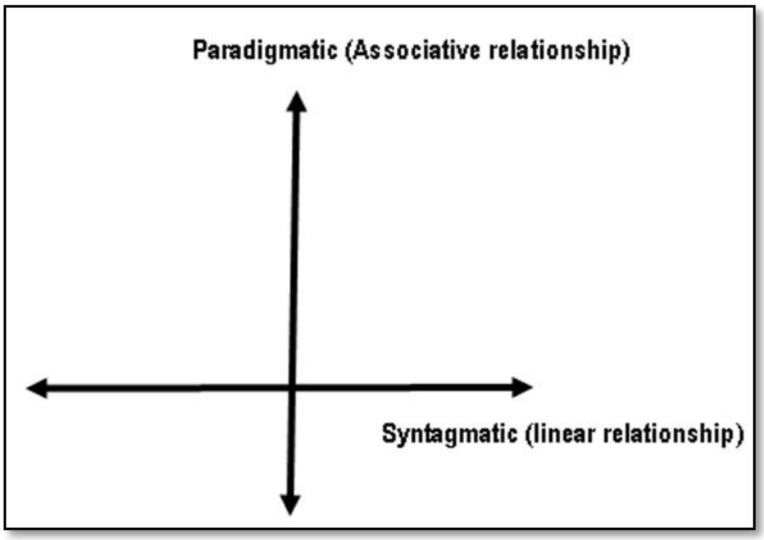
the possible number'. These segments range from the smallest construction units, i.e. phonemes, to phrases, and so on. Thus the word read is a succession of phonemes /r/, /i:/, /d/; re-read a succession of bound morpheme and a free morphemes.

For Saussure sentence is the most obvious example of a syntagme. It is a combination of other linguistic units. They demonstrate chain relationship. The unit acquires its significance by its position of occurrence vis-a-vis other elements preceding and following it. We shall take an example to e see elements occurring in a linear order in the following sentence:

She will come tomorrow.
The pronoun+ auxiliary+ main verb + adverb.

This ordering of the words cannot be changed. Syntagmatic relations function on the horizontal emphasizing the relational criteria identifying or defining linguistic categories or units. The concept of syntagmatic relations underlines the structural potential of any item, under examination.

Paradigmatic: - The paradigmatic relationships are contrastive or choice relationships. Words that have something in common, are; associated in the memory, resulting in groups marked by diverse relations. For example, the English word learning will unconsciously call to mind a host of other words–study, knowledge, discipline, etc. All these words are related in some way. This kind of relationship is called associative or paradigmatic relationship. Here the co-ordinations are outside discourse and are not supported by linearity. They are relations in absentia, and are vertical type relations. Their seat is in the brain; they are a part of the inner storehouse that makes up language of each speaker." (Saussure)



We can visualize a word as the centre of a constellation around which spring other words. These relations are unpredictable. Associations that are called up in one person may not occur in the mind of another. Since it is psychological, it is also subject to individual vagaries and governed by the specific factors governing the individual's speech behaviour, Paradigmatic relations are unpredictable, free, dynamic and idiosyncratic, comparable to la parole. It was the Danish linguist Lois Hjelmslev who suggested the term 'paradigmatic' for de Saussure's' 'associative relations'.

Langue and Parole

Introduction: - The major contribution of Ferdinand de Saussure to linguistics can be summed up as providing the basic groundwork of fundamental concepts; his definition of the 'linguistic sign'; his explanation of the distinction between concrete and abstract linguistic units; distinction between descriptive (synchronic) and historical (diachronic), study of language, and so on. He was under the influence of the new scientific

temperament and followed the principles of Durkheim who said that 'we have social facts that can be studied scientifically when we consider them from an aspect that is independent of their individual manifestations'. This attitude helped the shaping of the structuralist approach.

De Saussure put forward the concepts of La langue, La Parole and Le Language.

Le langage denotes a host of heterogeneous traits that a speaker possesses, such as his ability to produce speech acquired through heredity, his inherent ability to speak and the external factors that trigger and stimulate speech. It encompasses such factors as physical, physiological and psychological. Most significantly, it belongs to both the individual and society. Speech occupies a less important place in Le Langage. The latter' is, therefore, of greater interest to the anthropologist and the biologist.

La langue is more directly indicative of ability to produce speech, a kind of 'institutionalized element' of the community's collective consciousness. Every member of the community shares it, and because of this they are in a position to understand each other. Through langue they share the common properties of speech. 'If one took away what was idiosyncratic or innovational, langue would remain. Langue, by definition, is stable and systematic, society conveys the regularities of langue to the child so that he becomes able to function as a member of the speech community (Wilkins).

La langue is a collective pattern which exists as ***'a sum of impressions deposited in the brain of each individual.., like a dictionary of which identical copies have been distributed to each individual... it exists in each individual, yet it is common to all'***.

La langue is a repository of signs which each speaker has received from the other speakers of the community. It is passive. It is a set of conventions received by us all, ready-made from the community.

La Parole: By contrast la parole is active and denotes the actual speech act of the individual. We can better understand it by considering each act of speaking as a unique event. It is unique because it reflects the unstable, changeable relationship between the languages, the precise contextual elements triggering particular utterances, and personal factors. Thus each particular speech act is characterised by the personality, nature and several other external forces governing both the production and reception of a speech act. There is a great deal that is particular, individual, personal and idiosyncratic about la parole as opposed to la langue which emphasizes speech as the common act of behaviour, 'given that there is a good deal that is idiosyncratic or not fully institutionalised, parole cannot be stable and systematic' (Wilkins). Parole gives the data from which statements about langue are made; parole is not collective but individual, momentary and heterogeneous.

As Francis P. Dinneen points out "when we hear la parole of another community, we perceive the noises made, but not the social fact of language. We cannot connect the sounds produced and the social facts with which the other speech associates the sounds. When we hear la parole within our own community we perceive the sounds as associated with social facts, according to a set of rules. These rules, which can be called the convention, or grammar, of the language are habits that education has imposed on us. They have the property of being general throughout the community. That is why all the speakers can understand each other.

The main points of distinction between La Langue and La Parole can be summed up as follows.

La Langue	La Parole
It is stable and institutionalized	It is mobile and personal.
It is passive	It is active.
It is a social fact and general for the community.	It is individual and idiosyncratic.
It contains the negative limits on what a speaker must say.	It does not put any such limits.
It is sum of properties shared by all speakers of a community.	It contains infinite number of individual properties.
A scientific study can only be based on La langue	It is not amenable to scientific study.
It is an abstraction.	It is concrete manifestation.
It is a collective instrument.	It is not a collective instrument.
It is a set of conventions and habits handed down to next generation readymade.	It is diverse and variegated.
It is language as a speaker is expected to use.	It is language in actual use.
It is not subject to social and individual pressure.	It is susceptible to social and other pressure.
It is fixed.	It is free.
It is a potential form of language.	It is an actualized form of language.

The contribution Saussure had on language was revolutionary. His work had a profound influence on many aspects of linguistics. Lastly the following statement from Benevensite will reflect his contribution: "a forerunner in doctrines which in the post fifty years have transformed the theory of language, he has opened us unforgettable vistas on the highest and mysterious faculty of man… he has contributed to the advent of formal thought in the sciences of society and culture and to the founding of a general semiology". There is not a single general theory which doesn't mention him name.

Chomsky's Concept of Competence & Performance

A distinction developed by Noam Chomsky beginning in his 1965 book Aspects of the Theory of Syntax in which he outlines what he believes the goals of Linguistics should be.

A quote from the book:

Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech community, who know its (the speech community's) language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of this language in actual performance. (Chomsky, 1965, p. 3)

Chomsky argued that linguists should study only the underlying representations of language, and specifically of their own language (he believed that until linguists understand their own language, they cannot understand language in general; this is why he devoted so much of his career to the analysis of English syntax.) In order to illustrate that this is not a flawed knowledge (in native speakers) the way that he believed naturally occurring data to be, he created a distinction between what speakers know and what they might say.

Competence is the knowledge you (subconsciously) possess about how to speak a language.

Performance is your real world linguistic output. Performance may accurately reflect competence, but it also may include speech errors due to slips of the tongue or, as Chomsky points out in the quote above, external factors such as memory problems, etc.

To understand this distinction, it is helpful to to think about a time when you've made some sort of error in your speech. For example, let's say you are a native speaker of English and utter the following:

We swimmed in the ocean this weekend.

As a proficient speaker, it isn't that you don't know that the past tense of swim is swam, you've just mistakenly applied the regular rule to an irregular verb. You're unlikely to make this kind of error more than a small portion of the time, and may never say "swimmed" again. Your competence is fine - you know how to conjugate irregular English verbs, it is your performance that has let you down.

Though linguists have since realized that competence is not the only thing worth studying in Linguistics (thanks to contributions of linguists like William Labov, who popularized sociolinguistics), but the distinction remains useful, primarily because it allows those studying language to differentiate between a speech error and not knowing something about a language. Linguists use this distinction to illustrate the intuitive difference between accidentally saying swimmed and the fact that a child or non-proficient speaker of English may not know that the past tense of swim is swam and say swimmed consistently.

Descriptive and Prescriptive Linguistics

Descriptive Linguistics: - In the study of language, **description**, or **descriptive linguistics**, is the work of objectively analyzing and describing how language is spoken (or how it was spoken in the past) by a group of people in a speech community. All scholarly research in linguistics is descriptive; like all other sciences, its aim is to observe the linguistic world as it is, without the bias of preconceived ideas about how it ought to be. Modern descriptive linguistics is based on a structural approach to language, as exemplified in the work of Leonard Bloomfield and others. Linguistic description is often contrasted with linguistic prescription, which is found especially in education and in publishing. Prescription seeks to define standard language forms and give advice on effective language use, and can be thought of as a presentation of the fruits of descriptive research in a learnable form, though it also draws on more subjective aspects of language aesthetics. Prescription and description are complementary, but have different priorities and sometimes are seen to be in conflict. **Descriptivism** is the belief that description is more significant or important to teach, study, and practice than prescription.

Accurate description of real speech is a difficult problem, and linguists have often been reduced to approximations. Almost all linguistic theory has its origin in practical problems of descriptive linguistics. Phonology (and its theoretical developments, such as the phoneme) deals with the function and interpretation of sound in language. Syntax has developed to describe the rules concerning how words relate to each other in order to form sentences. Lexicology collects "words" and their derivations and transformations: it has not given rise to much generalized theory.

An extreme "mentalist" viewpoint denies that the linguistic description of a language can be done by anyone but a competent speaker. Such speakers have internalized something called "linguistic competence", which gives them the ability to extrapolate correctly from their experience new but correct expressions, and to reject unacceptable expressions.

A linguistic description is considered descriptively adequate if it achieves one or more of the following goals of descriptive linguistics:

1. A description of the phonology of the language in question.
2. A description of the morphology of words belonging to that language.
3. A description of the syntax of well-formed sentences of that language.
4. A description of lexical derivations.
5. A documentation of the vocabulary, including at least one thousand entries.
6. A reproduction of a few genuine texts.

Prescriptive Linguistics: - Prescriptive linguistics denotes normative practices on such aspects of language use as spelling, grammar, pronunciation, and syntax. It includes judgments on what usages are socially proper and politically correct. Its aims may be to establish a standard language, to teach what is perceived within a particular society to be correct forms of language, or to advise on effective communication. If usage preferences are conservative, prescription might (appear to) be resistant to language change; if the usage preferences are radical, prescription may produce neologisms.

Prescriptive approaches to language, concerned with how the prescriptivist recommends language should be used, are often contrasted with the alternative approach of descriptive linguistics, which observes and records how language actually is used. The basis of linguistic research is text (corpus) analysis and field studies, both of which are descriptive activities; but description includes each researcher’s observations of his or her own language usage. Despite apparent opposition, prescription and description can inform each other, since comprehensive descriptive accounts must take into account speaker attitudes, while some understanding of how language is actually used is necessary for prescription to be effective.

Phonetics - The Study of Speech Sounds

Introduction

Phonetics has been defined as the science of speech sounds. It is scientific study of the production, transmission, and reception of speech sound produced by human beings. In speaking trial listening a complex of activities is involved: there is the production of speech which is the result of simultaneous activities of several body organs.

These activities are aimed at creating disturbances in the air. The inhaled air acts as source of energy setting the outside air vibrating so that the sound thus generated is carried along to the ears of the listener. The auditory process is set in motion which is again a complicated process involving auditory organs; perception of speech segments which involves discarding the non-significant features from the significant or distinctive features and perceiving only those that are meaningful. It is like retrieving a small visual image from a crowd of intricate details. But the brain can quickly decode the incoming signals that have been encoded by the speakers. 'Physical energy in the form of sensory nerve impulses reaches the brain', the brain circuitry is understood to organise them into percepts which are the basis of recognition. Obviously, a complex of multiple factors in the form of the listeners' interest, his social background, intellectual level, past experience and other parameters play an active and significant role in the perception level, and the interpretation is made accordingly.

We thus observe that speech act encompasses intricate movements and activities that occur on different planes, some of them simultaneously and at incredible speed. We are so used to speaking in a natural effortless manner, that we hardly give attention to the complex nature of speech production and speech perception.

Major branches of Phonetics

Acoustic Phonetics

Acoustic phonetics is the study of the physical properties of speech sounds such as frequency and amplitude in their transmission. Acoustic phoneticians analyse the speech waves with the help of instruments, attempt to describe the physical properties of the stream of sound issues forth from the mouth of a speaker.

It is in the field of acoustic phonetics that the most sulking developments have taken place since the Second World War. Complex sound waves produced in speech can be analysed into their component frequencies and relative amplitudes. Considerable progress has also been made in speech-synthesis. Acoustic analysis has confirmed (if confirmation was needed) that speech is not made up of a sequence of discrete sounds. The articulatory features of rounding of voice, of nasality, of obstruction and of friction can also be identified acoustically. Acoustic phonetics achieved a good deal of success in matters of the study of the n vowels, but regarding consonants it has not reached final conclusions.

Auditory Phonetics

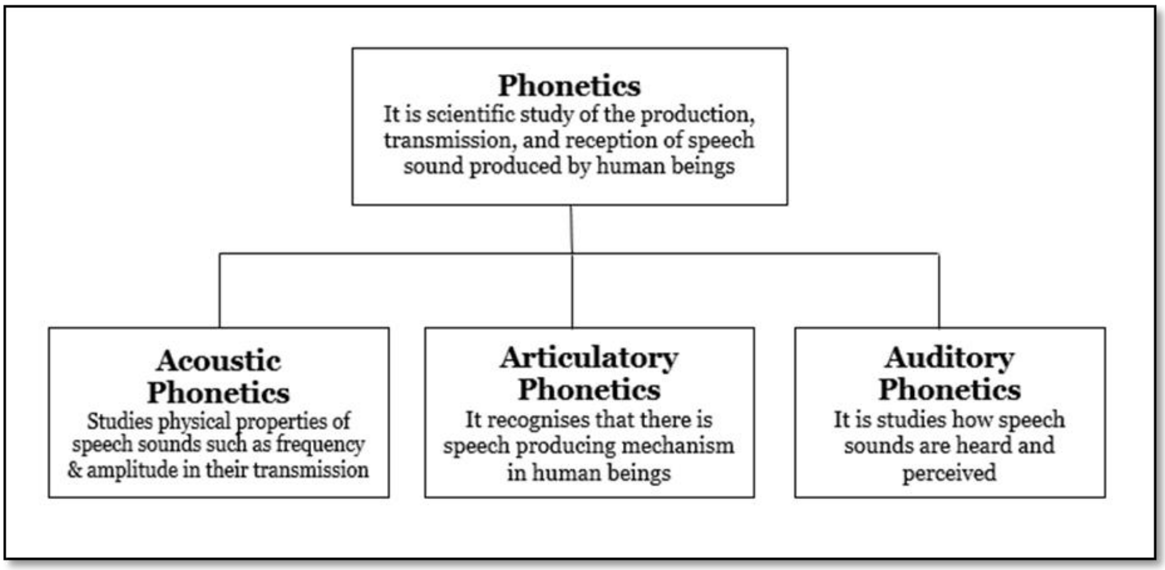
Auditory ***Phonetics studies how speech sounds are heard and perceived***. This requires a close ***study of the psychology of perception on the one hand, and the mechanism of the neuro-muscular circuitry on the other***.

Hearing is a very intricate process; it implies 'interpreting the physical description of actual or proposed signals in terms of the auditory sensations which the signals would create if impressed upon the ear'. Acoustic signals generate a 'complex chain of physical disturbances within the auditory system'. The brain receives signal about these physical disturbances; in the brain are caused other disturbances - physical counterparts of the sensations. It is necessary to establish correlation between the auditory signals and their interpretation in terms of the disturbances in the brain.

Articulatory Phonetics

This branch of phonetics ***recognises that there is speech producing mechanism in human beings***. 'The 'apparatus' that produces speech sounds is situated within the human body. Man uses various organs for speaking which already serve other biological needs. *Lips, teeth, tongue, hard palate, soft palate, trachea, lungs - all these organs used in speech production have different basic biological functions*. In the process of cultural evolution, man devised ways of utilizing these organs and parts thereof (such as the tip, blade, front, and centre, back of the tongue along with the corresponding areas or points in the roof of mouth or hard palate) for verbal communication.

Besides these the airstream that goes in and out of the lungs forms the basis of speech; that is, speech is based on the outgoing air stream. ***Articulatory phonetics studies how the outgoing airstream is regulated along the vocal tract to form various speech sounds.***



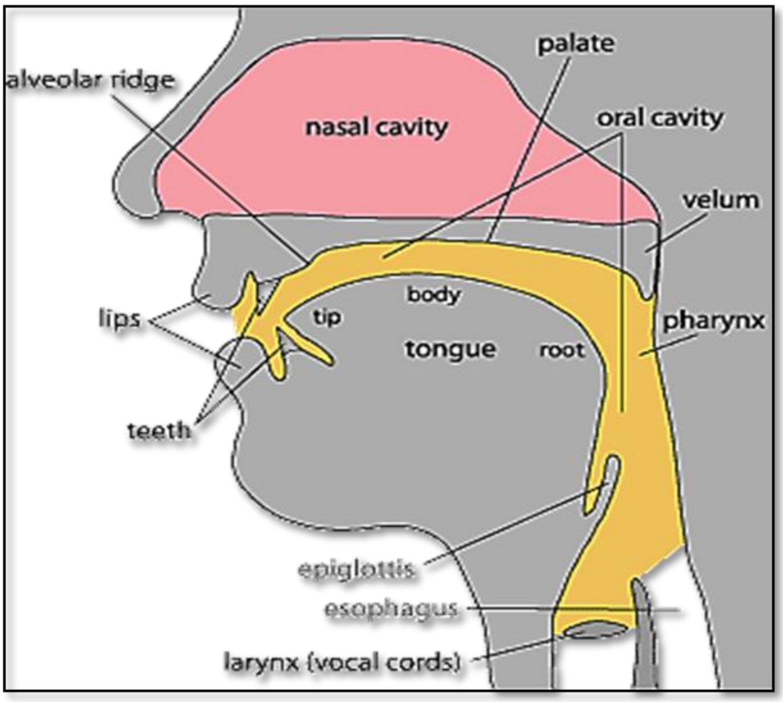
Articulators

Articulator is a vocal organ that takes part in the production of a speech sound. Such organs are of two types: those that can move, such as the tongue, lips, etc. (***active articulators***)*,* and those that remain fixed, such as the teeth, the hard palate, etc. (***passive articulators***)

(a) Active Articulators

The main role of the active articulators is to actively interfere with the outgoing airstream and modify it to produce various types of speech sounds. This is done either by approximating (forming a constriction) or coming into full contact with the passive articulators (forming complete stoppage). We have seen the functioning of the larynx, glottis and vocal cords in earlier sections.

Tongue: - The most active of articulators is the tongue. It shows an amazing range of adjustments and movements mainly because it is made of two groups of muscles, intrinsic ones are fibers of the longitudinal, transverse and vertical lingual muscles. These muscles are within the tongue and mainly responsible for changes in its shape.



The tongue has been divided into the parts on the surface along its length i-e tip of the tongue, blade of the tongue, front of the tongue, back of the tongue and root of the tongue.

The sides of the tongue can also be used in speech, these are known as margin. For lateral sounds the sides are raised enough for the airstream to create turbulence and escape continuously. The tip can be raised and curled backwards letting the passing airstream to vibrate it. This produces retroflex sounds of various types.

Lower lip: - The lower lip is a mobile articulator which can be used for many oral configurations. With the upper lip it can form various degrees of rounding that produce different vowels. It can bring about complete oral occlusion with the upper lip which produces bilabial sounds, plosives and in many languages fricatives also. When the lower lip comes into contact with upper teeth, we hear fricative sounds (labio-dental).

(b) Passive Articulators

Passive articulators cannot be moved about, but perform a very crucial role in speech production. The active organs approximate them, i.e. come close enough to affect the shape of the outgoing column of air, or form a complete closure by coming into full contact with them.

These organs are mostly located in the upper part of the mouth, beginning in front with the upper lip, upper teeth, the alveolar ridge, hard palate, the soft palate, just behind the hard palate and the back wall of the throat (pharynx).

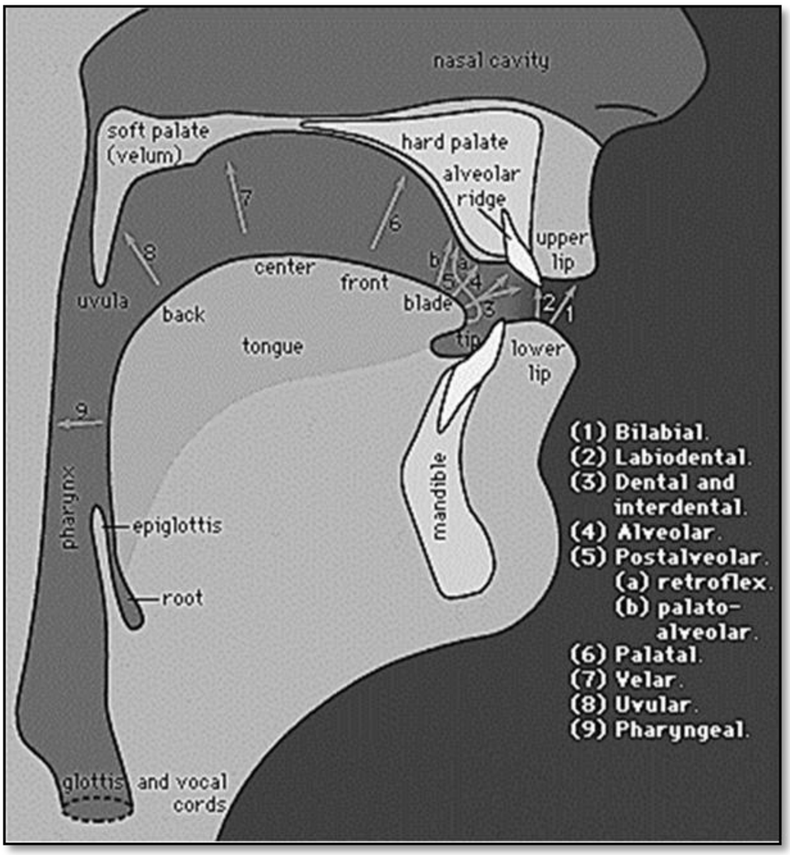
Upper lip: - Though upper lip is not a rigid organ and can be moved, in speech production it is not used as a mobile articulator; rather the lower lip reaches up to create various constrictions with it. Therefore, it has been classified as a passive articulator.

Upper teeth: - The row of upper teeth functions as the passive articulator. Tongue-tip and blade as well as the lower lip form constriction with them. The active organs can do so either with the edges of the teeth or the back of them. Dental class of sounds is produced in this manner. Upper teeth are also involved in the production of the fricative sounds, called labio-dentals in which the lower lip approximates them to form a slit through which the air escapes creating friction noise.

Alveolar ridge: - Just behind the upper teeth is located alveolar ridge. The mobile speech organs - various parts of the tongue reach it to form either a narrow stricture or a complete closure. English /o/ in thin and /ð/ in this are fricatives.

Hard Palate: - Behind the alveolar ridge begins the hard palate which forms the major part of the roof of the mouth. It is made of the horizontal plates of bone which terminate in the soft palate. 'Some part of both the hard and the soft palates serves as a point of contact or near-contact for the tongue in the production of a number of speech sounds'. It can be divided into parts or areas where the tongue makes contact. Phonetic quality is changed according to the point at which the hard palate is approximated by the tongue. These sounds are recognised as palatal. These are further classified according to which part of the tongue comes into contact with the precise palatal area. For example, we can produce palato-alveolar sounds by bringing the tip of the tongue to touch the extreme front of the hard palate or the place lying between the gum-ridge and the palate. Alveo-palatal area lies further back of the region just mentioned; palatal the slope of the hard palate and domal is the dome of it.

Soft Palate: - This is recognised as the fixed articulator though it can he moved, being a soft and flexible organ. The principal action of soft place consists of opening the naso-pharyngeal cavity by lowering itself. When it is lowered, the oral passage is closed off and the outgoing airstream passes through the nose, sounds produced in this manner are identified as nasals. /m/, /n/, /h/ and the nasalised vowels are of this type. For opening the oral passage and allowing the air a free passage through it, the soft palate is raised. Soft palate thus acts as a valve. The back of the tongue makes contact with the velum to produce either frictional sounds or stops. These stops are known as velar stops /k/, /g/. Retroflex sounds can also be produced by bringing the underside of the tongue tip to touch the velum.



Uvula: - The soft palate terminates into a piece of flesh which dangles over the pharyngeal passage. This is called uvula. It is a 'small flexible appendage hanging down from the posterior edge of the velum. It can be vibrated by the outgoing breath-stream, to produce uvular sound, particularly

uvular trills. Some languages use these sounds as phonemes.

Pharynx: - The posterior wall of the pharynx is used for producing speech. In the front are the base of the tongue, the palate, and the two openings leading to the nasal and oral passages. The pharynx serves as a resonator for the voice. Widening of the pharynx promotes resonance and makes the tones full, dark, strong and resonant; narrowing tends to make them thin, sharp, dampened, and throaty' . Besides, the root of the tongue can also be made to come into contact with the pharyngeal wall and produce certain types of fricatives and stops.

Processes of Speech Production

Labialization: - This is a process in which the lips play an active part in various ways. They come together to form various stages or degrees of rounding which is a crucial factor in producing back vowels /u/, /o/, as in shoe, shore, and .a. The two lips are joined together for the pronunciation of the plosive sounds /p/, /b/; and the voiced nasal continuant /m/. The lower lip is raised approximate the edge of the upper teeth for the fricatives /f/, /v/. For the semi-vowel /w/ again there is a noticeable lip-rounding.

Palatalization: - In palatalization the tongue approximates the hard palate leaving only a narrow space through which the airstream passes producing friction noise; or the tongue may form complete occlusion and then gradually withdraw, creating a turbulence of air due to the breath-stream escaping through the space slowly being allowed to form. This is how the sound in jar /dʒɑː:/ and chair /tʃeə/ is pronounced.

Velarization: - Velar sounds are produced by this process. The back of the tongue either approximates or forms total occlusion for articulating certain types of stop and fricative sounds. The velar sounds are /k/ and /g/ in English. /h/ is a velar nasal heard in such words as king, sing and conquer.

Glottalization: - The space between the vocal cords is called glottis. If the vocal cords are brought together and released with a 'popping' action, the resultant sound will be heard as a 'glottal stop'.

Nasalization: - This is a process whereby we produce nasal sounds or nasalised vowels. In articulating these sounds, the soft palate is lowered to close off the oral passage and direct the airstream through nasal cavity. In another case, the air is allowed to go into both the oral and the nasal cavities, but the active articulators check it in the mouth. For /m/ two lips come together to form a closure, and channelise the air flow, through the nose. Similarly, for /n/ the tip of the tongue comes into contact with the back of the upper teeth and forms a closure. 'Although the vocal tract is blocked at one point, the breath-stream flows outward through what has been called a secondary aperture consisting of the nasal airway Nasals are also classed as resonants or continuants.

Voicing: - It is an articulatory process in which the vocal flaps are set in vibration by the outgoing column of air. During voicing, the vocal cords are brought close enough to hold them taut and the airstream vibrates them in rapid succession. There is as a result, quick opening and closing of these vocal cords several times a second. Sounds can be produced without the vibration of the vocal cords. Such sounds are called unvoiced or voiceless sounds; sounds produced with the cords in vibration are called voiced sounds. See consonant chart for voiced and voiceless consonants.

Manner of Articulation

The manner or way in which the outgoing air-stream is interfered with determines the manner of articulation. The airstream may completely be stopped and released with force producing a plosive or stop sound. The occlusion may occur anywhere between larynx and the two lips; or the passage of air may be constricted enough for it to produce audible friction. The sound thus produced is called fricative. According to the manner of articulation sounds are classified into smaller classes as stops, fricatives, affricates, nasals, laterals, trills or flaps and semivowels. These constitute the larger class of consonants. For the complete description both the point/place and manner of articulation are taken into consideration.

Description of Speech Sounds

Speech Sounds are divided into two main groups: (1) consonants, and (2) vowels.

Consonant:

A sound that results from the passage of air through restrictions of the oral cavity is called consonant. The description of a consonant will include five kinds of information.

Nature of the Air-stream

Most speech sounds and all normal English sounds are made with an aggressive pulmonic air-stream, e.g., the air pushed out of the lungs.

The State of Glottis

A consonant may be voiced or voice-less, depending upon whether the vocal cords remain wide apart (voice-less) or in a state of vibration (voiced).

The Position of the Soft Palate

While describing consonants we have to mention whether they are oral sounds (produced with soft palate raised, thus blocking the nasal passage of air) or nasal sounds (produced with the soft palate lowered).

The Articulators Involved

In the description of consonants, we have also to discuss the various articulators involved. In the production of a consonant the active articulator is moved towards the passive articulator. The chief points of articulation are bilabial, labio-dental, dental, alveolar, post-alveolar, palato-alveolar, retroflex, palatal, velar, uvular, and glottal. In the case of some consonantal sounds, there can be a secondary place of articulation in addition to the primary. Thus, in the so-called dark /l/, in addition to the partial alveolar contact, there is an essential raising of the back of the tongue towards the velum (Velarization); or, again some post-alveolar articulator of ‘r’ (r) as in red are accompanied by slight lip-rounding (labialization). We can classify consonants according to the place of articulation.

The Nature of Stricture

By the nature of stricture we mean the manner of articulation. This stricture of obstruction made by the organs may be total, intermittent, partial, or may merely constitute a narrowing sufficient to cause friction.

When the stricture is that of a ***complete closure, the active and passive articulators make a firm contact with each other, and prevent the passage of air between them***. For instance, in the production of /p/ as in pin and /b/ as in bin, the lips make a total closure.

The stricture may be such that ***air passes between the active and passive articulators intermittently. Such a stricture is called intermittent closure, and involves the vibration of the active articulator against the passive***. The Scottish /r/ as in rat is an example. The intermittent closure may be of such a short duration that the active articulator strikes against the passive articulator once only. The English /r/ in the word very is an example; the tip of the tongue (active articulator) makes one tap against the teeth-ridge (passive articulator).

In the ***partial stricture, the air passes between the active and passive articulators continuously, but with some difficulty***. The sounds thus produced are clear /ı/ and dark /ı/ in late, and hill, the clear and the dark 'ı' respectively.

And lastly, the stricture may be such that the air, while passing between the active and passive articulators, produces audible friction. /f, v, q, ð, s, z, f, ʒ, h/ in English are examples of this kind of stricture. Or the air may pass without friction. Examples are /w/ in wet, /j/ in yes and flap /r/ as in butter. ***A stricture which involves audible friction, can be called a stricture of close approximation, whereas one which involves no such friction can be called a stricture of open approximation.***

English Consonants Chart

Place of Articulation / Manner of Articulation		**Bilabial** Upper lip and lower lip	**Labio-Dental** Lower lip and upper teeth	**Dental** Teeth and tip of tongue	**Alveolar** alveolar (teeth) ridge and tip and blade of tongue	**Palato-Alveolar** Hard palate and tip of tongue	**Palatal** Hard palate and front of tongue	**Velar** Soft palate and back of tongue	**Glotta** Glottis (vocal co
Plosive Complete closure of the air passage and released afterwards suddenly.	Voiceless	**p** : Pen			**t** : Two			**k** : Cat	
	Voiced	**b** : Best			**d** : Do			**g** : Go	
Nasal Complete oral closure while nasal passage is open.	Voiceless								
	Voiced	**m** : Man			**n** : No			**ŋ** : Singer	
Fricatives Complete closure and slow release	Voiceless		**f** : Fool	**Φ** : Thing	**s** : See	**ʃ** : She			**h** : Har
	Voiced		**v** : Voice,	**ð** : This	**r** : Run **z** : Zoo	**ʒ** : Pleasure,			
Lateral Complete closure in the center of the vocal tract and the air passes along the side(s) of the tongue.	Voiceless								
	Voiced				**l** : Left				
Affricate Complete closure of the air passage and released afterwards slowly.	Voiceless					**tʃ** : Chair			
	Voiced					**dʒ** : Jug			
Semi-Vowels Airflow doesn't stop, phonetically similar to a vowel.	Voiceless	**w** : Wet							
	Voiced						**j** : Yes		

Classification of Consonants

Consonantal sounds are classified on the basis of (i) voicing, (ii) place of articulation, and (iii) manner of articulation.

Voicing: - At the articulatory level, a **voiced** sound is one in which the vocal cords vibrate, and a **voiceless** sound is one in which they do not. The voiced sounds in English are /b, d, g, v. p, z, dʒ, m, n, ŋ, l, r, w, j/. All the vowels and semi-vowels are voiced sounds, whereas among the consonants some are voiced and some voiceless. See consonant chart.

Place of Articulation

The place of articulation (also point of articulation) of a consonant is the ***point of contact where an obstruction occurs in the vocal tract between an articulatory gesture***, an active articulator (typically some part of the tongue), and a passive location (typically some part of the roof of the mouth). Consonants are divided as given in the above table on the basis of the articulatory points at which the articulators actually touch, or are at their closest.

The Manner of Articulation

According to the manner of articulation, which describes the type of obstruction caused by the narrowing or closure of the articulators, the consonants can be divided into Plosives, Nasals, Fricatives, Laterals, Affricates and semi-vowels or frictionless continuants.

Plosives

In the production of a plosive, the oral and nasal passages arc closed simultaneously. The active and passive articulators come in contact with each other forming a stricture of complete closure and preventing the air from escaping through the mouth. The soft palate is raised and thus the nasal passage is also blocked. The air behind the oral closure is compressed, and when the active articulator is removed from contact with passive one, the air escapes with an explosion. Plosives are also known as Stops. See consonant chart for elaboration and examples.

Nasals

In a nasal consonant, the breath stream is interrupted at some point in the oral cavity or at the lips, while being allowed to enter the nose and create resonance there. Thus a nasal is produced by a stricture of complete oral closure. The soft palate is lowered and the air passes through the nose. All nasal sounds are voiced. See consonant chart for elaboration and examples.

Fricatives

In the production of a fricative consonant the stricture is one of close approximation. The active articulator and the passive articulator are so close to each other that passage between them is very narrow and the air passes through it with audible friction. See consonant chart for elaboration and examples.

Laterals

Laterals are produced by a stricture of complete closure in the center of the vocal tract, but the air passes out every one or both side of the tongue. See consonant

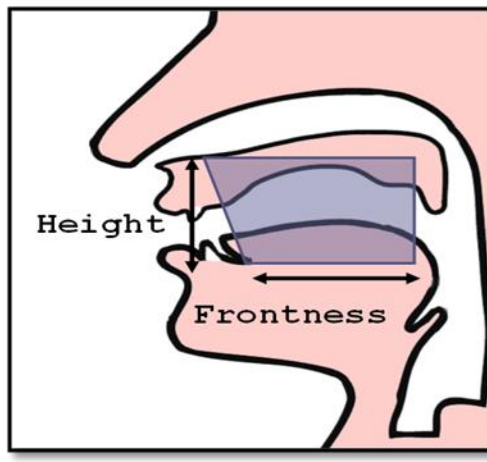
chart for elaboration and examples.

Laterals If the stop is not held for any appreciable time and released slowly, we get an affricate rather than a plosive. See consonant chart for elaboration and examples.

Semi-vowels

A semi-vowel is a vowel glide functioning as a consonant i.e., as the C element in syllable structure. In terms of articulation semi-vowels are like vowels, but they don't behave like vowels. Semi-vowels are never stable; they can never be pronounced by themselves. They are sounds in transition. These are also called semi-consonants too. See consonant chart for elaboration and examples.

Vowels



Vowel is a sound in spoken language, pronounced with an open vocal tract so that there is no build-up of air pressure at any point above the glottis. .Vowels may be defined with an open approximation without any obstruction, partial or complete, in the air passage. They are referred to as voiced in phonetics. They can be described in terms of three variables:

(1) Height of tongue

(2) Part of the tongue which is raised or lowered

(3) Lip-rounding.

In order to describe the vowels, we usually draw three points in the horizontal-axes: front, central and back, referring to the part of the tongue which is the highest. So we have

(i) **Front vowels:** During the production of which the front of the tongue is raised towards the hard palate. For example, /i, i:, e, æ/ in English as in sit, seat, set, and sat respectively.

(ii) **Back vowels**: During the production of which the back of the tongue is raised towards the soft palate. For example /a: u: / in English as in cart, cot, caught, book and tool respectively.

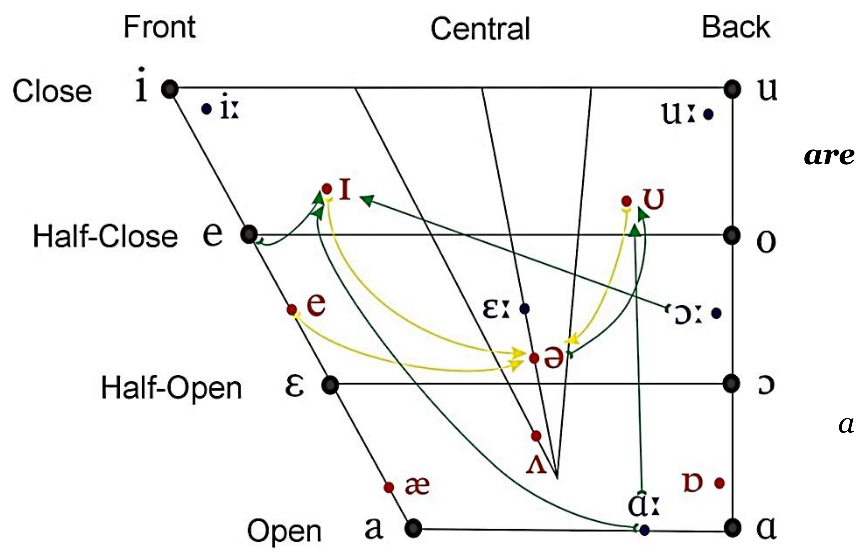
(iii) **Central vowels**: During the production of which the central part of the tongue (the part between the front and the back) is raised. For example, /ə, ɜ:, ʌ/ in English as in about, earth and but respectively.

To describe the vowel sound we mention whether it is open or close, half-close or half-open, front or back or central, long or short, whether the tongue is tense or lax while the vowel is being

pronounced, and whether lips are spread, neutral, open rounded, or close rounded. All English vowels are voiced. So, for every vowel, we must state that it is voiced.

Diphthongs

From the point of view of their quality, vowel sounds are of two types: monophthong and diphthong. ***Monophthongs are pure vowels and diphthongs are gliding vowels***. *'A vowel that does not change in quality' may be called a monophthong; and a vowel sound with a continually changing quality may be called a diphthong*.



A pure vowel is one for which the organs of speech remain in a given position for an appreciable period of time.

A diphthong is a vowel sound consisting of a deliberate, i.e. intentional glide, the organs of speech starting in the position of one vowel and immediately moving in the direction of another vowel.

A diphthong, moreover, consists of a single syllabic––that is, the vowel-glide must be performed with a single impulse of the breath; if there is more than one impulse of breath, the ear perceives two separate syllables.

A diphthong, thus, always occupies one syllabic. If two adjacent vowels form the nuclei of two successive syllables, they are not a diphthong. For example the vowels in bay, boy, and buy are diphthongs, but the vowels in doing are two different vowels since they belong to two different syllables.

One end of the diphthong is generally more prominent than the other. Diphthongs are termed 'decrescendo' of FALLING if the first element is louder or more prominent than the second, and 'crescendo' or RISING if the second element is louder or more prominent than the first. All the English diphthongs are falling diphthongs, because in them the first clement is louder or more prominent than the second clement.

Diphthongs are represented in phonetic transcription by a sequence of two letters, the first showing the position of the organs of speech at the beginning of the glide, the second their position at the end. *In the* case of the 'closing' diphthongs the second letter indicates the point toward which glide (movement) is made.

Vowel	Length	Height of Tongue	Part of tongue which is the highest	Position of lips	Opening between the jaws
/i/ Bid	Short Vowel	Nearly Half Close	Hinder part of the front	Spread	Narrow to medium
/e/ Get	Short Vowel	Midway between Half Close & Half Open	Front	Spread	Medium
/æ/ Bag	Short Vowel	Midway between Half Open & Open	Front	Spread	Medium to wide
/ɔ/ Dog	Short Vowel	Fully open	Back	Open lip rounding	Medium to wide
/ʌ/ Flood	Short Vowel	Half Open	Fore part of the back	Neutral	Wide
/ʊ/ Book	Short Vowel	Just above half close	Fore part of the back	Fairly close lip rounding	Medium
/ə/ Admit	Very Short Vowel	Midway between Half Close & Half Open	Central	Neutral	Medium
/i:/ Tree	Long Vowel	Nearly Close	Front	Spread	Narrow to Medium
/U:/ Move	Long Vowel	Nearly Close	Back	Close lip rounding	Medium
/ɑ:/ Pass	Long Vowel	Fully Open	Back	Neutral	Medium to wide
/ɔ:/ Form	Long Vowel	Between Half Open & Open	Back	Between open & Close lip rounding	Medium to fairly wide
/ɜ:/ Learn	Long Vowel	Little below the half close position	Central	Neutral	Narrow

English Vowels Chart

Phonetic Transcription

Phonetic transcription is a device in which we use several symbols in such a way that one symbol always represents one sound. It is also known as phonetic notation; it is an 'attempt on paper, a record of the sounds that speakers make.' By looking at an English word in its written form one cannot be sure of its pronunciation, whereas by looking at it in phonetic transcription one can be. Most of our phonetic transcriptions are phonemic transcriptions, that is, each symbol represents a phoneme, a distinct sound unit in language. A pair of square brackets [ ] indicates a phonetic transcription: Phonemic transcriptions are enclosed within slant bars / /.

The Usefulness of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)

The IPA gives us a uniform international medium of studying and transcribing the sounds of all the languages of the world. Many languages in the world have no orthographic (written) form at all. It has been made possible to study such languages with this alphabet. In other words, the IPA is 'a precise and universal' means (i.e. valid for all languages) of writing down the spoken forms of utterances as they are spoken without reference to their orthographic representation, grammatical status, or meaning.

As regards English, the IPA helps us in establishing and maintaining international intelligibility and uniformity in the pronunciation of English. With the help of the IPA we can easily teach the pronunciation of English or of any other language. The IPA has contributed a lot in the teaching and description of language. The teachers and learners of English can improve, and standardize their pronunciation and can overcome the confusion created by the spellings with the help of the International Phonetic Alphabet.

Received Pronunciation (RP)

A pronunciation of British English, originally based on the speech of the upper class of southeastern England and characteristic of the English spoken at the public schools and at Oxford and Cambridge Universities. Until recently it was the standard form of English used in British broadcasting.

RP as a Social Accent of English

Received Pronunciation, or **RP** for short, is the instantly recognisable accent often described as 'typically British'. Popular terms for this accent, such as 'The Queen's English', 'Oxford English' or 'BBC English' are all a little misleading. The Queen, for instance, speaks an almost unique form of English, while the English we hear at Oxford University or on the BBC is no longer restricted to one type of **accent**.

RP is an **accent**, not a **dialect**, since all RP speakers speak Standard English. In other words, they avoid non-standard grammatical constructions and localised vocabulary characteristic of regional dialects. RP is also regionally non-specific, that is it does not contain any clues about a speaker's

geographic background. But it does reveal a great deal about their social and/or educational background.

Well-known but not widely used

RP is probably the most widely studied and most frequently described variety of spoken English in the world, yet recent estimates suggest only 2% of the UK population speak it. It has a negligible presence in Scotland and Northern Ireland and is arguably losing its prestige status in Wales. It should properly, therefore, be described as an English, rather than a British accent. As well as being a living accent, RP is also a theoretical linguistic concept. It is the accent on which phonemic transcriptions in dictionaries are based, and it is widely used (in competition with **General American**) for teaching English as a foreign language. RP is included here as a case study, not to imply it has greater merit than any other English accent, but because it provides us with an extremely familiar model against which comparisons with other accents may be made.

What's in the name?

RP is a young accent in linguistic terms. It was not around, for example, when Dr Johnson wrote *A Dictionary of the English Language* in 1757. He chose not to include pronunciation suggestions as he felt there was little agreement even within educated society regarding 'recommended' forms. The phrase Received Pronunciation was coined in 1869 by the linguist, A J Ellis, but it only became a widely used term used to describe the accent of the social elite after the phonetician, Daniel Jones, adopted it for the second edition of the *English Pronouncing Dictionary* (1924). The definition of 'received' conveys its original meaning of 'accepted' or 'approved' — as in 'received wisdom'. We can trace the origins of RP back to the public schools and universities of nineteenth-century Britain — indeed Daniel Jones initially used the term **Public School Pronunciation** to describe this emerging, socially exclusive accent. Over the course of that century, members of the ruling and privileged classes increasingly attended boarding schools such as Winchester, Eton, Harrow and Rugby and graduated from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Their speech patterns - based loosely on the local accent of the south-east Midlands (roughly London, Oxford and Cambridge) — soon came to be associated with 'The Establishment' and therefore gained a unique status, particularly within the middle classes in London.

Broadcaster's choice

RP probably received its greatest impetus, however, when Lord Reith, the first General Manager of the BBC, adopted it in 1922 as a broadcasting standard - hence the origins of the term **BBC English**. Reith believed Standard English, spoken with an RP accent, would be the most widely understood variety of English, both here in the UK and overseas. He was also conscious that choosing a regional accent might run the risk of alienating some listeners. To a certain extent Reith's decision was understandable, and his attitude only reflected the social climate at the time. But since RP was the preserve of the aristocracy and expensive public schools, it represented only a very small social minority. This policy prevailed at the BBC for a considerable time and probably contributed to the sometimes negative perception of regional varieties of English.

There's more than one RP

A speaker who uses numerous very localised pronunciations is often described as having a 'broad' or 'strong' regional accent, while terms such as 'mild' or 'soft' are applied to speakers whose speech patterns are only subtly different from RP speakers. So, we might describe one speaker as having a broad Glaswegian accent and another as having a mild Scottish accent. Such terms are inadequate when applied to Received Pronunciation, although as with any variety of English, RP encompasses a wide variety of speakers and should not be confused with the notion of 'posh' speech. The various forms of RP can be roughly divided into three categories. **Conservative RP** refers to a very traditional variety particularly associated with older speakers and the aristocracy. **Mainstream RP** describes an accent that we might consider extremely neutral in terms of signals regarding age, occupation or lifestyle of the speaker. **Contemporary RP** refers to speakers using features typical of younger RP speakers. All, however, are united by the fact they do not use any pronunciation patterns that allow us to make assumptions about where they are from in the UK.

RP today

Like any other accent, RP has also changed over the course of time. The voices we associate with early BBC broadcasts, for instance, now sound extremely old-fashioned to most. Just as RP is constantly evolving, so our attitudes towards the accent are changing. For much of the twentieth century, RP represented the voice of education, authority, social status and economic power. The period immediately after the Second World War was a time when educational and social advancement suddenly became a possibility for many more people. Those who were able to take advantage of these opportunities — be it in terms of education or career — often felt under considerable pressure to conform linguistically and thus adopt the accent of the establishment or at least modify their speech towards RP norms. In recent years, however, as a result of continued social change, virtually every accent is represented in all walks of life to which people aspire — sport, the arts, the media, business, even former strongholds of RP England, such as the City, Civil Service and academia. As a result, fewer younger speakers with regional accents consider it necessary to adapt their speech to the same extent. Indeed many commentators even suggest that younger RP speakers often go to great lengths to disguise their middle-class accent by incorporating regional features into their speech.

English Diphthongs

Diphthong	Type of Diphthong	Position of Tongue i-e the tongue starts at position and moves towards position (Vowel Glide)	Position of lips	Opening between the jaws
/eɪ/ Age	Closing Narrow	Glide from /**e**/ to /**ɪ**/	Spread and more open at the start than at the end	Medium at the start becomes narrow towards end
/əʊ/ Go	Closing Narrow	Glide from /ə/ to /**ʊ**/	Un-rounded in the beginning slight rounded towards end	Medium at the start becomes narrow towards end
/ aɪ/ Cry	Closing Wide	Glide from / **a**/ to / **ɪ** /	Neutral to spread	Wide at the start and then becomes less
/aʊ/ Now	Closing Wide	Glide from / **a**/ to / **ʊ** /	Neutral at the beginning and weekly rounded at the end	Wide at the start and then becomes less
/ɔɪ/ Boy	Closing Wide	Glide from / **ɔ**/ to / **ɪ** /	Open rounded at the start and neutral at the end	Wide at the start and then becomes less
/ɪə/ Dear	Centering Diphthong	Glide from /***ɪ*** / to /*ə*/	Neutral	Narrow at the start and then increases
/eə/ *Fair*	Centering Diphthong	Glide from / ***e*** / to /*ə*/	Neutral	Fairly Wide
/ʊə/ Poor	Centering Diphthong	Glide from / ***ʊ*** / to /*ə*/	Weekly rounded at the beginning, neutral at the end	Medium in the beginning and then increases

Phonology - The Pronunciation of English

"Phonology is essentially the description of the systems and patterns of speech sounds in a language". (George Yule) Phonology is the subfield of linguistics that studies the structure and systematic patterning of sounds in human language.

What is sound? How and where is it produced from? How is it received by the ears? How and why is one sound different from the other? ––questions like these are the subject-matter of Phonology

Difference between Phonetics and Phonology

Phonetics and phonology are the two fields dedicated to the study of human speech sounds and sound structures. Both are concerned with the same subject matter or aspect of language, speech sounds, as the audible result of articulation. We'll discuss each one individually and then compare them side by side, which should clear things up.

Phonetics is about the **physical aspect** of sounds, it studies the production and the perception of sounds, called *phones*. Phonetics has some subcategories, but if not specified, we usually mean the "articulatory phonetics" that is "*the study of the production of speech sounds by the articulatory and vocal tract by the speaker*". Phonetic transcriptions are done using the square brackets, [ ].

(a) Phonetics is the basis for phonological analysis

(b) Phonology analyses the production of all human speech sounds, regardless of language.

(c) Phonetics is the study of human speech sounds

(d) Phonetics studies which sounds are present in a language

(e) Phonetics simply describes the articulatory and acoustic properties of phones (speech sounds)

Phonology is about the **abstract aspect** of sounds and it studies the *phonemes* (phonemic transcriptions adopt the slash / /). Phonology is about establishing what are the phonemes in a given language, i.e. those sounds that can bring a difference in meaning between two words. A phoneme is a phonic segment with a meaning value, for example in minimal pairs: **b**at – **p**at, ha**d** – ha**t**

Phonology is just one of several aspects of language. It is related to other aspects such as phonetics, morphology, syntax.

(a) Phonology is the basis for further work in morphology, syntax, and discourse and orthography design.

(b) Phonology analyses the sound patterns of a particular language by determining which phonetic sounds are significant, and explaining how these sounds are interpreted by the native speaker.

(c) Phonology is the study of how sounds are organised and used in natural languages.

(d) The phonological system of a language includes an inventory of sounds and their features, and pragmatic rules which specify how sounds interact with each other.

(e) Phonology studies how these sounds combine and how they change in combination, as well as which sounds can contrast to produce differences in meaning (phonology describes the phones as allophones of phonemes).

Phoneme

A phoneme is a basic element of a spoken language or dialect, from which words in that language or dialect are analyzed as being built up. The phoneme is defined by the International Phonetic Association as "the smallest segmental unit of sound employed to form meaningful contrasts between utterances".

Within linguistics there are differing views as to exactly what phonemes are and how a given language should be analyzed in phonemic terms. However a phoneme is generally regarded as an abstraction of a set (or equivalence class) of speech sounds (*phones*) which are perceived as equivalent to each other in a given language. For example, in English, the "k" sounds in the words *kit* and *skill* are not identical but they are perceived as the same sound by speakers of the language, and are therefore both considered to represent a single phoneme, /k/. Different speech sounds representing the same phoneme are known as allophones. Thus phonemes are often considered to provide an underlying representation for words, while speech sounds make up the corresponding surface form.

Notation of Phoneme: - Phonemes are conventionally placed between slashes in transcription, whereas speech sounds (phones) are placed between square brackets. Thus /pʊʃ/ represents a sequence of three phonemes /p/, /ʊ/, /ʃ/ (the word *push* in Standard English), while [pʰʊʃ] represents the phonetic sequence of sounds [pʰ] (aspirated "p"), [ʊ], [ʃ] (the usual pronunciation of *push*). The symbols used for particular phonemes are often taken from the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), the same set of symbols that are most commonly used for phones. A phoneme is a sound or a group of different sounds perceived to have the same function by speakers of the language or dialect in question. An example is the English phoneme /k/, which occurs in words such as *cat*, *kit*, *school*, *skill*. Although most native speakers do not notice this, in most English dialects the "c/k" sounds in these words are not identical: in *cat* and *kit* the sound is aspirated, while in *school* and *skill* it is unaspirated. The words, therefore, contain different *speech sounds*, or *phones*, transcribed [kʰ] for the aspirated form, [k] for the unaspirated one. These different sounds are

nonetheless considered to belong to the same phoneme, because if a speaker used one instead of the other, the meaning of the word would not change: using the aspirated form [k^h] in *skill* might sound odd, but the word would still be recognized. By contrast, some other sounds would cause a change in meaning if substituted: for example, substitution of the sound [t] would produce the different word *still*, and that sound must therefore be considered to represent a different phoneme (the phoneme /t/). This shows that in English, [k] and [k^h] are allophones of a single phoneme /k/.

Phone: - It is a speech sound or gesture considered a physical event without regard to its place in the phonology of a language. It is a speech segment that possesses distinct physical or perceptual properties. It is the basic unit revealed via phonetic speech analysis

Allophone: - It is one of a set of multiple possible spoken sounds (or *phones*) used to pronounce a single phoneme. For example, [p^h] (as in *pin*) and [p] (as in *spin*) are allophones for the phoneme /p/ in the English language. Although a phoneme's allophones are all alternative pronunciations for a phoneme, the specific allophone selected in a given situation is often predictable. Changing the allophone used by native speakers for a given phoneme in a specific context usually will not change the meaning of a word but the result may sound non-native or unintelligible. Native speakers of a given language usually perceive one phoneme in their language as a single distinctive sound in that language and are "*both unaware of and even shocked by*" the allophone variations used to pronounce single phonemes.

Assimilation: - It is a common phonological process by which one sound becomes more like a nearby sound. This can occur either within a word or between words. In rapid speech, for example, "handbag" is often pronounced [hæmbæɡ]. As in this example, sound segments typically assimilate to a following sound (this is called regressive or anticipatory assimilation), but they may also assimilate to a preceding one (progressive assimilation). While assimilation most commonly occurs between immediately adjacent sounds, it may occur between sounds separated by others ("assimilation at a distance").

Elision: - Elision is the omission of one or more sounds (such as a vowel, a consonant, or a whole syllable) in a word or phrase, producing a result that is easier for the speaker to pronounce. Sometimes, sounds may be elided for euphonic effect.

In English, elision is often unintentional, giving a result that may in some cases be impressionistically described as "slurred" or "muted." Often, however, the elision is deliberate, as in the use of contractions. Elided elements are often weak syllables or voiceless consonants. The finest examples of what happens in elision are presented by such expressions as Jack and Jill, black and white, high and low, wind and rain and bread and butter. These sound like

[dʒ æk n dʒil] ; [blæk n wait] [hainlðu]; [windnrein] and [brednb^t∂].

Theories of Phonological Analysis

The analysis of an utterance into segmental and suprasegmental features is known as phonemic or phonological analysis. There are several different theories of phonological analysis. Some of these major theories are discussed below,

(a) Structure and System:

One approach is in terms of what are called structure and system. The phonological units (Phonemes or sounds) of a language are grouped together to form the various systems and the arrangements of these units in larger units such as syllables, feet, tone-group, sentence that form the structure of that language. The units that form a system can be replaced by other units to produce different utterances, while the relations between the different units present in an utterance constitute a structure. For instance, the English word sack has one syllable, which is made up of sequence of three phonemes /s/, /ae/ and /k/. The phoneme /s/ can be replaced by other phonemes /b/,/p/, /t/dʒ/. /h/, /l/ to give us different words back, pack, tack, jack, hack, lack. All these items that can be replaced by another at a particular place in a structure are in paradigmatic relationship and form a system. Similarly, /ae/ forms a system with other phonemes /i/, /i:/, /e/, /ei/ that can be used as substitutes to give us other words sick, seek, seek, sake, /k/ also forms a system with the /t/, /d/, /p/, /m/ /ŋ/ that give us the words sat, sad, sap, sam, sang.

The units of phonological analysis have a hierarchy, so that a unit of higher ranks consists of a sequence of one or more occurrences of the next lower rank. For example, in English one or more phonemes make up a syllable; one or more syllables make up a foot (which is the unit of rhythm); one or more feet make up a tone group (which is the unit of intonation); one or more tone groups make up a sentence. Examples of these phonological units are given here:

Phoneme	/k/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /i/, /e/, etc
Syllable	back/bæk/ ago /əigou/ button /b^-tn,/ etc
Foot	The cur/few tolls/the knell/of part/ing day/. Here we have five feet. (/A slanting bar/ represents a foot boundary)
Tone group	// If the 'bride a, grees // the 'marriage is in' January.//. (// represents tone group boundary; 'represents rising tone, and 'falling tone,' accent (strong or stressed syllable.)
Sentence	For example, the sentence given above has two tone groups

(b) Prosodic Analysis:

Prosodic analysis is another aspect of phonology. ***It is concerned with phonological features like aspiration, nasalization, labialization, retroflexion and palatalization***. The study of supra-segmental features like stress, rhythm, intonation, etc. also forms a part of prosodic analysis. Examples of a few prosodic features are given below:

Aspiration	The English word clay /klei/ has an aspirated /k/ in the form of [kh], but the aspiration affects the following /l/ also and devoices it to [1o]. It can therefore be described as /h/ prosody.
Nasalization	The English word sing /siŋ/ has incidental nasalization of the vowel /i/

under the influence of the nasal consonant after it. Nasalization can therefore be described as prosody in this kind of syllable.

Lip-rounding

The English word quiet /kwait/ has lip-rounding for /k/ also under the influence of the following /w/. We have here an example of /w/–– prosody.

Palatalization

The English word key /ki:/ has a palatal instead of a velar /k/ under the influence of the following /i:/. This can be described as /i/–prosody.

Accent

Accent on a particular syllable in a word can be taken as prosody. For example, the English word ago/ə ‘ gou/ has the accent on the second syllable.

Sentence stress, rhythm and intonation are also prosodic features.

(c) Phonemics

Another approach to phonology is based on phonemics, according to which the discovery of the phonemes (the minimal distinctive sound-units) of a language is done by forming minimal pairs (by replacement of one phoneme by another which can bring about a change of meaning). Each phoneme, however, may have slightly different phonetic realizations, called allophones, in different environments. Most phonological theories are based on phonemics.

Some linguists restrict the use of the term ‘phoneme’ to segments of human sounds only, and analyse what are called suprasegmental or prosodic features separately. The most important of the suprasegmental features are: length (syllables and feet), stress, and pitch. Other linguists extend the use of the term ‘phoneme’ to cover all distinctive sound features including levels of stress, levels of pitch, and types of juncture.

(d) Distinctive Features Theory

In the phoneme theory, the phoneme (segment) is the smallest unit of phonology, but in the Distinct Features Theory the phonetic feature is the smallest unit of phonology. Segment theory is linguistically inconvenient. There are no rules in any language which apply to all the sounds. There are a fixed number of features or components which form a basic stockpile from which every language selects phonetic features and combines them in different ways. It is these features which keep a segment distinct or separate from others. That is why they are called the distinctive features.

In distinctive features theory (as different from the notation transcription), the phonetic transcription is simplified and systematized by regarding each sound a set of components, exactly parallel to semantic component. As proposed by Chomsky acoustics and / or articulatory variables can be reduced to a small number of parameters or phonetic features (twenty-seven with multi-values). A distinctive features component, for example for the sounds /t/ and /k/ as in the English word take according to this theory.

In English, for example, the following phonetic features are distinct:

State of Glottis	Voiceless/voiced.
Position of Soft Palate:	Oral/nasal.
Place of Articulation	(a) bilabial/alveolar/velar (b) labiodental/ dental/ alveolar / palato-alveolar
Manner of Articulation	(a) plosive / fricative/ nasal (b) nasal/lateral (c) affricate/fricative
Part of Tongue Raised	front/back
Height of Tongue	Close/between half-close and half-open/between half-open and open/open
lip-position	unrounded/rounded
Stress	stressed/unstressed
Reduction	Reduced vowel/unreduced vowel.
Tone	Falling/rising; low fall/high fall/low rise/high rise/fall rise: or primary/ secondary/ tertiary/ fall-rise.

Morphology and Linguistics

Morphology is the study of morphemes, which are the smallest significant units of grammar. It is a level of structure between the phonological and the syntactic. It is complementary to syntax. ***Morphology is the grammar of words; syntax is the grammar of sentences***. One accounts for the internal structure or form of words; the other describes how these words are put together in sentences.

The English word unkind is made up of two smaller units: "un" and "kind". These are minimal units that cannot be further sub-divided into meaningful units. Such minimal, meaningful units of grammatical description are generally referred to as morphemes. A morpheme is a short segment of language that meets three criteria:

1. It is a word or a part of a word that has meaning.
2. It cannot be divided into smaller meaningful parts without violation of its meaning or without meaningless remainders.
3. It recurs in differing verbal environments with a relatively stable meaning.

The word unlikely has 3 morphemes while the word carpet is a single morpheme. The words car and pet are independent morphemes in themselves. The word carpet has nothing to do with the meaning of car and pet. Carpet is a minimal meaningful unit by itself. Again, the word garbage is a single morpheme while the words garb and age are independent morphemes by themselves. A systematic study of morphemes or how morphemes join to form words is known as morphology.

The definition of the morpheme may not be completely unassailable as will be evident from the discussion that follows, but it is certainly a very satisfying definition applicable to a majority of words in any language. The English word unassailable is made up of three morphemes, un, assail, able, each one of which has a particular meaning distribution and a particular phonological form or shape.

Some Basic Concepts of Morphology

Morpheme

The word is the basic unit which relates the grammar of a language to its vocabulary. Words have internal structure which indicates their grammatical identity (e.g. that the word is plural, or past tense) and their lexical identity (e.g. that the word unhappiness is a noun with negative meaning referring to emotions). Words are composed of morphemes. ***A morpheme is the smallest unit of meaning. Some words consist of just one morpheme; some consist of several.***

We can easily recognise such constructions as **mats, artists, artistic. national, childishness, unmoved, denationalization, highway, footpath** as words. Difficulty arises when we try to define these constructions - but all the same they can be recognised.

They have meaning which is independent of the meaning of other words. They convey the meaning in the same way as the following words: **Sky, water, hill, cousin, mango, walk, sew, autumn and tap.**

But the crucial difference between the first set of examples and the next is that while we can break the items of the first set and still obtain smaller meaningful units we cannot break the items occurring in the second set. If we do so we would be destroying their meaning. Let us see how the items in the first group of examples can be split.

(a)	mat + s	(b)	art + ist	(c)	art + ist + ic
(d)	nation + al	(e)	child + ish + ness	(f)	un + move +d
(f)	de + nation + al + ize + ation	(g)	high + way	(h)	foot + path

After having broken these words we are left with more particles with different meanings. Attempts to break these nine words have not destroyed their meaning. We rather discover that the words are composed of smaller particles. We also see that two types of meaning in such constructions can be identified:

(i) Some particles refer to the external reality. (sky, dog, table, nation, child)

(ii) Others do not do so, but are to be understood in terms of their function within the language.

Words of the former type are known as **content words** and their meaning **as lexical meaning**; while words that are meaningful in terms of their structural significance are called **form words having structural, formal or grammatical meaning.** Thus we can see that the word child is content word whose meaning is referable to the external world and is bound to be destroyed if we try to split it further: ch - ild, chi-Id, chil-d

But after breaking childishness into childish and ness we get two segments whose meanings are independently contained in them. We cannot break -ness; but childish can be split into child and -ish. Again we obtain such particles each one of which possesses meaning. Further attempts to break them will, however, destroy their meaning. We will not get more particles that can either be referred to the external reality or can be construed as having any grammatical function. They are the **minimal meaningful units.** Such a particle is called a ***morpheme***. In the above examples, the particles that we have been able to obtain after breaking the various sequences, are all minimal meaningful parts of the English language. They are minimal since they cannot be broken down further on the basis of meaning. They are meaningful because we can specify the kind of connection they have with the nonlinguistic circumstances in which they are used.

Morpheme is, therefore, the minimal recurring unit of grammatical structure, possessing a distinctive phonemic form, having a grammatical function and may differ in its phonological manifestations.

Morpheme and Syllable: - A single morpheme may be made up of one syllable, more than one syllable, or no syllable at all. Monosyllabic morphemes (those consisting of one syllable) are tin, train, gold, pen, man, cat, dog. But words like station and teacher are

composed of two syllables - sta-tion, tea-cher, Hyperion and introduction contain four syllables; and chloromycetin contain five syllables. These are all single morphemes, though their syllabic composition varies. On the other hand, there are morphemes that can be marked to contain no syllable at all - the plural morpheme /-s/, the past tense morpheme /-d/ are examples of this type. Though they are not syllabic, they are morphemes. In this context, the case of zero allomorph is still more interesting.

Morph: - The concept of morph recognises that a morpheme has a phonetic shape. This phonetic representation is called its morph. The word writer has two morphemes, write and -er. These are realizable in the phonetic shapes as /rait/ and/-∂:/. These are two morphs of the morpheme (or word in this case).

Allomorph: - In our discussion of morpheme we have noted that it sometimes manifests itself in various phonetic shapes or forms. The plural morpheme can be realized as /-s/ or /-z/ or /-iz/ and so on. Similarly, the past tense morpheme can appear as /-d/, /-t/, /-id/, and /-q/. Each of these morphs belongs to the same morpheme. These are called allomorphs.

The plural morpheme in English (which combines with a noun morpheme to form a plural) is represented by three allomorphs /s/, /z/ and /iz/ in different environments (which are phonologically conditioned).

Plural Morpheme

Allomorphs

{e(s)}:

/iz/ in the case of words ending in /s/, /z/, /ò/, / ʒ /, / ʧ/, / ʤ /

e.g. buses / bʌs ɪz /,rouges / ru:ʒ ɪz /

/s/ in the case of words ending in a voiceless consonant (other than ò, s, ʧ)

e.g cats /kæts/, caps /kæps/

/z/ in the case of words ending in voiced sounds (other than /z, ʒ, ʤ /)

e.g boys/ bɔɪz /, bags /bægz/

Similarly, the present tense morpheme {-e(s)} has three allomorphs /s/, /z/ &. /iz/, e.g. packs /pæks/, digs /digz/, washes / wɒʃ ɪz /. The past tense morpheme of English, {-e(d} has also three different (phonologically conditioned) allomorphs /t/, /d/ and /id/. The rule that governs these allomorphs is as follows:

Past Morpheme

{e(d)}

/t/ after morphs ending in voiceless sounds (except /t/)

booked / bʊkt /, pushed / pʊʃt /

/d/ after morphs ending in voiced sounds (except /d/).

loved / lʌvd /, bagged /bægd/

/id/ after morphs ending in /t/ and /d/ wanted /wantid/ wedded /wedid/

The relationship between the terms morph, allomorph and morpheme is similar to that between phone, allophone and phoneme. The term 'morph' means shape.

Any minimal phonetic form that has meaning is a morph. Thus /bʌs/, /ɪz/, /kæp/, /s/, / bæg/, /z/ are all morphs.

Those morphs which belong to the same morpheme are called allomorphs of that morpheme. Thus /s/, /z/ and /iz/ are allomorphs of the plural morpheme {e(s)}. Similarly, a phoneme is a minimal, distinctive unit in the sound system of a language.

A phoneme may sometimes occur in more than one phonetic form called allophones. These phonetic forms have considerable phonetic similarity between them and their phonological function is the same. They, however, never occur in the same phonetic environment and are said to be in complimentary distribution.

Allomorphs, like allophones, are also in complimentary distribution. The phonemes /p/, /t/ and /k/ for example, have two phonetic forms each i.e. [p] and [ph], [t] and [th], [k] and [kh]. Here [p] and [ph] are the allophones of the phoneme /p/.

All the speech sounds (phonemes as well as allophones) are called phones.

It may be noted that in some languages words can generally he segmented into parts (morphs) while it is not so in others. Similarly there are languages in which the morph tends to represent a single minimal grammatical unit (a morpheme) while

Allomorphs of a morpheme may change their phonemic shapes due to two types of conditioning:

(a) Phonological or phonemic conditioning

(b) Morphological conditioning

Phonological Conditioning {Plural Morpheme}

We shall first examine the following sets of words:

Set A		**Set B**		**Set C**	
set	/sets/	beds	/bedz/	roses	/rəuziz/
clips	/klips/	lads	/lædz/	poses	/pəuziz/;
bits	/bits/	cabs	/kæbz/	horses	/ hɔːs ɪz/
bats	/bæts/	clubs	/kl^bz/	advises	/ədvaɪsɪz/
caps	/kæps/	beads	/bi:dz/	judges	/ dʒʌdʒ ɪz/

The pluralizing suffix in set A appears as /s/; in set B, it appears as /z/. This can be explained as due to the occurrence of final sound of the stem which is voiced, or voiceless. In set A words end in the voiceless sounds /t/ and /p/ affecting the plural morpheme which also appears as a voiceless phoneme /-s/. But in set B the stems end in voiced sound and affect the plural morpheme, which becomes /-z/. The phonetic quality of one sound affects the phonetic quality of another occurring in close proximity. The affected sound is phonetically conditioned. Both /-s/ and /-z/ are the allomorphs of the plural morpheme. Their positions cannot be interchanged, i.e., we cannot have /z/ placed in set A and /s/ in set B. These sounds are thus in complementary distribution. In the same way words in set C take the plural morpheme which is phonemically realized as /iz/. These words also show phonological conditioning.

We thus obtain three phonologically conditioned allomorphs of the plural morpheme /s/ ~ /z/ ~ /iz/. Phonological conditioning is predictable.

{Past Tense Morpheme} Morphological Conditioning

The regularity of phonological conditioning is restricted. There are several irregular forms that do not show the predictable direction of morphophonemic changes. We can always explain reasonably why such variant forms as the /t/~/d/~/id/ occur for past tense and /s/~/z/~/iz/ for plural morpheme.

But such explanation is not possible in the case of the plural form of child - children, and sheep - sheep. These forms are not phonologically conditioned, i.e. the proximity of a sound does not affect these forms. “en” is peculiar to children, oxen and brethren. Such changes are said to be due to morphological conditioning.

We shall consider below some major types of morphological conditioning.

Zero Suffix: - Certain words in English do not show any change of form when inflected either for pluralizing or making into past tense form. These singular - plural and present and past tense forms are alike.

Set A (Singular)	Set B (Plural)
Sheep	sheep
deer	deer

cattle	cattle

Set A (Present Tense)	Set B (Past Tense)
cut	cut
cut	put
hit	hit
beat	beat

But we know that set A words are in present tense and that set B words are in the past tense. With this understanding we use the words.

There is a sheep	There are sheep
He cuts	He has cut

We can say that a zero suffix of plural and a zero suffix of the past tense has been added to these forms. The change is not one of overt alteration in the phonemic shape of the morpheme (allomorph). They are said to undergo a zero modification. This is shown by {q} symbol which is called zero allomorph.

Thus, sheep is written as / ʃi:p + q/ and cut is written as / kʌt + q/

Vowel Mutation: - Let us take another example; the plural form of man is men that of woman is women, and louse is lice. In making them plural we see that nothing has been added, but a change in the vowel and diphthong has been made.

/a/ > /e/ /au/ > /ai/

Similarly, for making past tense, we can change the vowels as shown below:

find - found /ai/ > /au/	swim - swam /i/ > /æ/
bring - brought /i/ > /]/	seek - sought /i:/ > / ɔ:/
catch - caught /æ/ > / ɔ:/	feed - fed /i:/ > /e/

These changes too cannot be explained by the process of phonetic change. These are irregular changes and are known as vowel-mutation. Vowel mutation can also be seen in verb-making, adjectivising, noun-making, and so on.

Consonant Change: - Apart from vowel changes, pluralizing is effected by changes in consonants also. Some English words ending in /f/ - leaf life, wife, knife, shelf loaf make their plural by converting /f/ into /v/ and adding /z/. Examples are given below:-

knife /naif/ > knives /naivz/	wolf /wulf/ > wolves /wulvz/

But here too we observe irregularity. Not all words ending in /f/ undergo such changes - proof, roof and reef, to name only three, take /s/ for changing to plural form; while hoof is pluralized both by simply adding /s/ - hoofs and through the process of consonant change - hooves.

In the case of past tense formation also we observe consonant replacement –

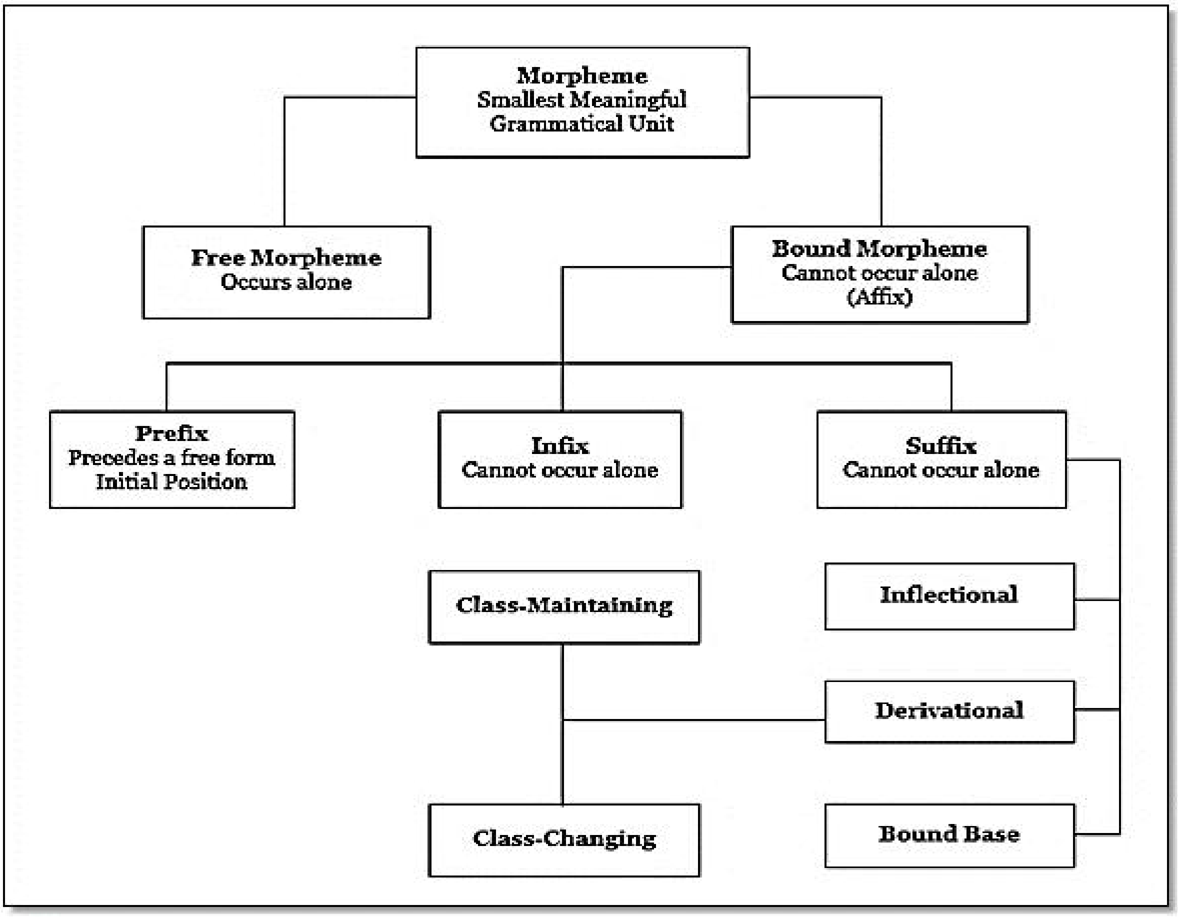
send	- sent	bend	- bent /d/ > /t/
lend	- lent	spend	- spent

The list of different kinds of changes signalling pluralization and past tense formation is fairly long. What is important here is to understand the mechanism of different types of vowel and consonant mutation that operates in such processes.

Suppletion: - In suppletion instead of a partial change in the root (either vowel change or consonant change or addition of s), we see the whole form of the root being replaced by a new -form. So, we see the past tense of "go" is "went", and the comparative of "bad" is "worse", "good" has "better" as comparative, the adjective of "moon" is "lunar", and "sea" ,has "marine" as its adjective; "tooth" is adjectivised as "dental" and "mouth" as oral. What we see in these examples is the complete change in the phonemic shape of the stem, for changing their form classes.

Free Morphemes and Bound Morphemes

Two types of morphemes have been identified on the basis of their occurrence in larger constructions: free form and bound form. **A morpheme that occurs alone, or can stand alone is a free form**. **It does not require the presence of another morpheme; in other words, such a morpheme does not need the support of any other element**. All content words are free forms: house, church, girl, cat, walk, see, red, short, book, water. Some form words are also free forms, always, though, but, never, and, or, if. The meaning of such words is 'contained in their ability to refer to some point in the world outside'.



A second class of morphemes called bound form; **contain elements that must always be attached to some other elements**. **They cannot occur or stand alone**. In words like watery, invisible, reader, possibility, madness, cats, and manly we can identify such morphemic particles as –y, in- , -er, - -ty, -ness, -s, and -ly. Their meaning is in their grammatical functions such as noun-making, verb-forming, pluralizing, adjectivising, and so on. They can be attached to any other free forms of the same form class to construct similar segments. Isolated they do not stand by themselves.

Two types of bound form that are widely used are prefix and suffix. As a class they are known as affixes.

A prefix precedes a free form, a stem or a root. We see these in the following words: uncommon, decentralise, disappoint, and recycle. Un-, de-, dis-, re- are all prefixes. There are many other prefixes. All these are word-formative elements.

A suffix is also a word-formative element - it follows a free form. Examples are sleeveless, temptation, government, activate, darkness, reader. By adding a suffix we can either negativise a word, i.e. hat less, merciless, or change its form class; dark is an adjective, by adding -ness we can change it into noun. -ate and -ide are verb-making particles. They are, therefore, known as grammatical morphemes.

Inflectional and Derivation: - Suffixes are classified on the basis of their function into two categories - derivation and inflection. An **affix that cannot take another affix is**

generally identified as inflectional affix. If we add -s or -ed to present we will get derivative words presents and presented. We cannot add another suffix to it. Inflectional suffixes of this type may create a set of forms of a morpheme within the same form class, usually known as paradigm. Such words are said to be 'inflected'. We can in this way pluralise a noun, speeches, judges and tops, etc.

These words are said to be inflected for pluralising. Similarly nouns can be inflected for making them genitive - teacher's, doctor's, men's, etc. Verbs are inflected for third person singular. Generally, in English, inflectional affixes are suffixes. They define a part of speech, but do not change it - ugly, uglier, ugliest - all the three forms belong to the adjective form class.

Both prefixes and suffixes can be derivational. The form-class of the morphemes may be changed by adding a derivational affix. Globe (N) may become global (Adj), globalize (vb), globalization (N); and so also child (N), childish (Adj), childishly (Adv), childishness (N). Each time a derivational affix is added in the above examples, we see the form-class changing.

A significant feature of the **derivational affix is that other suffixes can be added to it**. One of the functions of derivational affixes has been recognised as that of 'formation of new words' . This is one of its functions. Another function is that they maintain the form-class, that is, the grammatical category is not changed, as is seen as : If we add the prefix un-to certain (Adj.), we do not find the prefix changing the root to another form-class. Uncertain remains as much an adjective as certain is. Similarly, possess (vb) can take a negativising prefix dis- to make an antonym dispossess while retaining its form-class association.

Bound Bases: - Bound bases are those morphemes which serve as roots for derivational forms but which never appear as free forms. In words like conclude and perceive, -clude and –ceive are bound bases.

Structure of Words: - Considered from the point of view of their morpheme constituents, there are mainly three types of words:

Simple Words	They consist of a single free morpheme followed, or not, by an inflectional suffix, e.g. play, plays, stronger.
Complex words:	They consist of a base and a derivational affix, e.g. goodness, enable, boyhood, determination.
Compound words	They consist of two (or more) free stems which are independent words by themselves, e.g. over-ripe, happy-go-lucky, elevator-operator

Categories of Derivational suffixes: - The Derivational suffixes may be broadly divided into two categories: class-maintaining and class -changing.

(a) Class-maintaining: - These suffixes produce a derived form of the same class as the underlying form. They do not change the class of a part of speech. Here are a few examples:

Maintaining Suffi-	Suffix	Word	Class	New word	Class
	-ship	friend	noun	friendship	Noun

	ess-	tiger	noun	tigress	Noun
	ite	Hindu	adjective	Hinduite	adjective

(b) Class-changing Suffixes: - These suffixes produce a derived form of another class. Here are a few examples:

Class-Changing Suffixes	Class Change	Suffix	Word	Class	New word	Class
	Noun to adjective	-ian	India	noun	Indian	Adjective
	Adjectives to Noun	) -ity	able	adjective	ability	Noun
	Nouns to Verbs	-ify	fort	noun	fortify	Verb
	Verbs to Nouns	-er	drive	verb	driver	Noun
	Verbs to Adverb	-fly	sleep	verb	sleepily	Adverb
	Adjectives to Adverbs	-ly	nice	adjective	nicely	adverb

Conversions: - Some words can be used as nouns, verbs, adverbs or adjectives without any change in the form of the word, without the addition of an affix or prefix. This process of derivation is called conversion. Here are some examples:

Light	Switch on the light	Noun
	Light the lamp	Verb
	The luggage is light	Adjective
	Travel light if you must	Adverb
Round	The earth is round like a ball	Adjective
	The principal went on a round	Noun
	You must round all the sharp corners	verb

Miscellaneous conversions

Sentence	Conversion
Please give me two coffees	An uncountable noun used as a countable noun
This instrument is a must for you	A closed system word being used as a noun
I do not like this touch-me-not policy	A phrase being used as an adjective.
I do not believe in any ism bothering the society today	A suffix being used as a noun

In some words of two syllables, change of accent from the first to the second syllable changes a noun/adjective to a verb:

Noun/Adjective	Verb

‘conduct	con’duct
‘subject	sub’ject
‘object	ob’ject
‘present	pre’sent
‘contrast	con’trast

There are some words, in which there is a change in the meanings of words if the final consonant is voiced (either by a change in spellings or without it); for example:

Word	Final sound	Word	Final sound
advice (n.)	/s/	advise (v.)	/z/
thief (n.)	/f/	thieve (v.)	/v/
house (n.)	/s/	house (v.)	/z/

Compound Formation: - Compounds are formed by joining two or more bases. These bases are, in some cases, separated by a hyphen, while in other cases, the hyphen appears to have disappeared with the passage of time. There is no rule governing the presence or absence of the hyphen. Here are some examples of compound words:

Noun + Noun	Motor cycle, hair breadth, goldfish
Noun + Adjective	trustworthy, beauty conscious, duty free
Adjective + Noun	paleface, yellow press, red light
Compounds with verbs/adverbials/verbal nouns	sight-seeing, man-eating, heart-breaking

Blends: - Two words are sometimes clipped and the clippings joined to form a new word e.g. **brunch** from breakfast and lunch, **smog** from smoke and fog, **telecast** from television and broadcast and **motel** from motorists and hotel

Borrowings: -English (or any other language) generally borrows words from other languages with which it comes into contact. English continues to enrich its store of words by such borrowings e.g. **Guru** (from Hindi), **bazaar** (from Persian), Sheikh (from Arabic), **tycoon** (from Japanese) and **Dame** (from French)

Inventions: -New words have to be given to new inventions. Such words (as other words of the language) are arbitrary but in course of time, they come to stay as a part of the language. e.g. X-rays, laser, sputnik, astronaut

Echoism: - Some words are formed by the sounds that suggest their meaning. e.g. clang, whisper, thunder, click, tick, lisp, murmur.

Language, as everybody knows, is dynamic. It continues to acquire new words with the passage of time. Some words also go on disappearing, as the time passes, due to several reasons. Language is open-ended and modifiable.

Syntax and Modern Linguistics

The word syntax has been derived from Ancient Greek meaning ordering together. Syntax is "the study of the principles and processes by which sentences are ordered together in particular language". Thus "**Syntax** is the study of the principles and processes by which sentences are constructed in particular languages. Syntactic investigation of a given language has as its goal the construction of a grammar that can be viewed as a device of some sort for producing the sentences of the language under analysis." Grammar and grammatical analysis include both morphology and syntax. 'Grammar may be divided into two portions: morphology and syntax.

Syntactic Processes

Syntax is the core of the grammar. It is necessary to understand the patterns that underlie the sentences, and the ways and means of linking the constituents and the rules of transforming one kind of structure into another. We shall discuss here some of the major syntactic processes whereby we obtain various syntactic patterns.

Conjoining:- Conjoining is also identified by other terms like 'co-ordination' and 'conjunction'. In this process certain parts of two or more sentences are similar in structure. The coordinators join the sentences. 'This process is possible only when there is a similar relation of constituency' between the segments thus conjoined and the sentences.

Syntactic Structures give us this example:

1. The scene – of the movie – was in Karachi.
2. The scene – of the play – was in Karachi.

Conjoining process seeks 'to obtain the proper relation of constituency', to produce this new sentence.

The scene of the movie and the play was in Karachi

Embedding: - One sentence is included within the other sentence is called embedding. Embedding transformation process embeds the constituent sentence into the matrix (or basic) sentence.

{S1 [S2] S1}

Instead of joining the two sequences of equal status, one sentence becomes part of the larger sentence.

(1) The news	surprised his friends.
	(2) (that) he had got married

Sentence (2) is embedded in sentence (1) and is, therefore, an embedded sentence.

Let us consider another example:

S1	The man was arrested.
S2	The man murdered three persons.

This diagram shows that S2 is subordinate to S1 and, therefore, embedded in it.

There are two major types of embedding:

(a) Nesting (b) self-embedding

In a nesting construction the nested segment is totally enclosed within a matrix. We take another example.

The girl who bought the cosmetics gave money which was borrowed.

In the above example **who bought the cosmetics is nested**. Which was borrowed is not nested as no part of the matrix occurs to right of it. A self-embedded construction is totally enclosed within a construction of the same type (Fowler).

Recursion:- Through this process the same rules may be re-applied 'indefinitely many times within a single derivation'. As has been pointed out earlier, transformationalist believe that a language user has at his disposal an infinite number of sentences. This is chiefly because he can use the 'recursive' process, using the same linguistic device over and over again. This enables us to add any constituent (adjective, for example) repeatedly,

The old man, the little old man, the little poor old man, the clever little poor old man, and so on. 'To prove to anyone who does not believe in the infinity of the number of sentences in a language, we have merely to ask him to give us the largest sentence he can produce and then add another adjective or relative clause to it' (Palmer).

The example cited above is the realization of the NP NP + (S) rule.

The example cited earlier, 'the old man'... can be also be accounted for by a set of rewrite rules.

NP +De + Adj + N

Adj + Adj + N

Adj + Adj + Adj + N

Adj + Adj + Adj + Adj + N

This type of sentence can be expanded without apparent limit, and thus rules can go on being multiplied. As Roger Fowler says, 'we do not need a new rule to extend the sentence each time, just one complex sentence forming rule can be applied over and over again. Recursiveness is a property of complex sentences', and 'a transformational grammar with recursive rules represents a substantial gain in economy over other alternatives'.

Discontinuous Constituent:- Scholars of structural linguistics usually worked with cutting, classifying and labeling elements of language which is the process of IC analysis. Among the difficulties they encountered in following this method was that it was simply not possible to cut into neat segments certain sequences, as the elements that belong together are separated by some other element/s. There is thus a discontinuity in the sequence. Such constituents are known as 'discontinuous constituents'.

A very simple example is the sequence, the finest orator in the world. He sequence the finest naturally goes with in the world. Orator forms the other IC, but it interferes with the former to create 'discontinuity'.

Phrasal verbs produce the most familiar types of discontinuous constructions. We can use in sentences such phrasal verbs as put down, push away, brush off, make up, look up, etc to see how discontinuous constructions are created by them.

He brushed her explanation off
He brushed the dust off his coat.
The mob pushed him away.
The general soon put the uprising down.
She made the whole story up.

In such constructions the adverbs often follow the object, though they belong with the verb. In interrogative sentences the 'discontinuity' process is quite obvious:

Is she coming?
This can be shown by using 'boxes'.

Form-classes

The constituents of a sentence have the inherent lexical meaning as well as the class meaning. An important type of class meaning assigns a particular component occurring in the sentence structure a function meaning. These places or spots are structurally meaningful places in the sentence. What kinds of form can be filled in these places depends on their position.

Ducks	swim
Noun Phrase	Verb Phrase

The most basic dichotomy is between a Noun Phrase and a Verb Phrase. An utterance or a sentence must have these two components. These are also known at another place as the topic and the comment. These are the most common form classes. Any other sequence or sequences that can replace Ducks will play the same structural role as that single word. For example, we can use Two ducks. The two ducks; The two old ducks; or birds; the migratory bird; boys, the boys; the young boys, etc. Similarly, sequences that can replace swim, keeping the same structural relationship to the Noun phrase, are called Verb phrase. Thus we can replace swim with such possible sequences as eat, eat slowly, walk fast, speak, speak loudly, and so on.

Such structural positions are called form classes, and are also referred to as **primary grammatical categories**. In traditional grammar 'the major parts of speech were associated with certain typical syntactic function. The basic primary grammatical categories we have just identified in the sentence Ducks Swim can be shown diagrammatically as follows.

Ducks	Swim
NP	VP

A constituent in English has two types of meaning - a lexical meaning; that can be known by its ability to refer to things outside the language. A dictionary gives us the lexical meaning of words; and a structural or form class-meaning, whose meaning derives from their membership of a form class. Certain words clearly show lexical meaning, chair, table, man,

girl, hair, eyes, so on. In certain words form-class meanings are more dominant, the, of, from, by, since, etc. But there is no word which does not possess form class meaning.

We have already noted that an utterance or sentence can be divided into a Noun Phrase (NP) and a Verb Phrase (VP) by virtue of their having different basic syntactic functions.

Noun Phrase: - What we see in a Noun Phrase is that sequences occurring in this slot are all centered on the same category of word noun. However complex a sequence may be that occurs in this position, if it can be replaced by a single noun, or pronoun, it is called an NP. 'Any Phrase that can function as subject is a noun phrase' (Noel Burton-Roberts). These identifiable actual words that can be isolated by gradually peeling off other words without damaging the sentence structure is a noun in NP. Such words are called Head words. They may be a noun of any type or a pronoun.

S.No	A (Noun Phrase- Subject)	B (Verb Phrase- Predicate)
1	She	resumed her seat
2	My friend	wasted his time
3	The new car	runs smoothly
4	The car that	created problems
5	You	bought yesterday

The sequences occurring in section A are all NP. In the first sentence ''She'' is a pronoun, Head of NP which is a single word constituent (NP). In the second sentence ''my friend'', friend can be identified as noun, ''my'' a possessive pronoun modifies it. Similarly, the ''new car'' shows ''car'' a noun, which is the head. So also in the last sentence. In sentences 2, 3 and 4 if we remove the determiners and modifiers, we will be finally left with a noun that will still be functioning as syntactically relevant function word.

But if we remove the noun ''car'', or ''friend'', the structure of the sentence will suffer and we shall be creating impossible sentences like, my wasted his time, the new runs smoothly. As Noel Burton-Roberts defines it, 'In a phrase containing a modified form the essential centre of the phrase is said to be the Head of the phrase'.

Head words are recognized as constituting an open class. This is a place, or spot, or slot where any word that can function as noun can become the Head word. We may have a sentence like "There are too many ifs and buts in your argument". Ifs and buts function here as nouns, therefore as head words. Head words can function as subject and can occur as complement.

They follow determiners which are closed class words. They show morphological changes for form and class. A single noun can be the Head as well as the NP in a sentence. In Ali reserved his seat, Ali is a noun, a headword and an NP.

<table>
<tr><td>The</td><td>agent</td><td>reserved</td><td>his</td><td>seat.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Subject</td><td colspan="3">Predicate</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Noun Phrase (NP)</td><td colspan="3">Verb Phrase (VP)</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Modifier</td><td rowspan="2">Head</td><td rowspan="2">Head</td><td colspan="2">Modifier</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Noun Phrase (NP)</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Determiner</td><td rowspan="2">Noun</td><td rowspan="2">V (ed)</td><td>Modifier</td><td>Head</td></tr>
<tr><td>Pronoun</td><td>Noun</td></tr>
<tr><td>The</td><td>Agent</td><td>reserved</td><td>his</td><td>seat</td></tr>
</table>

Determiners

Noun head words pattern with a wide range of adjuncts. These adjuncts are labelled determiners and modifiers. The class of determiners is fairly large with many sub-classes. However, we shall here take into account three major sub-classes.

(i) Regular determiners:- Within this class we can identify articles, demonstratives and possessives (also called genitives). The basic determiner is the, the definite article. It precedes a noun or NP1 and demonstrates the nounness of it. It has a particularising role, I know the man; the tree has grown tall; The boys are rowdy, where its meaning is 'before mentioned' and 'already known'. Articles and demonstratives are divided according to the number of the nominal.

Article	**Demonstrative**	**Possessive**
a, an	this	my
q	that	our
the	these	Your
any	those	Her
every		Its
each		Their
some		nom + z3

(Z3 is the symbol for the genitive form N + 's)

Two regular determiners do not occur before a noun. Only one determiner precedes it, showing a relation of mutual exclusiveness. This principle distinguishes determiner from an adjective.

(ii) Pre-determiners:- Pre-determiners co-occur with determiners, normally preceding them:

All the boys
Both these umbrellas
Half Rita's time

If we say all boys the position is occupied by the zero article. Many of the determiners and pre-determiners function like pronouns. In the above example, both predetermines the determiner these which in turn determines umbrellas

(iii) Post-determiners:-Post-determiners follow the determiners and precede the adjectives. While adjectives can 'occur in any order, post-determiners have fixed positions. The following three classes of post-determiners can be recognized.

Ordinals	Cardinals	Superlative/comparative
first	one	more
second	two	most
third	three	fewer
next	many	fewest
lost	few	less
final	several	least

In the examples, the last few days; the first four girls we find that first and last which are pre-determiners occur with few and far. But their order cannot be changed.

Finer distinctions are made and sub-classes recognized within the large group. Absence of an article is marked by q symbol. Such an absence cannot totally be ignored. Its absence gives information of the kind that can be compared to the information given by the determiners. The information could be about indefiniteness. We can thus have

q + tables, the table

q + chair, the chair

Determiners, then, give information about definiteness and indefiniteness, quantity and proportion. Their function is not to modify but to determine a nominal.

(iv) Modification

The term modification suggests the syntactic relation between a headword and the element that is dependent on it. This dependent element may occur either before or after it. When it precedes the H (head) it pre-modifies; when it follows the H, it is said to post-modify. It is a one-way dependency/function.

Let us look at the following construction,

his rather curious look , phrase a

The Head word is preceded by curious, rather and his. We see here the following relationships.

his + phrase b
phrase c + looks
rather + curious

Such structure is called the structure of modification. 'It has the same distributional characteristics as the head constituent (H)'. The boy ran, the young boy ran, He stood tall and straight.

In (A) example the headword (N) is modified by young (Adj.). In (B) the VP has a VS -ran which is the head word of the VP modified by slowly.

In the earlier example curious is modified by rather, a word which shows the extent of curiousness; rather is dependent on curious - it cannot occur all by itself. At the next higher level rather curious specifies look and are, therefore, dependent upon the latter. We can omit the whole phrase rather curious and still have a meaningful sequence his looks as it is the headword and the whole sequence preceding it is dependent upon it.

Most adjectives act as pre-modifiers of nouns.

1. A pretty girl met me.
2. Good people are honest.
3. A tall chimney came down.

Adjectives can be modified by other adjective - a good tall chimney, a small pretty girl.

They can also be modified by degree adverbs like very, rather, quite, too, much.

Nouns as Modifiers: - In a sequence in which two nouns occur, one of them can act as attributive or pre-modifier:

Football match;	Cricket commentary;	film industry;	munitions factory.
(Mod) (N)	(Mod) (N)	(Mod) (N)	(Mod) (N)

The modifier noun can also be proper noun -Delhi conference, Geneva convention, cardinal numerals (one, two, three), the ordinal numerals, (first, second, third...) and general ordinals (next, last, other) can also function as pre-modifiers.

Let us now look at the following examples.

A	B
the faded scene	the crumbling cake
a forgotten valley	the flying bird
remembered moments	the moving train

The phrases in set A have perfect participle forms faded, forgotten, remembered, they appeal to meaning by referring to valley that has been forgotten, the scene that faded and the moments that are remembered. They modify the noun-head. Similarly, the examples in set B show progressive participle as modifying element for cake, bird, and train. Obviously these in turn can be pre-modified in different ways.

Post-modification:- In this type of modification the modifiers follow the item they modify.

The men injured were flown to Karachi.
The houses built recently have shown cracks.

The words injured and built are post-modifiers following the noun heads men and houses. In fact, we can see that these modifiers can be regarded as '**reduced relative clauses'** so we can expand them in the manner shown below.

The men (Who were) injured were flown to Karachi.
The houses (that were) built recently have shown cracks.

There are some phrases that show adjectives with special meaning - Secretary General, president elect, court martial, attorney general, heir apparent, etc.

Verb Phrase

In the example cited earlier, Ducks swim, we have labelled swim as verb phrase. It is the second of the two immediate constituents. These are called predicates and embody 'comment' on the 'topic'. Predicates contain a verb which optionally may be modified or complemented. These verbs are the Headword of the VP. Look at the following sentence:

The boys are moving away.

In the above example 'the boys' is a noun phrase with a noun as its centre (Head) and 'are moving away' is a verb phrase with moving as its centre.

A verb phrase contains a **verb group** (Vgp) which consists of a main verb that may be optionally modified by other verbs known as auxiliary verbs. The simplest kind of VP is one-word construction with only a Head which is also a verb group (Vgp).

In the sentence

He is walking.

'He' is NP and 'is waking is VP' which consists of Vgp made up of an auxiliary verb and the main verb walking.

Main verbs show morphological possibilities - they can be inflected in the following manner.

Walks	Walking	Walked
Swims	Swimming	Swam

Complementation: - A verb phrase may or may not contain a noun phrase. The occurrence of an NP is one of complementation. A relation of mutual dependency exists between a Vgp and an NP in which Vgp acts as governor. Thus we can see in this example,

We cannot omit the NP from the VP. Similarly, we cannot do without caught. Both

* He caught and

and * He those flies are unacceptable

Such verbs are called monotransitive or simply transitive. We shall discuss this process later on. It is not necessary that all verb groups should be followed by an NP. In our example above, if we replace caught with slept, we must drop the NP to have such a grammatically acceptable construction as

He slept

We cannot construct a sentence in this case which has a Vgp followed by an NP. We shall have an incorrect sentence if we do so such as

* He slept those flies or

or

* He looked those flies

Verbs that are followed by an NP are called transitive verbs; without such an NP they are known as intransitive verbs. Appear, disappear, look, feel, go, come, etc. are some examples of intransitive verbs. However, these verbs can be followed by adverbs of various types. He appeared suddenly, He appeared on the scene; or they may occur without them.

But this is not part of the complementation as the sense of the sentence is complete without it. Rather, it is a modifier in VP. VPs can include PP (on the scene, for instance) as optional modification.

Verb Group Classified

Verb group can be sub-classified into six types according to what occurs after it.

(i) Monotransitive verb group (or Vgp):- As we have already seen, a monotransitive Vgp needs one NP as its complement. This NP functions as its direct object, for example : deer is the NP in the VP which complements the transitive verb saw. Pronouns functioning in this place assume specific forms which are called objective case (accusative). The NP complementing a Vgp is called the, direct object.

(ii) Ditransitive:- This type of Vgp takes two NP complementations. Example,

a. She sent me[1] a message[2]
b. John gave Jill[1] a car[2]
c. Jill bought John[1] a candy[2]

Words marked I are indirect object and those marked 2 are direct object. Both the NPs are governed by the Vgp sent, gave and bought in. We can also write these sentences in the following manner.

a. She sent a message to me.
b. John gave a car to Jill.
c. Jill bought a candy for John.

The indirect object, in these examples appears as prepositional phrase following a direct object. Such PPs are introduced by to or for. PPs of this type are part of the complementation of the **intransitive** verb.

(iii) Intensive:- Either a single Adj. Phrase or an NP or a PP can complement an intensive verb group.

She became a doctor (NP)
John is being rather generous (AP)
Jill must be in the class room (AP)

We must note here that in the above examples no second person is mentioned. It is different from monotransitive Vgp. complementation where something apart from the subject is mentioned (i.e. she saw me). The NP, AP and the PP can be said to be 'predicative', and also 'complement' which' distinguish it from 'object'. The following examples make it clear.

(a) Ramzan turned pale.
(b) Ramzan turned the doorknobs.
(c) She felt sad.
(d) She felt spider on her hand.

Examples (a) and (b) show intensifying Vgp taking a subject predication, an AP, since they characterize the subject. In (b) and (d) VP has a complementation which gives information about something other than subject.

Complex Transitive

Here we see a combination of the monotransitive with intensive complementation: complex transitives are followed by an NP (Dir. obj.) and an NP, an AP, or a PP (predicative).

(a) They will make me their representative (NP)
(b) I found his joke extremely unpleasant (AP)
(c) Jill is putting the basket under the table (PP)

While in an intensive Vgp construction; the predicative characterises the subject (i.e. he became a doctor), in the complex transitive constructions the predicative refers to the direct object: She will be his wife. Such complementation is called object predicate.

Prepositional

He glanced at the elephant
Jack referred to the old book.

In the above sentences a VP contains a PP which complements the Vgp. Such complements are known as prepositional complements.

Adverbials

Also known as adjunct adverbials, this is a large class expressing a wide range of ideas like manner, means, purpose, reason, place, time.

Adverb, or Adverb Phrase denotes a category; Adverbial denotes function.

a. So apart from functioning as adverbial, adverb has other functions too like modifying an adjective as in this example.

She is extremely beautiful

b. It is not just adverbs that function as adverbials, other categories can also function as adverbials, i.e., PPs and NPs. Adverbial Adverbs

Function Prepositional Phrases Noun Phrases

Adjuncts appearing in the VP modify the segment Vgp + NP, not just the Vgp alone. Let us look at the following examples :

The PP adjunct in the garage characterises the verb group (Vgp) put hi car as a whole not just the NP (his car).

Pre-verbs

It is a sub-class of adverbs, which occurs after ‘the first auxiliary Vb almost, ever, always, seldom, hardly, rarely, etc.

Ramzan is always in a hurry
Rina has never read a novel
I can hardly understand it

Time adverbs: We can note various notions of time expressed by these adverbials, in the following examples:

i. He came to see me again
ii. We saw him in Karachi last year

iii. Ramzan will leave at 8 o'clock

The adverbials in these examples indicate a point or period of time. So also now, then, etc. Other adverbials indicate the point of time from which the period can be measured.

Recently I saw an old film.
Once I saw an old film

Time duration is indicated in the following manner :

He studied all night long
We had been moving since last Sunday

Frequency is suggested by adverbials like regularly, everyday, often, seldom, usually, twice, never, soon.

He regularly visits the library
Take the tablet twice a day
I sometimes feel giddy

The following examples show PP functioning as adverbials.

She has spoken about it on several occasions
He has not seen me in recent times

Degree Adverbs: Effect can be underscored by putting a degree adverbial in the VP of a sentence. The result is lowering or hightening of effect.

He will certainly agree
We nearly fell off the ladder
I much prefer to stay alone

Among others we can note definitely, thoroughly, all but, rather, really, entirely, scarcely, hardly, simply as degree adverbs.

Place adverbs: As is obvious, these adverbs indicate the place.

He stood on the hill
Roberts fell in the bathroom
He studies in the college

Mobility of the Adverbials

A high level of mobility is observed in the adverbials. They can be moved around somewhat freely, and do not necessarily occur only in a position after the Vgp and its complement. In fact we can shift a PP around in a sentence to see if it functions as an adverbial or as a complement.

He arranged everything cleverly
He cleverly arranged everything
Cleverly he arranged everything
He arranged cleverly everything

We can experiment with other adverbs in this manner.

Phrasal verbs :

Phrasal verbs consist of the elements that also comprise some PPs. Apparently they look alike.

1. a. He took down the dictation.
   b. He took me down the stairs.
2. a. I called up the man.
   b. I called up the balcony.

In the set 1, and 2, a. shows a phrasal verb, while b. shows a verb plus an adverb.

In a. down the dictation does not make sense; took down form a unit, a phrasal verb. In b. down the stairs makes sense. Similarly, in set 2 up the man fails to carry sense, but up the balcony does. Though these segments, call up and take down look alike, they belong to different categories and have different functions. We can distinguish them from call off put down, hand over, give up, give in and a whole multitude of other phrasal verbs.

Phrasal verbs may consist of more than one element, but all the units function together as one-word verb group. It consists of Vb + particle.

An important feature of it is that it can appear as discontinous form -

NP as adverbial

Certain noun phrases function as adverbials.

He arrived last week
She left day before yesterday
We had seen it three years ago

Non-finite clause as adverbial

All the three types of non-finite clauses.

1. an infinitive
2. a progressive participle (-ing type)
3. a perfect participle (-ed type)

can function as adverbials

1. An infinitive functioning as adverbial is shown below :

He works to earn his bread
Ramzan came to meet his friend

We went there to spend the vacation

2. A progressive participle functioning as adverbial is shown below :

He felt satisfied, having talked to us

Entering the room, he collapsed

3. We can see the perfect participle functioning as adverbials in the following examples.

The work done, he left the place.
Not satisfied, we quit the office.
Forgotten, the book lay there for years.

Sentence Adverbials:- This is a class of adverbial formation that is not strictly integrated in the structure of the sentence. Also known as Disjuncts, these constituents represent some sort of comment from the speaker and so are peripheral to the structure of the sentence. Let us look at these examples:

a. (i) She upsets everything between you and me
(ii) She upsets everything, between you and me
b. (i) He admitted everything frankly
(ii) He admitted everything, frankly

In the (i) sentence of both the sets the sequence between you and me and frankly are adjuncts. In (ii) sentences, on the other hand, these same sequences function as disjuncts, denoting what the speaker has to say, and not how she upsets or he admitted, or the manner of these actions. These are expressed in sentence i. of both the sets.

Disjuncts are loosely attached to the sentence structure and can also be placed in the initial, middle or final positions. In writing disjuncts are shown by a comma, while in speaking a distinct intonation movement marks them. Structurally, like other adjuncts, disjuncts or sentence adverbials can appear as

(i)	A prepositional phrase	in all honesty
(ii)	An infinite clause	to be honest
(iii)	A progressive participle	honestly speaking
(iv)	A perfect participle	put honestly
(v)	A finite verb clause	if I can speak honestly

Auxiliary Verb Group:- We must keep in mind that the verb group (Vgp) which is a constituent of the VP has main verb (lexical verb) as its head. This optionally takes the verb modifier auxiliary verb. The function of the auxiliary verb is to modify the lexical (maim) verb, while the number of the lexical verbs is very large, infinitely large; the auxiliary verbs are a restricted set of morphemes forming a closed system. These are placed before the main verb, when an auxiliary verb combines with the main verb to form a verb group, we get a complex verb group. But when a single verb forms the verb group, we have simple verb group. Such simple Vgps consist of main verbs only.

He talks rapidly
I met some guests
She went there
They cracked soon enough

Finite Verbs are those that are tensed. A sentence must contain a finite Vgp.

Work	Worked	Working
leave	left	leaving
eat	ate	eating

Non-finite verbs are not tensed; participles, gerunds,-infinitives are types of non-finite Vgps.

Finite verb also changes its forms according to the number and person of the subject NP.

She	goes
They	go
It	cracks
These	crack

This kind of relationship is known as subject-verb agreement or concord. **Auxiliary verbs are classified into Primary auxiliary and the modal auxiliary**. In the former we find the verbs do, have, be, with their variant forms - have, has, had, having, do, doing, done, be, been, being, is, are, was, were, etc.

In modal auxiliaries we find can, could, may, might, must, shall, should, will, would, need, dare, used to, ought to. **Auxiliary verbs also function as main verbs**, i.e. they constitute the single-verb Vgp. **Modals are not tensed**, nor do they show subject-verb agreement; their form is always that of the present tense.

I can go; She must read; They will win, and so on.
Even the verb that follows the modal shows the basic stem form.

An auxiliary verb having the perfect aspect modifies the main verb following it.

has
have
had MV + perfect

The changed form of the **MVb is called perfect participle**. For progressive aspect we require auxiliary verb be, followed by a main verb that takes -ing.

He is running; They were eating; He was writing.

Passivisation:- Auxiliary verbs play a very important role in a kind of transformation process known as passivisation. This affects the whole sentence. For this we must switch the positions of subject and object. Subject becomes a PP and passive Vgp is introduced.

The Vgp that creates passive voice sentences must contain be verb or their different forms.

Active	Passive
build/built	is/was built
is/was building	is/was being built
has built	has been built
will build	will be built

The forms taken by the main verb after the passive auxiliary verb is the passive participle form. Its form and that of the perfect participle is the same (built).

The Difference between Syntax and Morphology

The difference between syntax and morphology is that ***syntax deals with the structure of sentences and morphology deals with the structure of words.*** In any language, rules exist that guide the way that words are put together. These are the rules of syntax. Morphology is the study of how words are formed and understood within a language. ***Both syntax and morphology are related to how meaning is produced with language.***

Syntax is a concept that governs the structure of sentences. The order in which words are put together has a bearing on the meaning of a sentence as a whole. Syntax rules must be followed in order for a sentence to be grammatically correct and to make sense to speakers of a language. It is what dictates things such as the order of the subject and verb, and how adjectives and adverbs are used.

Morphology is the study of morphemes, which are the smallest unit of meaning in a language. A morpheme can be one whole word or a prefix or suffix that is understood to change the meaning of the word and therefore takes on meaning itself. Morphology includes the concepts of inflection and derivation, which allow words to be made plural or for the tense of a word to be changed. ***The study of morphology attempts to understand how people use and understand the way that words work, in an attempt to understand the difference that one morpheme makes to many words and how words relate to each other.***

Syntax and morphology are both important to the way that people derive meaning from language, but they are different in that syntax refers to the order and use of words, and morphology refers to the parts of words that create meaning. For example, it is possible to create a sentence that is grammatically correct, but that makes no sense to a speaker of the language. This is possible because syntax only governs the order of a sentence and not what the words in it mean. On the other hand, a combination of words may make sense when used together, but lose their meaning when rearranged in a way that violates the rules of syntax. ***Syntax and morphology are different but are dependent on each other.***

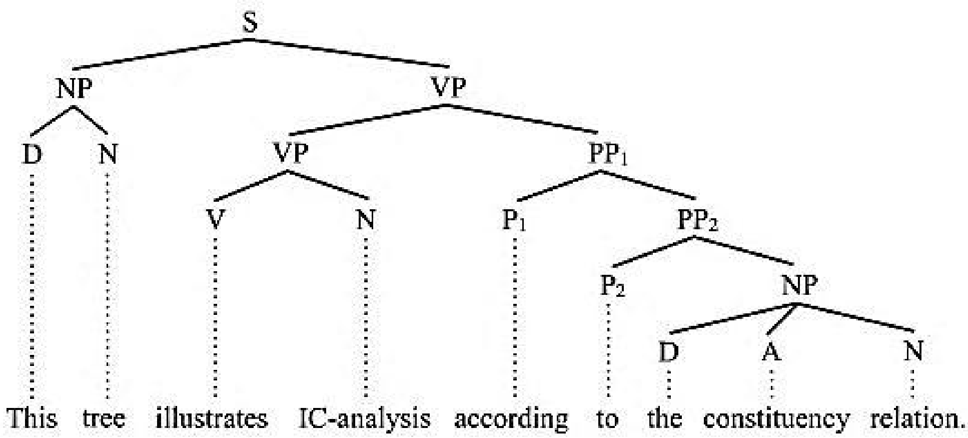
Systems of Syntactic Analysis

Immediate Constituent Analysis

Immediate constituent analysis or IC analysis is a method of sentence analysis that was first mentioned by Leonard Bloomfield and developed further by Rulon Wells. The process reached a full blown strategy for analyzing sentence structure in the early works of Noam Chomsky. The practice is now widespread. Most tree structures employed to represent the syntactic structure of sentences are products of some form of IC-analysis. The process and result of IC-analysis can, however, vary greatly based upon whether one chooses the constituency relation of phrase structure grammars (= constituency grammars) or the dependency relation of dependency grammars as the underlying principle that organizes constituents into hierarchical structures.

IC-analysis in phrase structure grammars

Given a phrase structure grammar (= constituency grammar), IC-analysis divides up a sentence into major parts or immediate constituents, and these constituents are in turn divided into further immediate constituents. The process continues until irreducible constituents are reached, i.e., until each constituent consists of only a word or a meaningful part of a word. The end result of IC-analysis is often presented in a visual diagrammatic form that reveals the hierarchical immediate constituent structure of the sentence at hand. These diagrams are usually trees. For example:



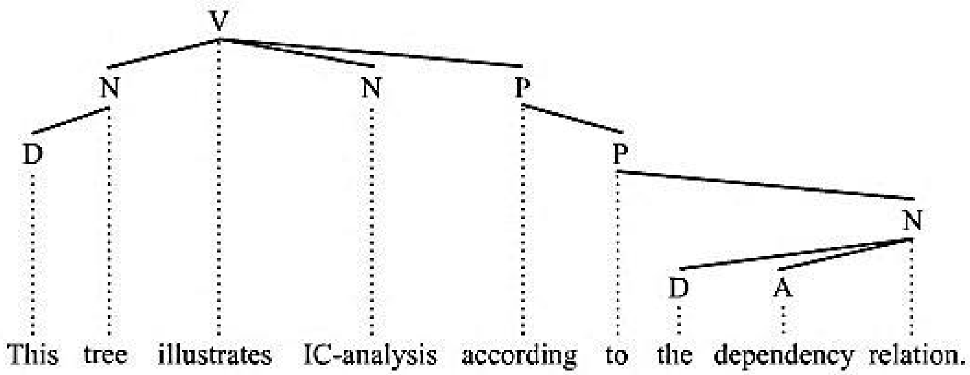
This tree illustrates the manner in which the entire sentence is divided first into the two immediate constituents ***this tree*** and ***illustrates IC-analysis according to the constituency relation***; these two constituents are further divided into the immediate constituents ***this*** and ***tree***, and ***illustrates IC-analysis and according to the constituency relation***; and so on.

An important aspect of IC-analysis in phrase structure grammars is that each individual word is a constituent by definition. The process of IC-analysis always ends when the smallest constituents are reached, which are often words (although the analysis can also be extended into the words to acknowledge the manner in which words are structured). The process is,

however, much different in dependency grammars, since many individual words do not end up as constituents in dependency grammars.

IC-Analysis in Dependency Grammars

IC-analysis is much different in dependency grammars. Since dependency grammars view the finite verb as the root of all sentence structure, they cannot and do not acknowledge the initial binary subject-predicate division of the clause associated with phrase structure grammars. What this means for the general understanding of constituent structure is that dependency grammars do not acknowledge a finite verb phrase (VP) constituent and many individual words also do not qualify as constituents, which means in turn that they will not show up as constituents in the IC-analysis. Thus in the example sentence ***"This tree illustrates IC-analysis according to the dependency relation"***, many of the phrase structure grammar constituents do not qualify as dependency grammar constituents:



This IC-analysis does not view the finite verb phrase ***illustrates IC-analysis according to the dependency relation*** nor the individual **words tree,** illustrates, **according, to**, and ***relation*** as constituents.

While the structures that IC-analysis identifies for dependency and constituency grammars differ in significant ways, as the two trees just produced illustrate, both views of sentence structure are acknowledging constituents. The constituent is defined in a theory-neutral manner: ***A given word/node plus all the words/nodes that that word/node dominates.*** This definition is neutral with respect to the dependency vs. constituency distinction. It allows one to compare the IC-analyses across the two types of structure. A constituent is always a complete tree or a complete sub-tree of a tree, regardless of whether the tree at hand is a constituency or a dependency tree.

Phrase Structure Grammar

There are three distinctive periods of development in the theory of constituent structure. Bloomfield only introduced notion and explained it by means of example. His followers notably Eugene, Nida, Rulon Wells, Zells Harris, formulated the principles of constituent analysis in greater detail and replaced Bloomfield's somewhat vague reference to `taking account of the meanings, with explicitly distributional criteria'. Finally, in the last few years,

the theory of constituent structure has been formalized and subjected to rigor by Chomsky and other linguists and has been called `Phrase Structure Grammar'.

Once we start to use labels, we have clearly departed from simple analysis and are undertaking analysis somewhat similar to traditional phrasing, the division of sentences into already established grammatical elements. This kind of analysis is today usually called `phrase structure grammar'. It shows some of the weaknesses of the simple IC analysis. There are sophisticated versions of phrase structure grammars. The three best known are `Scale and Category grammar' associated with the name of Michael Halliday in London University, `Tagmemics' associated with the name of Kenneth Pike of Michigan, and `Stratificational grammar' associated with Sidney Lamb of Yale.

Thus, phrase structure grammar is an alternative way of expressing the information found in a tree diagram by means of `re-write' rules. In this model the linguist formalizes the grammar by means of generative rules which explicitly assign the correct constituent structure to sentences. Such systems are called simple `phrase structure grammars'. This model of grammar shows not only the terminal elements or constituents of a linear structure but also specifies the subunits and the level at which these units form natural groups. So the linguist is her interested in

1. The pattern underlying the sentence and the constituents; and in

2. The syntactic devices used to link the constituents together, and the ways in which various parts relate to one another.

Without the axiom, there are bound to be an unlimited number of rules. This implies that we can neither formulate nor write down such rules in one lift time which rules out the possibility of someone using this grammar to master a language. The fact that we learn a language by the time we are three or four years old refutes such an implication and compels us to believe that the rules of a grammar have got to be finite and not infinite.

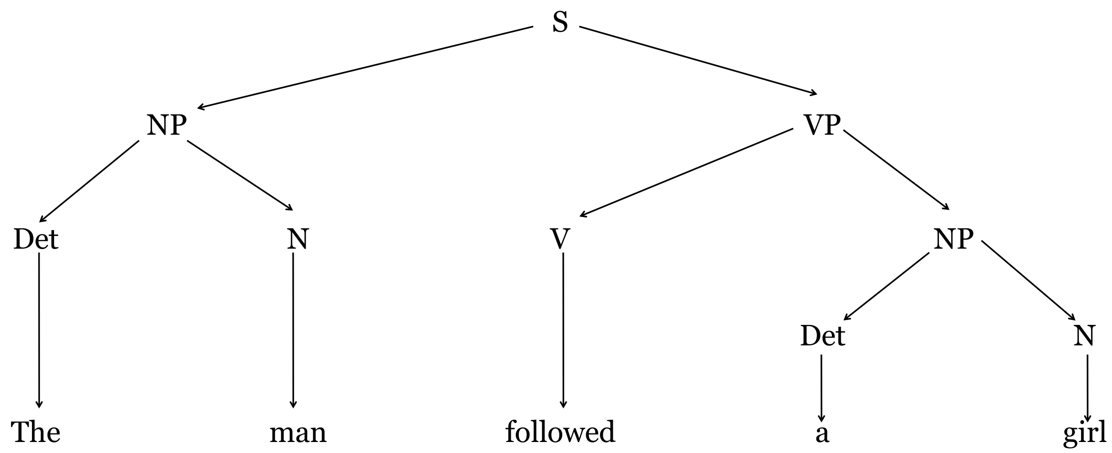
Phrase structure rules of the generative grammar are an amalgamation of the subject-predicate and parsing systems of the traditional grammars and the IC analysis of the structural grammar. They are framed to derive a `kernel' sentence (in the Syntactic Structures, Chomsky 1957), or `underlying (deep) strings (in the Aspects, Chomsky 1965). These rules define basic grammatical relations that function in the deep structure.

They also make explicit the domination of constituent over the other. In short, they make explicit the universal conditions that define `human language'.

The phrase structure of a sentence is generally represented by a tree diagram. This representation of the phrase structure of a sentence is known as its `phrase marker' or `P marker' for short. The points that are joined by the lines or branches are called `Nodes'. Each of the nodes, except those on the bottom line (which are the terminal nodes) is given a label that represents a grammatically definable constituent - N, V, NP, VP, etc. where one mode is higher than another and joined to it by branches, it is said to `Dominate' it, if it is placed immediately above it and joined by a single line, it `Immediately' dominates it.

`Dominance' then shows how a larger constituent may consist of one or more constituents of a smaller kind. It is also important to note that the tree structure preserves the linear order of the constituents, just as plain IC analysis does. The first noun phrase precedes the verb phrase, the verb precedes the second noun phrase. The determiner precedes the noun. `Precedence' thus like `Dominance' is clearly shown in the tree diagram.

The sentence "***the man followed a girl"*** will be represented by a tree diagram as



Labeled bracketing and phrase structure trees provide much more information than IC analysis, but they still do not state, except by implication, how new sentences can be generated. This can be done with the use of `phrase structure rules' (PS rules). The tree structure of the sentence given in the example can be generated by six rules.

1. S-----NP------VP

2. VP----V--------NP

3. NP----DET-----N

4. V---------Followed

5. DET-------the, a

6. N----------man, girl

These rules will not generate only the one sentence handled in the tree diagram - `The man followed a girl'. Since both `the' and `a' are shown as determiners and both `man' and `girl' as nouns, the rules permit us to permute the determiners in each determiner position and the two nouns in each noun position and in fact, to generate no less than sixteen different sentences including, for instance:

A girl followed the man.
The girl followed a man.
A girl followed a man.

The phrase structure rule can generate longer sentences also.

Limitations of Phrase Structure Grammar

A phrase structure grammar is essentially a grammar of segmentation and categorization; it is a taxonomic model - a grammar of lists, an inventory of elements, and of class of sequences of elements. Although it is very strong in giving structural description of the language, yet it is deficient in generative capacity. It is incapable of accounting for all the intentions of native speakers. It fails to disambiguate all the ambiguities and understand all the synonymies.

The processes that pose problems to PS grammar are:

1. Ambiguities
2. Synonymies
3. Permutations
4. Discontinuous constituents (e.g. particles)
5. Remote relationship (e.g. those of cases)
6. Concord phenomena
7. Co-ordination.

Despite its rules of inference, binarity and irreflexibility, etc. a PS grammar runs into difficulties in describing syntactic structures of questions, negatives, passives, relatives, etc. easily. It fails to capture the deep meaning. It cannot discover the crucial notions, nor can it prevent the assignment of false, ungrammatical structure.

PS rules are incapable of - except by having recourse to very arbitrary solutions - of accounting for the multiplicity of relations existing either between elements in the same sentence, or between different sentences. For example:

1. The police diverted the traffic.
2. The traffic was diverted by the police.
3. The traffic was diverted by a country road.

PS rules fail to show the relationship that connects 1 to 2. In sentence 2 `by the police' will be shown as a prepositional phrase consisting of a preposition, a determiner and a noun, and in sentence 3 `by a country road' too will be shown as a prepositional phrase (prep + NP). Thus, it would ignore semantic considerations and case relations.

PS grammar does not have the precision, simplicity, elegance, power, insight, and competence of the TG grammar. It would be very complex and cumbersome and clumsy with so many constraints.

Transformational Grammar

Transformational grammar is a form of language analysis that establishes a relationship with the different elements in the sentence of a language and makes use of rules or transformations to recognize these relationships.

Basic concepts of Transformational Grammar

Transformational grammar which is usually generative grammar describes a language with the help of transformational rules. It involves logical reasoning to understand fully the meaning of the selected words. As such **transformational grammar** goes a step ahead of *structural grammar* which focuses more on the sentence structures used for communication. Apart from the use of correct sentence structure, **transformational grammar** analyses the words with reference to its underlying thoughts. Transformational grammar employs most of the linguistic tools such as syntax and context to explore the possible meanings of words.

Architect of Transformational Grammar

Transformational Grammar also known as Transformational Generative Grammar (TGG) refers to the theory of generative grammar of a natural language, developed by Chomsky. **Transformational grammar** is basically a theory to understand the processing of grammatical knowledge in the human brain. Noam Chomsky, the U.S. linguist, was the main propagator of transformational grammar in the 1960's.His theory opposed the earlier theories of structuralism by rejecting the idea that each language is different fro the other. In fact transformational grammar analyses language on the basis of certain universal tenets in languages.

Deep Structure and Surface Structure of Transformational Grammar

According to Chomskyan theory, **transformational grammar** involves two levels to represent the structure of sentences known as the *"deep structure"* and the *"surface structure"*. The *"deep structure"* implies a more abstract form underlying the structure of a sentence. It is represented by a *"phrase structure tree"* in which the abstract relations between words and phrases of a sentence are depicted in a *"hierarchical tree diagram"*. The *"surface structure"* refers to the actual form of the structure of a sentence used. Besides the two levels of sentence structure, transformational grammar consists of a body of formal rules to enable transforming deep structures to surface structures.

Phrase Structure Tree in Transformational Grammar

A phrase structure tree in **transformational grammar** is a diagrammatic representation of sentences distinguished by their syntactic characteristics. Thus we have verb phrases (VP), noun phrases (NP), prepositional phrases (PP) and so on. Most of the sentence structures in a language are governed by phrase structure rules. For example, sentences in English are governed by the rule that they should contain a Noun Phrase (NP) and a Verb Phrase (VP)

Transformational Grammar

Transformational grammar is used routinely to understand the grouping of words in a particular context. For example look at the sentences, *“John wrote a poem on the spring season”* and *“A poem on the spring season was written by John”*. According to Chomsky these sentences originate from a deeper and more abstract grammatical structure. **Transformational grammar** explains how actual sentences evolve by manipulating the common form of sentence structures. A number of different theories have since evolved but they are all based on the Chomsky’s original theory of **transformational grammar**.

Generative Grammar

Generative Grammar is a linguistic theory which describes a set of rules to use sequence of words properly to form grammatical sentences. The Generative grammar thus includes the studying particular rules in relation to the syntax and morphology of sentences in a language. Generative grammar is the basis of the study of different grammars such as transformational grammar, tree-adjoining grammar, relational grammar, categorical grammar among others.

Chomsky's ideas on Generative Grammar

Generative grammar exists in different forms and includes transformational grammar basically developed by Noam Chomsky, the U.S. linguist in the mid-1950s. His theory opposed the earlier theories of structuralism by rejecting the idea that each language is different from the other. In fact transformational grammar analyses language on the basis of certain universal tenets in languages. Further the Chomskyan tradition has resulted in specific transformational grammar, influenced greatly by his Minimalist Program. There is no agreement by Linguists on the kind of generative grammar that could be used as the best model to describe natural languages.

Basic concepts of Generative Grammar

Generative grammar sets forth the rules to recognize grammatical sentences in a language and differentiate them from improper sequence of words or ungrammatical sentences in the same language. Besides, Generative grammar outlines the syntactic analysis or structural description for the grammatical sentences of the language which are more precise than the analysis of traditional grammar in terms of parts of speech.

The rules of **generative grammar** focus on the different components of the language such as syntax, semantics, phonology and morphology. The sentence is represented as a tree having branches denoting the subordinate and superordinate elements rather than just a sequence of words. For example, the sentence, *“The cat ate the mouse”* would have the branches of a *noun phrase* (The cat) and *verb phrase*(ate the mouse) with the branch of *noun phrase* further being divided into the branches of a *determiner*(the) and *noun*(cat) and the *verb phrase* consisting of the *verb*(ate) and the *noun phrase*[*determiner*(the) and *noun* (mouse)].

Relation between Transformational and Generative Grammar

Transformational Grammar is looked upon as one of the approach to **generative grammar** which describes a language with the help of transformational rules. It involves logical reasoning to understand fully the meaning of the selected words. As such transformational grammar goes a step ahead of structural grammar which focuses more on the sentence structures used for communication. Apart from the use of correct sentence structure, transformational grammar analyses the words with reference to its underlying thoughts. Transformational grammar employs most of the linguistic tools such as syntax and context to explore the possible meanings of words.

Use of Generative Grammar

Generative grammar is more of an attempt to formalize the implicit rules that a person uses while speaking his native language. It is due to this inate language rules present I human beings that enables them to learn their native language with minimum effort and time. The rules of **generative grammar** may appear to be useful only in language studies but the truth is that they have been successfully applied even in the studies on music. Notable musicians such Schenkerian, Fred Lerdahl and Mark Steedman have used the ideas of **generative grammar** to analyze studies in music theory.

Semantics and Theories of Semantics

Semantics is the study of meaning in language. We know that language is used to express meanings which can be understood by others. But meanings exist in our minds and we can express what is in our minds through the spoken and written forms of language (as well as through gestures, action etc.).

The sound patterns of language are studied at the level of phonology and the organisation of words and sentences is studied at the level of morphology and syntax. These are in turn organised in such a way that we can convey meaningful messages or receive and understand messages. 'How is language organised in order to be meaningful?' This is the question we ask and attempt to answer at the level of semantics. Semantics is that level of linguistic analysis where meaning is analysed. It is the most abstract level of linguistic analysis, since we cannot see or observe meaning as we can observe and record sounds. Meaning is related very closely to the human capacity to think logically and to understand. So when we try to analyse meaning, we are trying to analyse our own capacity to think and understand, our own ability to create meaning. Semantics concerns itself with 'giving a systematic account of the nature of meaning' (Leech).

What is Meaning?

Philosophers have puzzled over this question for over 2000 years. Their thinking begins from the question of the relationship between words and the objects which words represent. For example, we may ask: What is the meaning of the word 'cow'? One answer would be that it refers to an animal who has certain properties that distinguish it from other animals, who are called by other names. Where do these names come from and why does the word 'cow' mean only that particular animal and none other? Some thinkers say that there is no essential connection between the word 'cow' and the animal indicated by the word, but we have established this connection by convention and thus it continues to be so. Others would say that there are some essential attributes of that animal which we perceive in our minds and our concept of that animal is created for which we create a corresponding word. According to this idea, there is an essential correspondence between the sounds of words and their meanings, e.g., the word 'buzz' reproduces 'the sound made by a bee'. It is easy to understand this, but not so easy to understand how 'cow' can mean' a four-legged bovine'—there is nothing in the sound of the word 'cow' to indicate that, (Children often invent words that illustrate the correspondence between sound and meaning: they may call a cow 'moo-moo' because they hear it making that kind of sound.)

Different aspects of meaning of a word

The Logical or Denotative Meaning

This is the literal meaning of a word indicating the idea or concept to which it refers. Concept is a minimal unit of meaning which could be called a 'sememe' in the same way as the unit of sound is called a 'phoneme'. Just as the phoneme /b/ may be defined as a bilabial + voiced + plosive, the word

'man' may be defined as a concept consisting of a structure of meaning 'human + male + adult' expressed through the basic morphological unit 'm + æ + n'. All the three qualities are logical attributes of which the concept 'man' is made. They are the minimal qualities that the concept must possess in order to be a distinguishable concept, e.g. if any of these changes, the concept too changes. So 'human + female + adult' would not be the concept referred to by the word 'man', since it is a different concept.

The Connotative Meaning

This is the additional meaning that a concept carries. It is defined as 'the communicative value an expression has by virtue of what it refers to over and above its purely conceptual content' (Leech, 1981). That is, apart from its logical or essential attributes, there is a further meaning attached to a word, which comes from its reference to other things in the real world. In the real world, such a word may be associated with some other features or attributes. For example, the logical or denotative meaning of the word 'woman' is the concept, 'human + female + adult'. To it may be added the concept of 'weaker sex' or 'frailty'. These were the connotations or values associated with the concept of 'woman'. Thus connotative meaning consists of the attributes associated with a concept. As we know, these associations come into use over a period of time in a particular culture and can change with change in time. While denotative meaning remains stable since it defines the essential attributes of a concept, connotative meaning changes as it is based on associations made to the concept; these associations may change.

The Social Meaning

This is the meaning that a word or a phrase conveys about the circumstances of its use. That is, the meaning of a word is understood according to the different style and situation in which the word is used, e.g. though the words 'domicile', 'residence', 'abode', 'home' all refer to the same thing (i.e. their denotative meaning is the same), each word belongs to a particular situation of use—'domicile' is used in an official context, 'residence' in a formal context, 'abode' is a poetic use and 'home' is an ordinary use. Where one is used, the other is not seen as appropriate. Social meaning derives from the awareness of the style in which something is written and spoken and of the relationship between speaker and hearer—whether that relationship is formal, official, casual, polite, or friendly.

The Thematic Meaning

This is the meaning which is communicated by the way in which a speaker or writer organises the message in terms of ordering, focus and emphasis. It is often felt, for example, that an active sentence has a different meaning from its passive equivalent although its conceptual meaning seems to be the same. In the sentences:

Mrs. Smith donated the first prize
The first prize was donated by Mrs. Smith

The thematic meaning of both the sentences is different. In the first sentence it appears that we know who Mrs. Smith is, so the new information on which the emphasis is laid is 'the first prize'. In the second sentence, however, the emphasis is laid on 'Mrs. Smith'.

It is sometimes difficult to demarcate all these categories of meaning. For example, it may be difficult to distinguish between conceptual meaning and social meaning in the following sentences:

He stuck the key in his pocket.
He put the key in his pocket.

We could argue that these two sentences are conceptually alike, but different in social meaning––the first one adopts a casual or informal style, the second adopts a neutral style. However, we could also say that the two verbs are conceptually different: 'stuck' meaning 'put carelessly and quickly', which is a more precise meaning than simply 'put'. Of course, it is a matter of choice which word the speaker wishes to use, a more precise one or a neutral one.

Some Terms and Distinctions in Semantics

Lexical and Grammatical Meaning

Words grouped together randomly have little meaning on their own, unless it occurs accidentally. For example, each of the following words has lexical meaning at the word level, as is shown in a dictionary, but they convey no grammatical meaning as a group:

Lights the leap him before the downhill purple. [Without grammatical meaning]

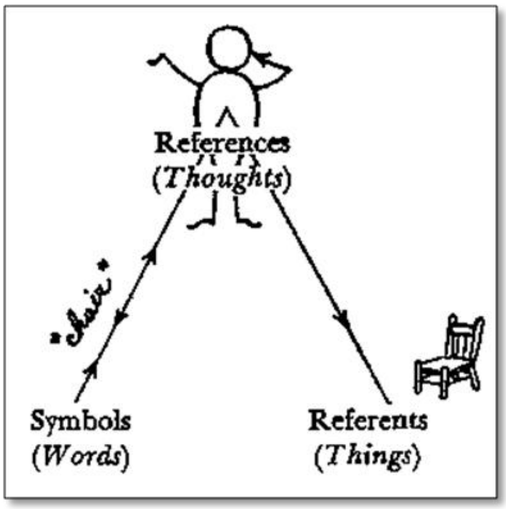
However when a special order is given to these words, grammatical meaning is created because of the relationships they have to one another.

"The purple lights leap down the hill before him." [With grammatical meaning]

"Different forms of the same lexeme will generally, though not necessarily, differ in meaning: they will share the same lexical meaning (or meanings) but differ in respect of their grammatical meaning, in that one is the singular form (of a noun of a particular subclass) and the other is the plural form (of a noun of a particular subclass); and the difference between singular and plural forms, or--to take another example--the difference between the past, present and future forms of verbs, is semantically relevant: it affects sentence-meaning. The meaning of a sentence . . . is determined partly by the meaning of the words (i.e., lexemes) of which it is composed and partly by its grammatical meaning." (John Lyons, Linguistic Semantics: An Introduction. Cambridge University Press, 1996)

Sense and Reference

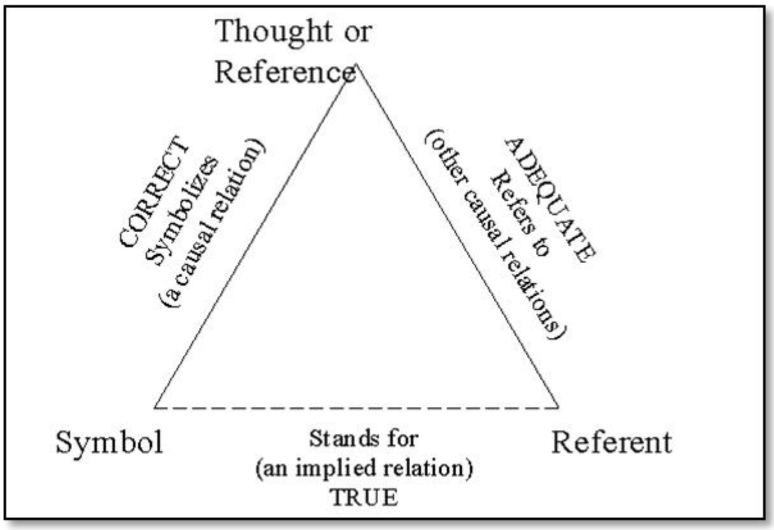
The relationship between linguistic items (e.g. words, sentences) and the non-linguistic world of experience is a relationship of reference. It can be understood by the following diagram given by Ogden and Richards:



"The objects in the real world are referents

the concept which we have of them in our minds is the reference and the symbol we use to refer to them is the word, or linguistic item."

Reference is what a linguistic form refers to in the real, physical world; it deals with the relationship between the linguistic elements and the non-linguistic world of experience.



Sense is the inherent meaning of the linguistic form independent of situational context. It's the aspect of meaning dictionary compilers are interested in. It is concerned with the intra-linguistic relations. It's abstract and de-contextualized. As we have seen, we can explain the meaning of a linguistic item by using other words**. *The relation of a word with another word is a sense-relation.*** Therefore, sense is the complex system of relationships that holds between the linguistic items themselves. Sense is concerned with the intra-linguistic relations, i.e. relations within the system of the language itself, such as similarity between words, opposition, inclusion, and pre-supposition. ***Sense relations include homonymy, polysemy, synonymy, antonymy and hyponymy.***

Sentence-meaning and Utterance-Meaning

A distinction may be drawn between, sentence-meaning and utterance-meaning. This is because a speaker may use a sentence to mean something other than what is normally stated in the sentence itself. Sentence meaning is a combination of lexical and grammatical meaning. In addition to this, intonation may also affect sentence meaning. For example, 'I don't like COFFEE' means that the speaker does not like coffee, but may like some other drink; 'I don't like coffee' means that the speaker doesn't like coffee but someone else does. Speakers /*-*can use intonation to change the emphasis and thus the meaning of the sentence.

Further, a sentence may be used by a speaker to perform some act, such as the act of questioning, warning, promising, threatening, etc. Thus, a sentence such as 'Its cold in here' could be used as an order or request to someone to shut the window, even though it is a declarative sentence. Similarly, an interrogative sentence such as 'Could you shut the door?' can be used to perform the act of requesting or commanding rather than that of questioning (The speaker is not asking whether the hearer is able to shut the door, but is requesting the hearer to actually do the action). Usually such use of sentences is so conventional that we do not stop to think of the literal sentence meaning, we respond to the speaker's act of requesting, etc., which is the utterance meaning. This is the meaning that a sentence has when a speaker utters it to perform some act, in particular appropriate circumstances.

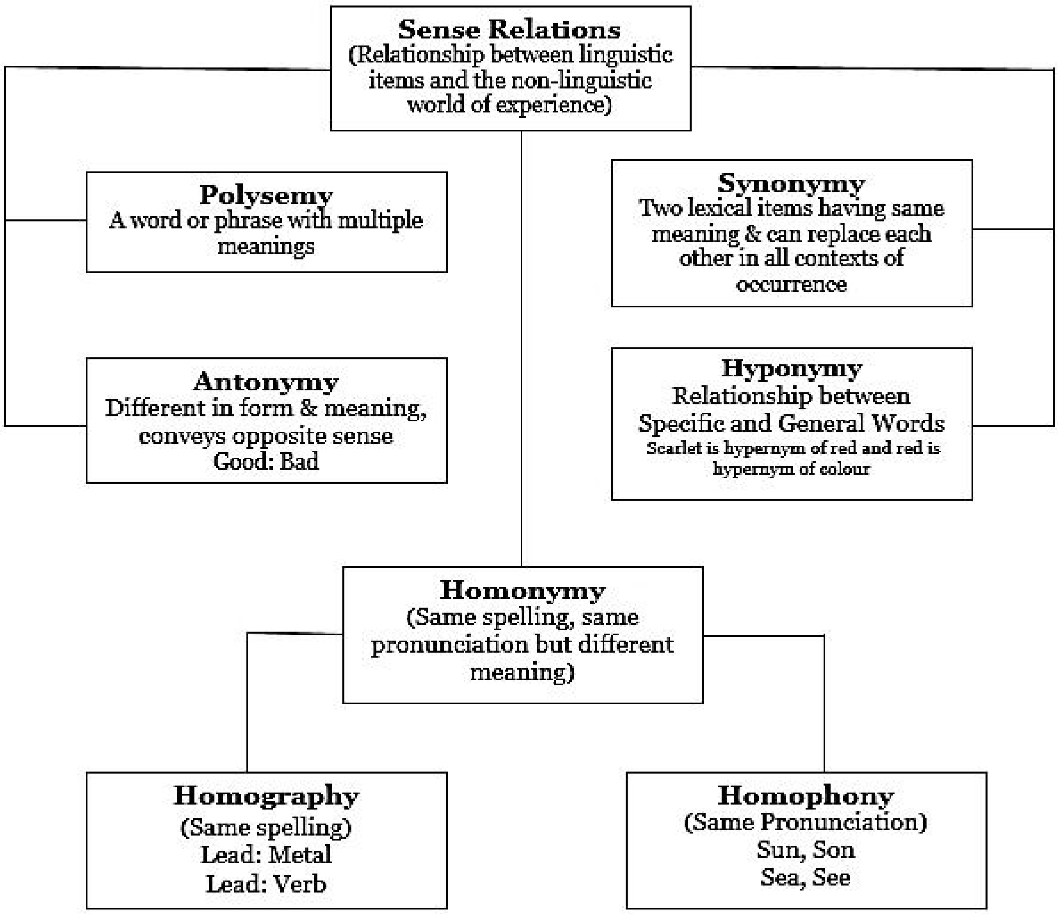
Entailment and Presupposition

One sentence may entail other sentence—that is, include the meaning of other sentence in its meaning, just as hyponymy includes the meaning of other word. For example, the sentence 'The earth goes round the sun' entails (includes) the meaning 'The earth moves'.

A sentence may presuppose other sentences, e.g. the sentence 'Shamim's son is named Rahat' presupposes the sentence 'Shamim has a son'. Presupposition is the previously known meaning which is implied in the sentence. While entailment is a logical meaning inherent in the sentence, presupposition may depend on the knowledge of the facts, shared by the speaker and the hearer.

Semantic Structure

Words form certain kinds of relations. These are called sense relations that are paradigmatic and syntagmatic. Below we discuss five such major ***sense-relationships***.



Synonym

This refers to ***similarity or 'sameness of meaning'***. This is a handy concept for the dictionary makers, who need words for one word which have greater degree of similarity. To an extent this is acceptable, it is a working concept. However, one cannot disagree with Dr. Johnson's statement that 'words are seldom exactly synonymous'. In actual use where contextual nuances and situational subtleties influence meanings the degree of similarity among words reduces considerably to signify much, each word acts as a potential token of sense. Form the great literary scholars to the

semanticists all agree that it is almost a truism that total synonymy is an extremely tale occurrence'.

It is clear that in considering synonymy 'emotive or cognitive import' has critical role. In the words of Ullmann, to qualify as synonyms they must be capable of replacing' 'catch other in any given context without the slightest change either in cognitive or emotive import'. John Lyon also stresses equivalence of cognitive and emotive sense.

Except for highly technical and scientific items, words used in everyday language have strongly emotional or associative significance. Liberty-freedom; Jude-conceal; attempt-effort, cut-slash; round-circular; have different evocative or emotive values; in a particular context where freedom is used liberty definitely cannot be used: it is always freedom struggle and not liberty struggle; or freedom movement not liberty movement. Clear in this instance freedom acts as modifier while liberty does not.

Hyponymy

This refers to the way language classifies its words on the principle of inclusiveness, forming a class members of which are then called co-hyponyms. For example, the classical Greek has a 'super ordinate' term to cover professions of various kinds, shoemaker, helmsman, flute player, carpenter, etc. but such a term doesn't exist in English. In English the word 'animal' is used to include all living in contrast to the vegetable world.

Synonymous sets can also be seen in such combinations denoting male-female-baby in dog-bitch-puppy; ram-ewe-lamb; when such terms do not exist, they are formed: female giraffe, male giraffe, baby giraffe. Thus the meaning of male giraffe is included in the meaning of giraffe as is the meaning of baby giraffe and female giraffe. The relationship of inclusiveness rests on the concept of reference. This gives us the idea of how a language classifies words. Words that are members of a class are called hyponyms.

Polysemy

When a word is identified as possessing two or more meanings, it is; said to be polysemous or polysemic. These different meanings are derived from one basic idea or concept. Dictionaries enter different meanings of a word. Head, for example, has the following different meanings : the upper or anterior division of the body, scat of intellect, mind, poise, the obverse of a coin, person, individual, the source of a stream, leader, director, crisis, culminating point of action, etc (Webster's Dictionary). All these meanings derive from the same word. From this have been coined as many as seventy, compound structures, each in the right of a different word such as headsman, headstand, headshop, headpiece, headgear, headlamp, headline, headlong, head-dress, etc. In the latter examples, one can see that the noun acts as adjectives which show contextual shifts of application.

Problems arise when it becomes difficult to determine whether a word with several meanings must he called polysemic or homonomous.

Collocation

An important concept in semantics is that of collocation, which recognises 'the association of a lexical item with other lexical items'. J.R. Firth says, 'you shall know a word by the company it keeps'. What he calls keeping company is what we know by collocation. It is part of the meaning of a word. Thus

the word red is related to blood, rose, tomato, ink, cherry, etc. or to put it differently, red collocates with these words. Different linguistic contexts enable us to identity different meanings. Thus, for the word table we can identify these meanings front the contexts presented below.

(i) Writing table

(ii) Reading table

(iii) Have tabled the motion

(iv) Talk across the table

Most associations are loose with a freedom of movement that is not predictable. We can say white milk, but we can also say 'while clouds and 'white paint'. We can contrast this with such predictable collocations as blond hair, buxom woman and pretty girl or child. Blond cannot be collocated with door or dress. Buxom always goes with female individual - a buxom friend would mean a buxom woman friend and cannot mean a man. Similarly, a pretty boy is not heard. A more permanent collocation is seen in 'bark' always being associated with 'dog', 'roar' with 'lion' 'chirp' with 'birds', 'school' with 'fishes', 'flock' with birds etc.

In collocation words get special meaning. Exceptional conditions and exceptional boy do not really mean the same thing. So, the meaning of the collocated terms depends on the collocation.

"A word will often collocate with a number of other words that have something in common semantically. More strikingly we find that individual words or sequences of words will NOT collocate with certain groups of words". (Palmer).

To 'die' and to 'pass away' refer to the same happening, but to say that daffodil passes away, is absurd, more acceptable is to say 'daffodil dies'.

F.R. Palmer has identified three types of collocational restrictions.

1. Meaning in this type is completely based on die word. Green horse is an unlikely collocational combination.

2. Here meaning is based on the range, which makes, a pretty boy unacceptable.

3. This kind of restriction involves neither range nor meaning: rancid butter, addled brains are a couple of examples.

Antonymy

The concept of antonymy implies 'oppositeness of meaning' where the 'recognition and assertion of one implies the denial of the other'. This is illustrated in pairs of words such as, big-small; old-young; wide-narrow, etc. These words can be handled in terms of the degree of quality involved. The comparative

forms of the adjectives are graded: wide-wider; happy-happier; old-older. They are also made by adding more. To use Sapir's term, these are explicitly graded.

Homonymy

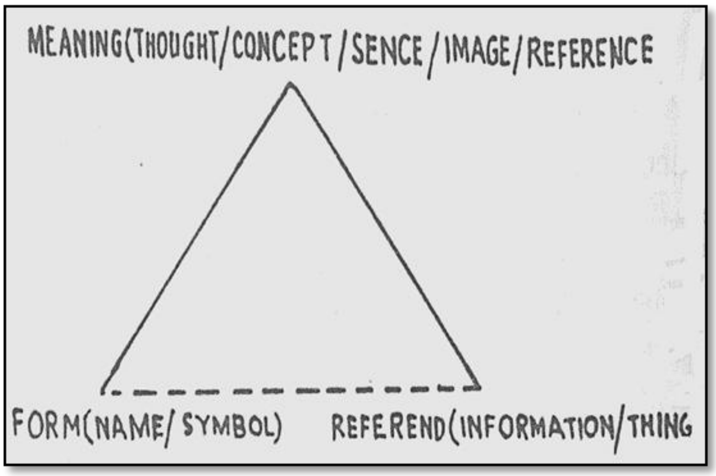
Homonomous words are defined as sounding alike hut possessing different meanings. For example, the words lie-lie, by-bye, I-eye. They are spoken and sometimes, written alike, but mean totally different things, as can be seen in their uses in these sentences - Don't lie, tell the truth. I have to lie down now. Normally, in dictionaries, separate entries are made for homonymous words recognizing them as separate Words rather than different meanings of the same words.

Homophonous words may be spelled and written identically or in different ways. The example cited above elucidates the point. For the words that are spelled alike the name homography is used. For the words that sound alike but may be spelled differently, the term homophony is used. Examples of the former are grave-grave; pupil-pupil; light-light; examples of the latter are cite-site; write-right-rite-might. Some homophones are also, interestingly, antonyms - raise-raze; cleave in the sense of severing asunder and cleave in the sense of 'uniting'. The problem of identifying which is a homonym and which a polyseme is a practical one and often it is difficult to determine exactly what is what. However, it is useful to know that homonymous words have generally different origins, while polysemic words, even when their meanings arc markedly divergent, have one source. We may use such metaphorical expressions as the foot of a bed, or the mountain; the hands and face of a clock, but we know that these are the meanings that ultimately trace to the original meanings of these words. They are, therefore, polysemes. Tracing the lexical etymologies is fraught with difficulties. One must have a vast knowledge of the histories of the words. Confusion between polysemy and homonymy is natural.

Semantic Theories

Traditional Approach

We have noted earlier that meaning was always a central concern with thinkers. This has been the root of much divergent opinion and definition of meaning. However, there was little doubt that there are two sides of the issue: **symbolic realization**, whether in utterance or in writing, and the **thing symbolised**.



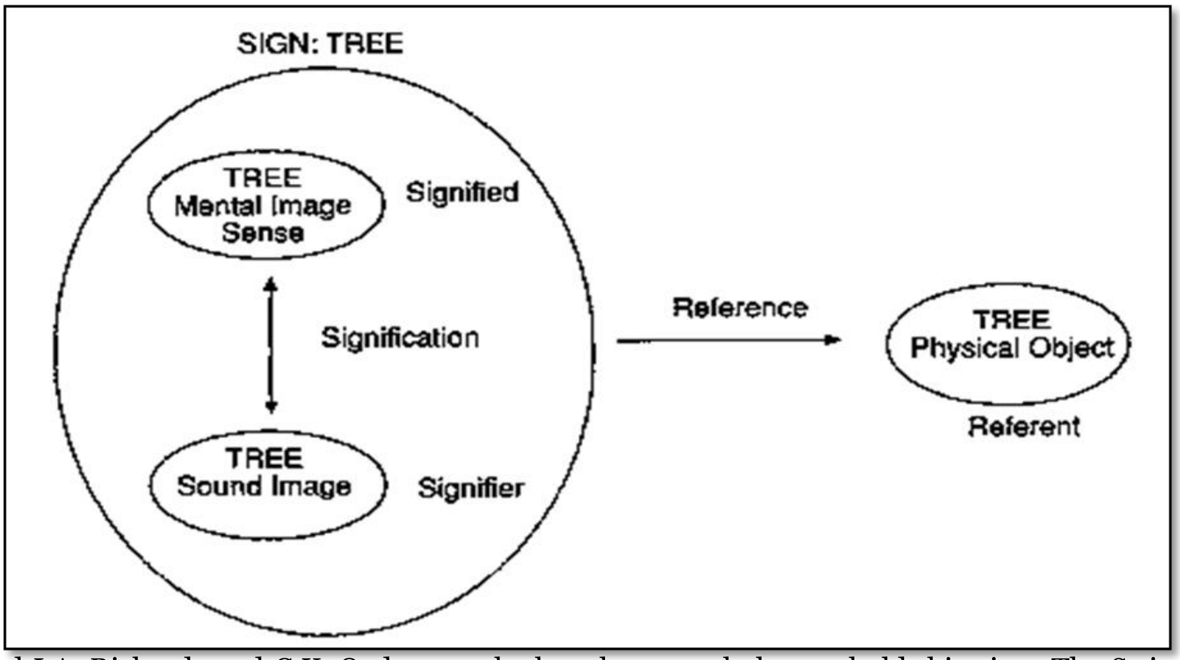
Plato's Cratylus clearly lays down that **word is the signifier** (in the language) and **the signified is the object** (in the world). Words are, therefore, names, labels that denote or stand for. Initially, a child learns to know his world, and his language in this manner. He is pointed out the objects and people; names are given to them, and in his mind link or association between the names and the external world is established. Children have always been taught their language in this manner. This is also perhaps the way the earliest thinkers tried to

understand the world through linguistic medium. That could be the reason why William Labov was prompted to say***, 'In many ways, the child is a perfect historian of the language'.***

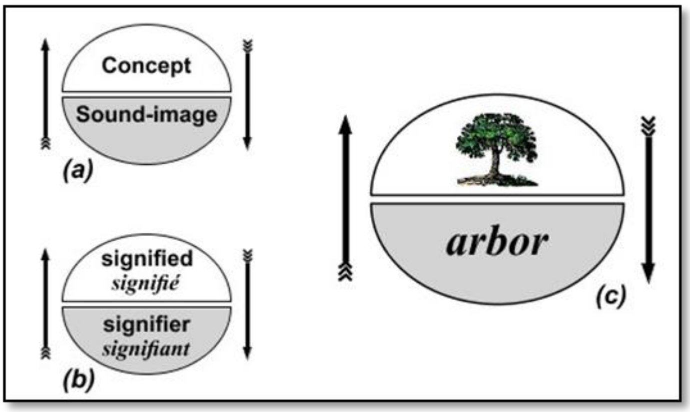
However, this is an extremely simplistic theory and it would be wrong to say the child simply learns the names of things. Gradually, and simultaneously, he learns to 'handle the complexities of experience along with the complexities of language'.

Analytical/Referential Approach

Between the symbol and the object/thing there is an intervening phenomenon which is recognized as 'the mediation of concepts of the mind'. De Saussure



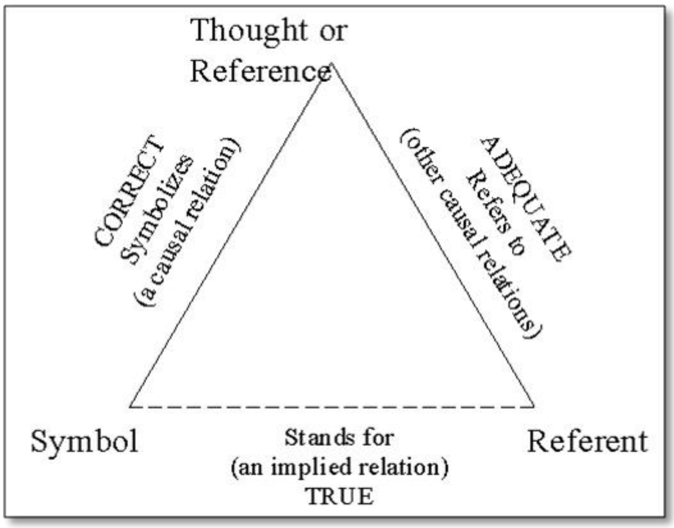
and I.A. Richards and C.K. Ogden are the best-known scholars to hold this view. The Swiss linguist de Saussure postulated the link a psychological associative bond, between the sound image and the concept. Ogden and Richards viewed this in the shape of a triangle. The linguistic symbol or images, realized as a word or sentence and the referent, the external entities are mediated by thought or reference. There is no direct relation between the sign and the object but 'our interpretation of any sign is our psychological reaction to it' (Ogden).



The meaning of a word in the most important sense of the word is that part of a total reaction to the word which constitutes the thought about what the word is intended for and what it symbolizes. Thus thought (the reference) constitutes the symbolic or referential meaning of a word. Linguistics, in the opinion of de Saussure, operates on the borderland where the elements of sound and thought combine: their combination produces a form, not a substance.

When we see an object, a bird, for example, we call it referent; its recollection is its image. It is through this image that the sign is linked to the referent.

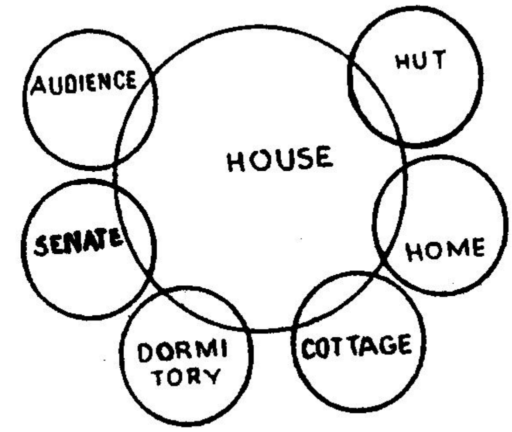
The symbol is manifested in the phonetic form and the reference is the information the hearer is conveyed. This process thus established, makes meaning a 'reciprocal' and reversible relation between name and sense. One can start with the name and arrive at the meaning or one can start with the meaning and arrive at the name/s. The referential or 'analytical' approach, as it is also known, tries to avoid the functional domain of language, and seeks rather to understand meaning by identifying its primary components.



This approach is the descendant of the ancient philosophical world-view, and carries its limitations. It ignores the relatively different positions at which the speaker and the hearer are situated. Their positions make a reciprocal and reversible relationship between name and sense (Ullmann). This approach also overlooks other psychological, non-physical processes which do not depend upon the linguistic symbol, the reception of the sound waves for recognising the meaning of the object/thing. A word usually has multiple meaning and is also associated with other words. Which of the meanings will be received depends upon the situations.

Operational (Contextual or Functional) Approach

In the year 1953 L. Wittgenstein's work Philosophical Investigation was published. Around this time Malinowski and J.R. Firth were working to formulate the 'operational character of scientific concepts like 'length', 'time' or 'energy'; they tried to grasp the meaning of a word by observing the uses to which it is put instead of what is said about it. They approached the problem by including all that is relevant in establishing meaning – the hearers, their commonly shared knowledge and information, external objects, and events, the contexts of earlier exchange and so on, and not by excluding them. This approach can directly be linked to the concept of the Context of situation being developed by the London group which viewed social processes as significant factor in explaining a speech event.



While the referential approach took an idealist position, dealing, as someone said, with 'meaning in language', the functional theory or the operational theory took a realistic stand, taking 'speech' as it actually occurred. Words are considered tools and whole utterances are considered. Meaning is thus seen to involve a 'set of multiple and various relations between

the utterances' and its segments and the relevant components of environment' (Robins). In placing special emphasis on language as a form of behaviour – as something that we perform, the functional approach shares a lot with systemic linguistics. Language is a form a behaviour which is functional, 'something that we do with a purpose, or more often, in fact, with more than one purpose. It is viewed as a form of functional behaviour which is related to the social situation in which it occurs as something that we do purposefully in a particular social setting' (Margaret Berry). The systemic organization of a language is sought to be understood through its relations with the social situations of language.

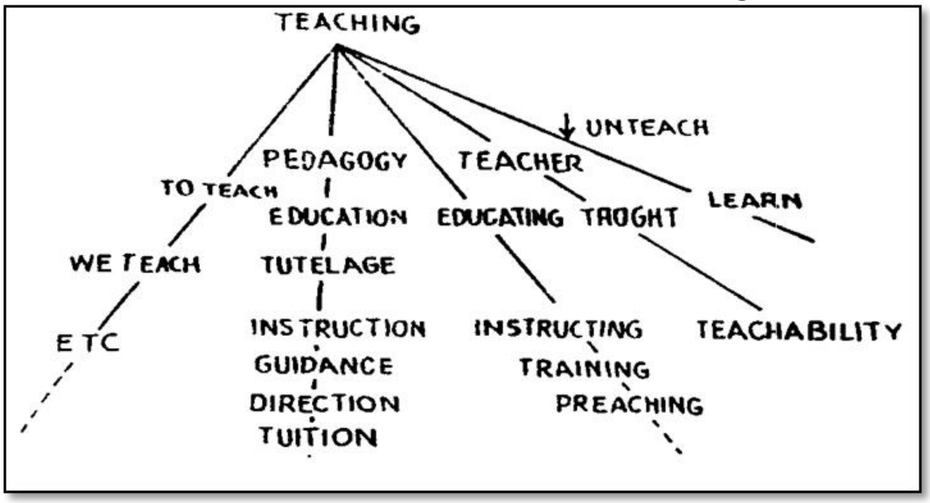
According to this theory, meaning is classified into two broad categories: Contextual Meaning and Formal Meaning.

Contextual meaning relates a formal item or pattern to an element of situation. There is a regular association between a linguistic item and something which is extra-linguistic, 'something which is part of the situation of language rather than part of the language itself' (Berry). Contextual meaning is further divided into thesis, immediate situation and wider situation.

In ***Formal meaning*** the relationship between a linguistic item, pattern or term form a system and other linguistic items, patterns or terms from system belonging to the same level of language'. Formal meaning can be understood by collocating and contrasting a lexical item with other lexical items. The lexical item cat, for instance, has the potentiality for collocating with mew, purr, lap, milk, fur, tail, etc. It also contrasts with dog, mouse, kitten, etc. Thus, the complete description of the formal meaning of a lexical item would involve the statement of all the items with which it collocates and contrasts. Such items which fall into a context or set of contexts are referred to as an association field.

Field Theory of Meaning

Basic to this theory is the concept that each word in a language is surrounded by a network of associations that connect it with other terms. See the diagram below.



The field theory visualizes the vocabulary as a mosaic on a gigantic scale, which is built up of fields and higher units in the same way as fields are built up by words. The associative field of a word is formed by an intricate network of associations, some based on similarity, others on continuity, some arising between senses, others between names, others again between both. The field is by definition open, and some of the associations are bound to be subjective though the more central ones will be largely the same for most speakers. Attempts have been made to identify

some of these central associations by psychological experiments, but they can also be established by purely linguistic methods. The identification of these associations by linguistic methods is done by collecting the most obvious synonyms and antonyms of a word, as well as terms similar in sound or in sense, and those which enter into the same habitual associations. Many of these associations are embodied in figurative language: metaphors, similes, proverbs, idioms, and the link. The number of associations centred in one word will of course be extremely variable and for some very common terms it may be very high.

As one of Saussure's pupils expressed it, 'the associative field is a halo which surrounds the sign and whose exterior fringes become merged'. This field is formed by an intricate network of associations: similarity, contiguity, sensation, and name. The associative field is by any definition open, that is, no finite limits can be assigned to any given field. Hence the aptness of the concept 'field', which serves an analogous purpose in physics.

The Distributional Approach

The structural treatment of linguistic meaning has been dealt in the Distributional Approach. Some linguists recommend studying meaning as a **phenomenon isolated from outside world of human experience**. The meaning of a word is to be understood as the range of its occurrences in sentences consisting of other words. Just as there are probably no words exactly like in meaning in all contexts, so there will be no two words in any language sharing exactly the same lexical distribution. This approach studies meaning as syntagmatic relations (collocation) and paradigmatic relations (sets).

It uses statistical methods and computer techniques for the study of semantics. But this approach to meaning fails to save the phenomena as meaning is understood everywhere by involving the relation of language to the rest of the world, and such meaningfulness is an essential part of any definition of language. Thus this approach incompletely treats the meaning.

Meaning of words in dictionary entries is derived on the basis of their relation to the whole human experience, on the basis of extra linguistic criterion and unsystemized commonsense. For this reason some linguists have tried to redefine or reconsider meaning in so far as in concerns the linguist within the range of its occurrence in sentences consisting of other words. Just as there are probably no words exactly alike in meaning in all contexts, so there will probably no words exactly alike in meaning in all contexts, so there will probably no two words in any language sharing exactly the same lexical environment.

Componential Analysis Approach

Componential Analysis Approach underlies the linguistic theories developed by developed by Katz and Foder (1963), Weinreich (1966), Beirwisch (1969) and others. It is a technique for the economical statement of certain semantic relations between lexical items and between sentences containing them. It is attempt to describe the structure of vocabulary in terms of relatively small set of very general elements of meaning called "component markers" or "sememes", and their various possible combinations in different languages. It tries to discover the ultimate meaning units out of which a particular set of words appears to be composed in composed in some systematic way. Some segments of vocabulary can be better

analysed by this method. Through componential analysis, we can seek to find out how speakers use the vocabulary of a language in order to classify reality by referring to certain parameters of meaning.

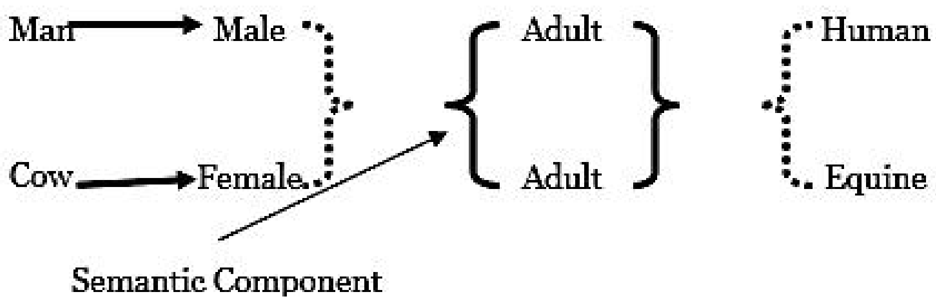
The term componential analysis in semantics is best explained by means of simple example by linguists:

(1)	Man	Woman	Child
(2)	Bull	Cow	Calf
(3)	Ram	Ewe	Lamb
(4)	Drake	Duck	Duckling

When we consider these set of English words we can, on the basis of our intuitive appreciation of the sense of these words, set up such proportional equations as the following:

"Man : Woman : Child : : Bull : Cow : Calf"

This equation bears proof to the fact that, from the semantic point of view, the word "Man, Woman and Child" on the one hand, and "Bull, Cow and Calf on the other hand, all have something in common. What "man and bull" have in common is not shared by "woman and cow", and what "calf and child" have in common is not shared either "man and bull" or "woman and cow". What these groups of words have in common is called "semantic component" (other terms used for that are plereme/ sememe/ semantic marker/ semantic category). Thus the sense of man, according to componential analysis is the product of the component (male), (adult) and (human); that the sense of cow is the product of (female,) (adult) and (equine); and so on.



In order to understand the meaning of a sentence and its semantic relations to other expressions, one must know the meaning of its lexical items as well as how they are interrelated.

Basic Assumptions of theory: - Componential theories of semantics are based upon following assumptions:-

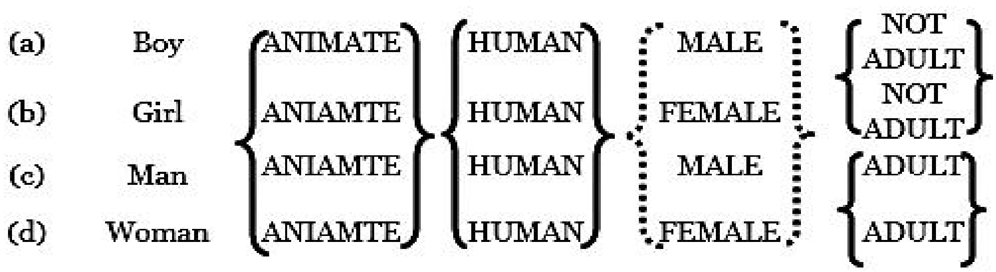
(a) ***Semantic components are language independent, or universal***. The semantic components may be combined in various in different languages, yet they would be identifiable as the same components in the analysis of the vocabularies of all languages.

Hence, in the matter of kinship, colour, artifices, needs and functions of physical qualities semantic components may be universal, but they are not universal in many other areas.

(b) Propositional equations should be established with respect to the sense of lexical items. These propositions are cognitively valid, and can be set up on the basis of introspection.

"All the semantic structure might finally be reduced to components representing the basic dispositions of the cognitive and perceptual structure of human organism."

Componential Analysis Approach defines the meaning of a lexical element explicitly in terms of semantic components. These components or categories are not part of the vocabulary of the language itself, but rather theoretical elements postulated in order to describe he semantic relation between the lexical elements of a given language. These components are then connected by logical constants. For example Bierwisch's analysis:-



These implicational rules automatically complete a redundancy free entry like (1) to its fully specified (2) in the following:-

(1) Boy: HUMAN and MALE and NOT ADULT.

(2) Boy: ANIMATE and HUMAN and MALE and NOT FEMALE and NOT ADULT.

Rules of this type not only simplify the necessary dictionary specifications; they also express relevant generalization about the semantic structure of the vocabulary described.

Psycholinguistics

Psycholinguistics is the study of the ***psychological and neurobiological factors*** that enable humans to acquire, use, comprehend and produce language. ***It deals with planning, production, perception and comprehension of speech***. The aim of modern linguistics has been to arrive at understanding of the way in which our minds work, and in this respect it could be argued that psycholinguistics, with its unique of blend of psychology and linguistics, is most significant of all the linguistic branches.

Psycholinguistics is a recent branch of linguistics developed in the sixties. ***It studies interrelationship of psychological and linguistic behaviour***. It uses linguistic concepts to describe psychological processes connected with the acquisition and use of language. Thus language acquisition has become the most important area of investigation. It has raised and has partly answered questions such as how do children acquire their mother tongue? How do they grow up linguistically and learn to handle the registral and stylistic varieties of their mother tongue effectively? How much of the linguistic system that they ultimately command, are they born with and how much do they discover on the basis of their exposure to that system?

Now-a-days, certain areas of language and linguistic theory tend to be concentrated on by the psycholinguist. Much of psycholinguistics has been influenced by generative theory and the so-called mentalists. The ***most important area is the investigation of the acquisition of language by children***. In this respect there have been many studies of both a theoretical and a descriptive kind. The need for ***descriptive study*** arises due to the fact that until recently hardly anything was known about the actual facts of language acquisition in children, in particular about the order in which grammatical structures were acquired. Even elementary questions as to when and how the child develops its ability to ask question syntactically, or when it learn the inflectional system of its language, remained unanswered. However, a great deal of work has been done recently on the methodological and descriptive problems related to the obtaining and analyzing information of this kind.

The **theoretica**l questions have focused on the issue of how we can account for the phenomenon of language development in children at all. Normal children have mastered most of the structures of their language by the age of five or six. The **generative** approach argued against the earlier **behaviorist** assumptions that it was possible to explain language development largely in terms of imitation and selective reinforcement. It asserted that it was impossible to explain the rapidity or the complexity of language used by the people around them.

Psycholinguistics, therefore, argue that imitation is not enough; it is not merely by mechanical repetition that children acquire language. They also acquire it by natural exposure. ***Both nature and nurture influence the acquisition of language in children.*** Children learn first not items but systems. Every normal child comes to develop this abstract knowledge of his mother tongue, even of a foreign language, to some extent for himself; and the generative approach argues that such a process is only explicable if one

postulates that certain features of this competence are present in the brain of the child right from the beginning. 'In other words, what is being claimed is that the child's brain contains certain innate characteristics which 'pre-structure' it in the direction of language learning. To enable these innate features to develop into adult competence, the child must be exposed to human language, i.e. it must be stimulated in proper to respond. But the basis on which it develops its linguistic abilities is not describable in behaviourist terms'. (David Crystal, Linguistics, p. 256)

The boundary between psycholinguistics and linguistics is becoming increasingly blurred as the result of recent developments in linguistics which aim at giving psychological reality to the description of language. ***Chomsky regards linguistics as a subfield of psychology more specially the cognitive psychology***. His view of linguistics, as outlined for instance, in his book *Language and Mind*, is that the most important contribution linguistics can make, is to the study of the human mind. The bonds between psychology and linguistics become stronger by the extent to which language is influenced by and itself influences such things as memory, motivation, attention, recall and perception.

Similarly psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics are coming closer because of the realization that merely grammatical competence is not enough; we have to aim at communicative competence too. Whereas ***psycholinguistics is language and the mind, sociolinguistics is language and community***. In other words, ***psycholinguistics can be said to deal with language and the individual, and sociolinguistics with language and society.***

Language Acquisition

By the study of language acquisition is meant the process whereby children achieve a fluent control of their native language. Few people in the 1950s asked about the processes by which language was acquired. It was assumed that children imitated the adults around them and their speech gradually became more accurate as they grow up. There seemed to be some mystery attached to this apparently straight-forward process. Psycholinguistics has therefore attempted general theories of language acquisition and language use. Some have argued that ***learning is entirely the product of experience and that our environment affects all of us in the same way.*** Others have suggested that ***everybody has an innate language learning mechanism which determines learning or acquisition of language identically for each of us***. These two schools are known as 'empiricists' (Behaviourists) and 'rationalists' (mentalists).

The empiricists say that all knowledge is derived from experience. They are of the opinion that children start out as clean slates. Learning a language is a process of getting linguistic habits printed on these slates. Language acquisition is the result of stimulus-response activities. Imitation, repetition, memorization, reward, and reinforcement facilitate this process of language acquisition***. The behaviourists argue that learning is controlled by the conditions under which it takes place and that, as long as individuals are subjected on the same condition, they will learn in the same way.*** Variations in learning are caused because of the difference in learning experience, difference in the past experience of learning, difference in aptitudes, motivation, memory and age. So, for them

there is not a theory of language learning as such but merely the application to language of general principles of learning.

From this follows that in general there is no difference between the way one learns a language and the way one learns to do anything else. So, according to the empiricists, language is a result of stimulus and response. A child should, therefore, learn to make a response in the first place, and then the response should be reinforced in a variety of ways. Indeed strength of learning is measured in terms of the number of times that a response has been made and reinforced. A word that has been uttered thirty times is better learned than one which has been said twenty times. So language learning process is basically a mechanical process of a habit formation. Habits are strengthened by reinforcement. ***Language is behaviour, a conditioned behaviour which can be learned only by inducing the child to behave***. Repetition plays a vital role in learning a language. Hence there is necessity of mechanical drills and exercises, imitation and repetition.

The rationalists contradict the empiricists at almost every point. ***Children learn a language, not because they are subjected to a similar conditioning process, but because they possess an inborn capacity which permits them to acquire a language as a normal maturational process.*** This capacity is universal. ***The child has an innate language acquiring device.*** He learns a language by exposure to it in society and by unconsciously forming certain hypotheses about language, which he goes on modifying till he comes to the adult model to which he is for the most part exposed. So the child goes on constructing an innate grammar, operating over generalized rules.

Language acquisition is species-specific and species-uniform. The ability to take up an understand language is inherited genetically but the particular language that children speak, is culturally and environmentally transmitted to them. Children all over the world acquire their native tongue without tutoring. Whereas a child exposed to an English speaking community begins to speak English fluently, the other one exposed to a community of Urdu speakers, begins to use Urdu fluently. Only human beings can acquire language. Language acquisition thus appears to be different in kind from acquisition of other skills such as swimming, dancing, or gymnastics.

Native language acquisition is much less likely to be affected by mental retardation than the acquisition of other intellectual activities. Every normal human child learns one or more language unless he is brought up in linguistic isolation, and learns the essentials of his language by a fairly little age, say by six. To acquire fluency in a language a child has to be exposed to people who speak that language. A language is not something we know by instinct or inherit from our parents. It is the result of our exposure to a certain linguistic community. It is part of that whole complex of learned and shared behaviour that anthropologists call 'culture'. By this we do not mean that language is acquired ready-made. It is created anew by each child by putting together bits and pieces of environmental raw material. The human child does play an active role in this process, he actively strains, filters, recognizes what he is exposed to. His imitations are not photographic reproductions but artistic recreations. ***A child is a linguist in cradle. He acquires a language more easily than adults. He discovers the structure of his native language to use that language; no one hands it to him in a ready-to-use form.***

Both schools have said significant things, yet neither is perfect. The mentalists' emphasis on the rule-learning is over-enthusiastic, and the behaviourists' rejection of meaning entirely is unjust. We can easily understand the point of view of both schools of thoughts by studying language learning theories.

Language Acquisition Theories

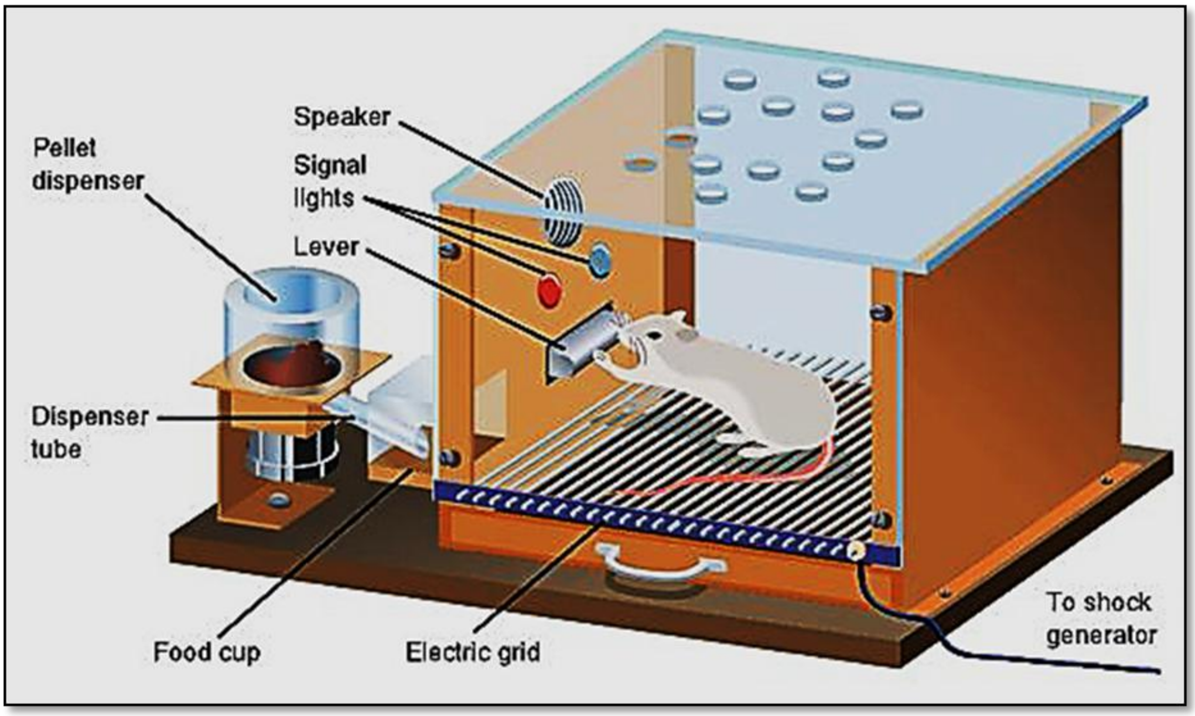
Introduction

Language is Almighty Allah's special and unique gift to mankind without which human civilization would have remained an impossibility. As a distinct area of interest psycholinguistics developed in the early sixties, and in its early form covered acoustic phonology and language pathology. But now-a-days it has been influenced deeply by the development of generative theory, and its most important area of investigation has been language acquisition. It has raised and has partly answered questions such as how do children acquire their mother tongue? How do they grow up linguistically and learn to handle the registral and stylistic varieties of their mother tongue effectively? How much of the linguistic system that they ultimately command are they born with and how much do they discover on the basis of their exposure to language? In order to account for the phenomenon of language learning by children, during the past forty years, there have been two main theories known as "Behaviourism" and "Mentalism". ***The Behaviourists School of thought has argued that learning is entirely the product of experience and that our environment affects all of us in the same way. On the other hand the Mentalists school of thought has suggested that everybody has an innate language learning mechanism.*** Let us discover with the help of these two schools of thought that how do children acquire their mother tongue.

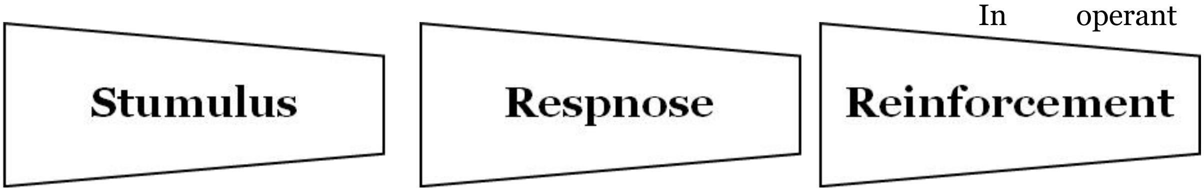
(1) The Behaviourist School

According to B.F Skinner and his colleagues, the behaviourists, learning, or a change of behaviour on the part of the learner, is brought about by a process known as operant conditioning which is the result of repeated training. Operant means 'voluntary behaviour' which is the result of learner's own free-will and is not forced by any outside person or thing. The learner demonstrates the new behavior first as a response to a system of reward or punishment, and finally as an automatic response. In order to prove their theory they conducted an experiment.

In a typical experiment, a rat is put in a box containing a bar. If it presses the bar, it is rewarded with a pellet of food. Nothing forces it to press the bar. The first time it probably does so accidentally. When the rat finds that the food arrives, it presses the bar again. Eventually it finds that if it is hungry it can obtain food by pressing the bar. Then task is made more difficult. The rat only gets rewarded if it presses the bar while a light is flashing. At first rat is puzzled. Eventually it learns the trick. Then the task is made more difficult again. This time the rat only receives food if it presses the bar a certain number of times. After initial confusion it learns to do this also. And so on, and so on.



Operant condition can be summarized thus



In operant conditioned, reinforcement plays a vital role. There are two kinds of reinforcement:

(a) Positive Reinforcement

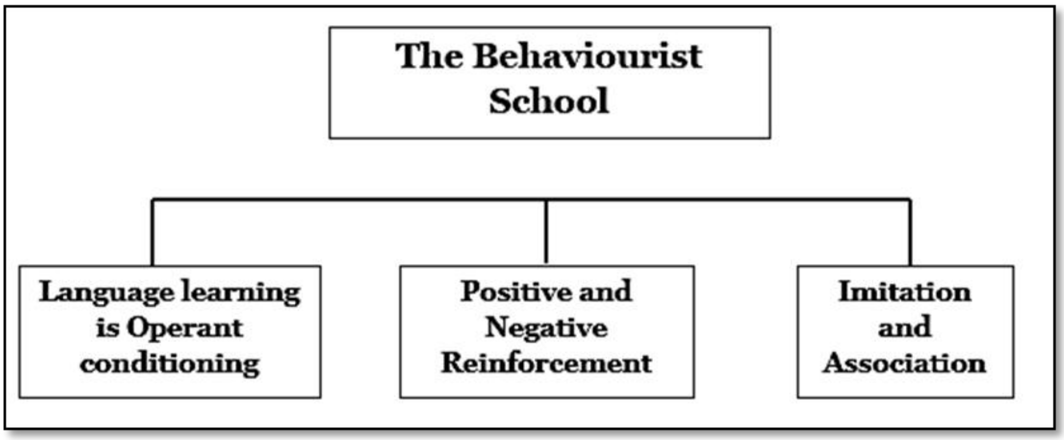
Positive reinforcement comprises of praises and rewards. It has been shown by the experiments that positive reinforcement works much better in bringing about good learning.

(b) Negative Reinforcement

Rebukes and punishments fall into the negative reinforcement category. Skinner eventually applies his theory of learning through operant conditioning to the study of how humans learn language.

Behaviourists believe that learning a language is no different from learning anything else; it becomes a habit by the stimulus-response-reinforcement-repetition process. The behaviourists also claim that we learn by imitation and by association. For instance, a young child hears a word 'apple' every time he is given one. He soon associates the word 'apple' with the actual thing. He then makes this sound himself, imitating what he has heard. His parents are pleased that he has learnt another word and so his response is reinforced. The thoughts of behaviorist school can well be understood according to following tree diagram:

Psycholinguists argue that imitation is not enough; it is not merely by mechanical repetition that children acquire language. They also acquire it by natural exposure.



(2) The Mentalist School

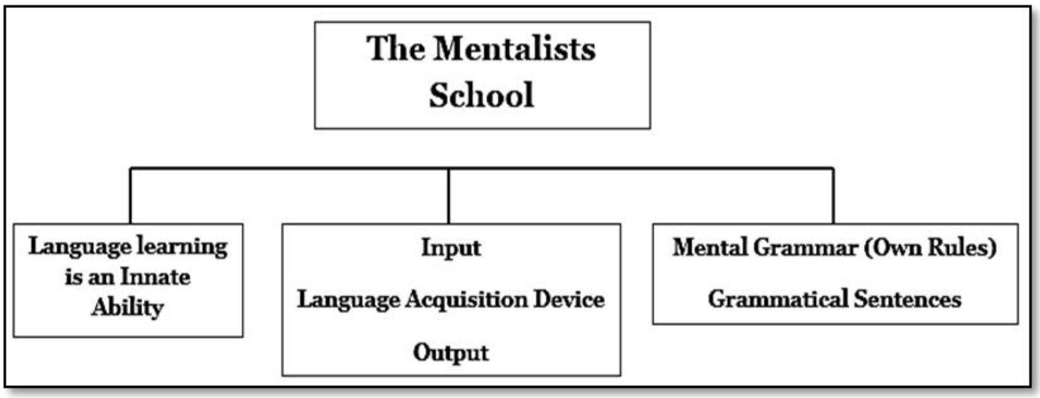
Another school of thought arguing on the crucial matter of first language acquisition in children is the mentalist school of thought which is led by Noam Chomsky. He and his mentalist followers claim that a child learns his first language through cognitive learning. He also acquires it by natural exposure. Both 'nature' and 'nurture' influence the acquisition of language in children. Chomsky regards linguistics as a subfield of psychology, more especially the cognitive psychology.

The Language Acquisition Device:

Chomsky argues that language is so complex that it is almost incredible that it can be acquired by a child in so short a time. He further says that a ***child is born with some innate mental capacity which helps the child to process all the language which he hears***. This is called the ***"Language Acquisition Device" (LAD).***

Chomsky and his followers claim that language is governed by rules, and is not a haphazard thing, as Skinner and his followers would claim. We must remember that when Chomsky talks about rules, he means the unconscious rules in a child's mind. A child constructs his own mental grammar which is a part of his cognitive framework. These rules enable him to produce grammatical sentences in his own language. Chomsky does not mean that child can describe these rules explicitly. For instance, a four or five year old child can produce a sentence like, I have taken meal, he can do that because he has a 'mental grammar' which enables him to form correct present perfect structures and also to use such structures in the right or appropriate situation.

The thoughts of Mentalists can well be understood with the help of the following tree diagram.



Chomsky suggests that the learner of any language has an inbuilt learning capacity for language that enables each learner to construct a kind of personal theory or set of rules about the language based on very limited exposure to language.

Difference between Mentalistic Approach and Behaviourist Approach:

Language acquisition seems to be a process both of analogy and application, both nature and nurture. The differences between the empiricists approach and that of the rationalist can be summarized in the following manner:

Mentalist Approach	Behaviourist Approach
(1) Language is an innate, in-born process.	(1) Language acquisition is a stimulus-response process.
(2) Children learn language by application.	(2) Children learn language by imitation and analogy.
(3) Language is not a behavior like other behaviors, but a specific mental process.	(3) Language is a conditioned behavior.
(4) The role of exposure to language is quite vital.	(4) The role of imitation, repetition, reinforcement and motivation is very significant in language learning.
(5) Language learning is analytical, generative and creation	(5) Language learning is based on practice.
(6) Language acquisition is the result of nurture.	(6) Language acquisition is the result of nature.

Conclusion:

Finally, after analyzing both the theories about first language acquisition by the child, such as Behaviourism and Mentalism, it can be concluded that Chomsky subscribes to an entirely different view of learning from that of behaviourists. He follows a mentalist approach which means something which involves the mind and the thought processes. Most psychologists of language agree with this theory. Behaviourism may not tell us much about the way in which we learn our mother tongue, but it can point to successful strategies in the learning of a

foreign language when we are older. This comparative study makes one thing clear: nature and nurture, analogy and application, practice and exposure are important. Innate potentialities lay down the framework. Having been exposed to a small number of utterances, the child begins to extract the principles underlying the utterances and compose new utterances of his own. In a period of about four years, he is able to master and internalize all the essential rules of language**.**

First Language Acquisition

The acquisition of first language "is doubtless the greatest intellectual feat any one of us is ever required to perform." Leonard Bloomfield

In nearly all cases, children's language development follows a predictable sequence. However, there is a great deal of variation in the age at which children reach a given milestone. Furthermore, each child's development is usually characterized by gradual acquisition of particular abilities.

Children acquire their first language when they are exposed to a real environment. Acquiring the first language is like completing a puzzle. Some parts of the puzzle are set up, they are ready to be used-those set of pieces are born with everybody, we inherit them from our parents and forefathers. They are called innate learning mechanisms or as Noam Chomsky described as universal grammar. They are active until a specific age then it seems to be impossible to acquire the language again 'There is strong evidence that children may never acquire a language if they have not been exposed to before they reach the age of 6 or 7.

Children between the ages of 2 and 6 learn language so rapidly that by 6 they are competent language users. By the time children are of school-age, they have amazing language ability; it is a seemingly effortless acquisition (Cole & Cole, 1993; Curtiss, 1977; Goldin-Meadow, 1982; Lindfors, 1991; McLaughlin, 1984; Newport, 1991).' The other part of the puzzle is acquired from the interaction between the child and the surroundings, the environment, parents, caretakers, etc. The puzzle is not finished until we interact with the surroundings. As a result of this kind of interaction we acquire the language or we complete the puzzle. The sort of interaction determines the language we speak. I go with those who proposed that children are born with some syntactic categories like 'noun' and 'verb' wired in along with certain structural arrays for combining them. Through this interaction, children acquire the language. But what are the basic requirements for this process? Who are caretakers and how do they affect language acquisition process? and what stages do children go through for the sake of language acquisition?

Basic requirements for first language acquisition

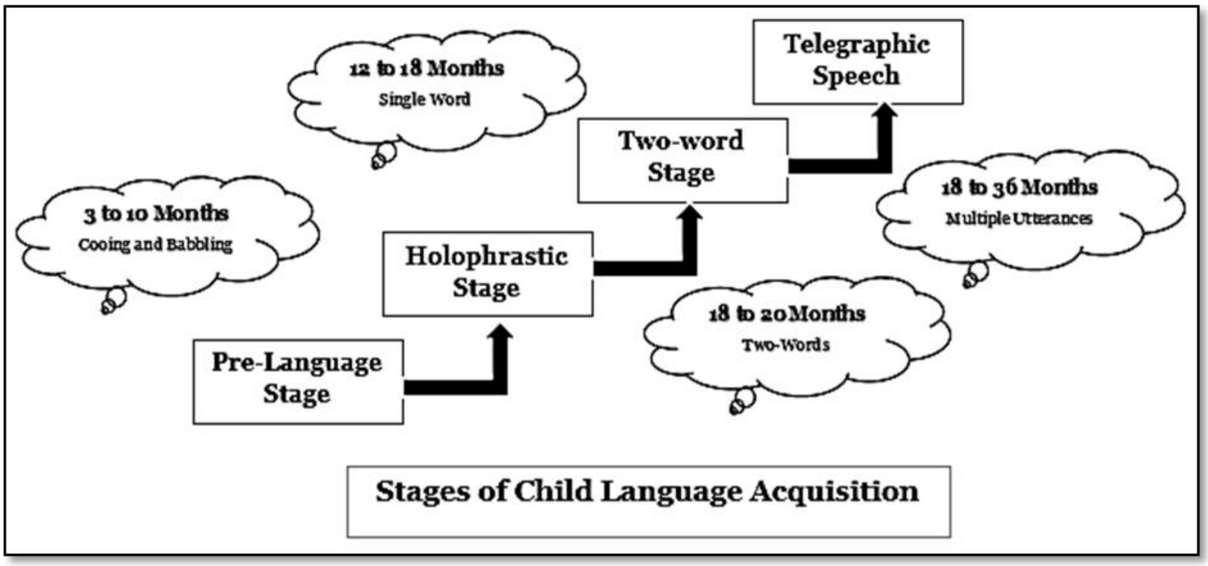
A child growing up in the first two or three years requires interaction with other language-users in order to bring the 'language-faculty' or 'universal grammar' into operation with a particular language, such as English. The child who doesn't hear, or not allowed to use, language will learn no language. The case of Genie, the thirteen-year-old girl from Los Angles who spent her whole life in a state of physical, sensory, social and emotional deprivation that resulted in language disability, is an example. ***The language is acquired in a particular language-using environment.***

The child must also be physically capable of sending and receiving sound signals in a language. All infants make 'cooing' and 'babbling' noises during the first few months, but congenitally deaf infants stop after six months. Therefore, in order to speak a language, a child must be able to hear that language being used. Hearing language sounds by itself, however, is not enough. One reported case has demonstrated that, with deaf parents who gave their mal-hearing son ample exposure to TV and radio programs, the child did not acquire an ability to speak or understand English. What he did learn very effectively, by the age of three, was the use of American Sign Language- the language he used to interact with parents. ***The crucial requirement appears to be the opportunity to interact with others via language.***

Caretaker speech

Under normal circumstances, in Western cultures, the human infant is certainly helped in his or her language acquisition by typical behaviour of the adults in home environment. Adults such as mom, dad, granny and grandpa tend not to address the little creature before them as if they are involved in normal adult-to-adult conversation. ***The characteristically simplified speech style adopted by someone who spends a lot of time interacting with young child is called caretaker speech or motherese***. This type of speech often uses exaggerating intonation and incorporates a lot of forms associated with 'baby-talk'. These are simplified words or alternative forms, with repeated simple sounds, for objects in the child's environment. Built into a lot of caretakers speech is a type of conversational structure which seems to assign an interactive role to the young child even before he or she becomes a speaking participant. Caretaker speech is also characterized by simple sentence structures and a lot of repetition. If the child indeed in the process of working out a system of putting sounds and words together, then these simplified models produced by the interacting adult may serve as good clues to the basic structural organization involved. Moreover, it has generally been observed that the speech of those regularly interacting with children changes and becomes more elaborate as the child begins using more and more language.

Language Acquisition Stages



Here are the stages of child language development. As we look at the stages we have to remember that children develop at different rates.

Pre-Language Stages

The pre-linguistic sounds of the ***very early stages of child language acquisition are simply called 'cooing' and babbling'***. The period from about ***three months to ten months*** is usually characterized by three stages of sound production in the infant's developing repertoire. The ***first recognizable sounds are described as cooing*** with velar consonants like /k/ and /g/, as well as high vowels like /i/ and /u/. ***By six months***, the child is usually able to sit up and can ***produce a number of different vowels and consonants such as fricatives and nasals***. The sound production at this stage is described as babbling and may contain syllable type sounds such as mu and da. In the later babbling stage, around ***nine months***, there are recognizable intonation patterns to the consonant and vowel combinations being produced. It is worthy saying that some psychologists have suggested that this 'pre-language' vocalization gives children some experience of the social role of speech because parents tend to react to the babbling, however incoherent, as if it is, in fact, their child’s contribution to social interaction.

The one-word or Holophrastic Stage

Between ***twelve and eighteen months***, children begin to produce a variety of recognizable single unit utterances. This period, traditionally called the 'one-word stage', is characterized by speech in which single terms are uttered for everyday objects such as ‘cat and cup' other forms such as /Λ / may occur in circumstances which suggest that the child is producing a version of what is that, so the label 'one-word' may be misleading. Some terms like holophrastic or 'single-unit' or 'single-form' may be more accurate.

The two-word Stage

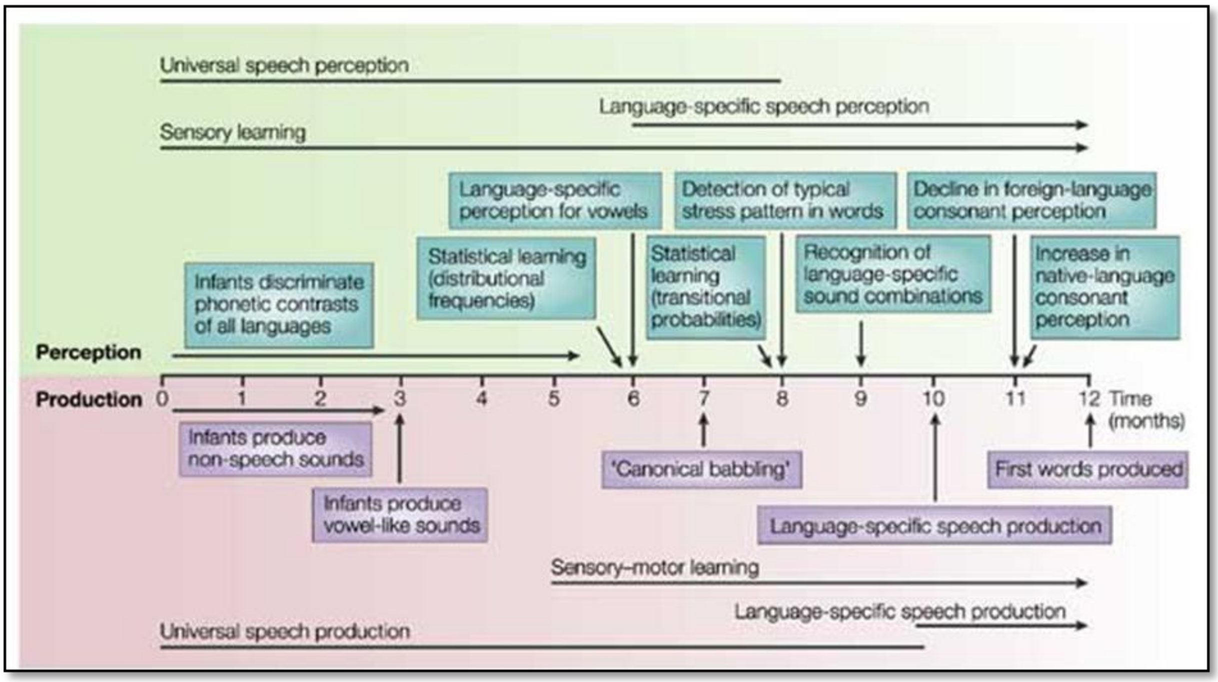
This stage begins around ***eighteen to twenty months***,

as the child's vocabulary moves beyond fifty distinct words. By the time the child is two years old, a variety of combinations will have appeared. The adult interpretations is, of course, very much tied to the context of their utterance. Whatever it is that the child actually intends to communicate via such expressions, the significant functional consequences are that the adult behaves as if communication is taking place.

Telegraphic Speech

Between ***two and three years*** old, the child will begin producing a large number of utterances which could be classified as multiple-word utterances. The salient feature of these utterances ceases to be the number of words, but that variation in word-forms which begins to appear. The telegraphic speech is a stage which is characterized by strings of lexical morphemes in phrases such as cat drink milk . The child has clearly developed some sentence-building capacity by this stage and can order the forms correctly. By the age of two and a half, the child's vocabulary is expanding rapidly and the child is actually initiating more talks. By the age of three, the vocabulary has grown to hundreds of words and pronunciation has become closer to the form of the adult language, so that even visitors have to admit that the little creature can talk.

In conclusion, babies are not born talking however, they acquire the language. ***Language acquisition is a part of the overall development of children physically, socially, and cognitively. They start to acquire the language even before they are born 'silent stage' and they develop their abilities and skills immediately after birth.*** In addition, they go through different stages to develop an ability for uttering sounds, making words, recognizing the meaning and forming constructions.



The Universal Language Timeline of Speech-Perception and Speech-Production Development

Sociolinguistics

Language is a social-cultural-geographical phenomenon. There is a deep relationship between language and society. It is in society that man acquires and uses language. When we study a language which is an abstraction of abstractions, a system of systems, we have to study its further abstractions such as dialects, sociolects, idiolects, etc. That is why we have to keep in mind the geographical area in which this language is spoken, the culture and the society in which it is used, the speakers who use it, the listeners for whom it is used, and the purpose for which it is used, besides the linguistic components that compose it. Only then can our study of a language be complete and comprehensive.

So we must look at language not only from within but also from without; we should study language from the points of view of both form and functions. **Sociolinguistics is the study of speech functions according to the speaker, the hearer, their relationship and contact, the context and the situation, the topic of discourse, the purpose of discourse, and the form of discourse**. An informal definition of sociolinguistics suggested by a linguist is that it is the study of: ***"Who can say what how, using what means, to whom and why."*** It studies the causes and consequences of linguistic behaviour in human societies; it is concerned with the function of language, and studies language from without.

Sociolinguistics is a fascinating and challenging field of linguistics. It studies the ways in which language interacts with society. It is the study of the way in which the structure of a language changes in response to its different social functions, and the definition of what these functions are. 'Society, here is to cover a spectrum of phenomena to do with race, nationality, more restricted regional, social and political groups, and the interactions of individuals within groups. Different labels have sometimes been suggested to cover various parts of this spectrum. **Ethnolinguistics** is sometimes distinguished from the rest, referring to the linguistic correlates and problems of ethnic groups—illustrated at a practical level by the linguistic consequences of immigration; there is a language side to race relations. The term **Anthropological Linguistics** is sometimes distinguished from 'sociological linguistics', depending on one's particular views as to the validity or otherwise of a distinction between anthropology and sociology in the first place (for example, the former studying primitive cultures, the latter studying more 'advanced' political units; but this distinction is not maintained by many others). '**Stylistics**' is another label which is sometimes distinguished, referring to the study of the distinctive linguistic characteristics of smaller social groupings. But more usually, stylistics refers to the study of the literary expression of a community using language. Sociolinguistics gradually merges into ethno-linguistics, anthropological linguistics, stylistics and the subject-matter of psychology.

Broadly speaking, however, the study of language as part of culture and society has now commonly been accepted as Sociolinguistics. But there are also some other expressions which have been used at one time or another, including 'the sociology of language', 'social linguistics', 'institutional linguistics', 'anthropological linguistics', 'linguistic anthropology', 'Ethnolinguistics', the 'ethnography of communication', etc.

The ***kinds of problems which are faced by the sociolinguist*** are***:***

(a) The problems of communities which develop a standard language, and the reactions of minority groups to this (as in Belgium, India, Pakistan or Wales).

(b) The problems of people who have to be educated to linguistic level where they can cope with the demands of a variety of social situations.

(c) The problems of communication which exist between nations or groups using a different language, which affects their 'world-view' (for example the problem of popularizing Russian among the nations which are friendly to Russia).

(d) The problems caused by linguistic change in response to social factors; the problems caused or solved by bilingualism or multilingualism.

By this however, we do not mean that socio-linguistics can or does solve all such problems as stated above. Yet it can identify precisely what the problems are and provide information about the particular manifestation of a problem in a given area, so that possible solutions can thereby be found out or expedited. Furthermore***, problems related to interference, code-switching or dialect-switching can be successfully handled by socio-linguistics. But the success of socio-linguistics ultimately depends upon 'pure linguistics'.***

The scope of sociolinguistics, therefore, ***is the interaction of language and various sociologically definable variables such as social class, specific social situation, status and roles of speakers/hearers,*** etc. As J.B. Pride says, sociolinguistics is not simply 'amalgam of linguistics and sociology (or indeed of linguistics and any other of the social sciences)'. It incorporates, in principle at least, every aspect of the structure and use of language that relates to its social and cultural functions. Hence there seems no real conflict between the sociolinguistic and the psycholinguistic approach to language. Both these views should be reconciled ultimately. Linguists like John Lyons and cognitive psychologists like Campbell and Wales advocate the necessity of widening the notion of competence to take account of a great deal of what might be called the 'social context' of speech.

Language Variation

Language with its different varieties is the subject matter of sociolinguistics. Sociolinguistics studies the varied linguistic realizations of socio-cultural meanings which in a sense are both familiar and unfamiliar and the occurrence of everyday social interactions which are nevertheless relative to particular cultures, societies, social groups, speech communities, languages, dialects, varieties, styles. That is why language variation generally forms a part of socio-linguistic study.

Language can vary, not only from one individual to the next, but also from one sub-section of speech-community (family, village, town, and region) to another. People of different age, sex, social classes, occupations, or cultural groups in the same community will show variations in their speech. Thus language varies in geographical and social space. Variability in a social dimension is called sociolectical. According to sociolinguists, a language is code. There exist

varieties within the code and the factors that cause language variation can be summarized in the following manner:

Nature of participants and their relationship	Socio-economic, Sexual, Occupational
Number of participants	Two Face-to-Face, One addressing a large audience, etc
Role of participants	Teacher/Student/Priest/Parishioner /Father/Son/Husband/Wife, etc
Function of speech event	Persuasion, Request for information, Ritual, Verbal, etc.
Nature of medium	Speech, Writing, Scripted Speech, Speech reinforced by gesture, etc.
Genre of discourse	Scientific, Experiment, Sport, Art, Religion, etc.
Physical setting	Noisy/Quiet/Public/Private/Family/Formal/Familiar/ Unfamiliar, etc.

Language Varieties: - Language varies from region to region, class to class, profession to profession, person to person, and even situation to situation. Sociolinguistics tends to describe these variations in language with reference to their relationship with society. It shows that the relationship between language variation and society is rather a systematic relationship. It manifests that there are four major social factors involve in this variation: ***socio-economic status, age, gender, and ethnic background of the user or users of language***. Due to all these four factors language differs on four levels chiefly:

(1) Phonological Level

(2) Lexical Level

(3) Syntax Level

(4) Discourse Level

In other words, variation within a language with reference to its use or user can be defined in terms of 'difference of linguistic items'.

R. A. Hudson in his Sociolinguistics manifests: ***"What makes a language variety different from another is linguistic items that it includes, so we may define a variety of language as a set of linguistic items with similar social distribution".***

So, to describe language varieties, on one side there are linguistic items and on the other there is 'social distribution'. Let's take two different social classes for example: Middle Class and Working Class. Language of Working Class is different from that of Middle Class. The choice of vocabulary of one class is quite different from the other. Middle class uses more adjective, adverbs and impersonal pronouns. Whereas Working class uses active and simple words and here is lesser use of adjective, adverbs and impersonal pronouns. Lower class speech (restricted code) is more direct with simple grammatical construction in contrast with middle class speech (elaborated code).

In the following, five major language verities will be discussed, namely: Idiolect, Register, Diglossia, Pidgin and Lingua Franca. Besides this, it will also be observed that how a language variety differs from another closely related variety. For instance, what is difference between Idiolect and sociolect? How register differs from dialect? What makes distinguish pidgin from other varieties?

Idiolect: - Every person has some differences with people around him. From eating habits to dressing, everyone has some quite unique feature. The same is the case with individual language use. Every individual have some idiosyncratic linguistic features in his or her use of language. These personal linguistic features are known as Idiolect. ***David crystal*** in his Dictionary of Linguistics and phonetics ***defines Idiolect*** as: ***"Linguistic system of an individual—one's personal dialect".***

This 'linguistic system' can be described in terms of personal choice of vocabulary, grammatical structures, and individual style of pronunciation. In other words idiolect refers to a person's individual phonology, syntax and lexicon.

For instance some individuals use lower pitch and some other speak with higher pitch. Some are in habit of speaking with harder tone and it feels as if they are speaking with anger, even though they are speaking 'sweetly' on their side. Similarly, some individual's use their nasal cavity, more than their vocal cord, in their production of sound and listener feels as some sharp whistle is blowing.

The best example of particular choice of vocabulary is individual use of 'catch phrases'. Most frequent among these are "I say", "I mean", "do you understand?" and "what do you think?" Some catch phrases are rather interesting and their use becomes cause of amusement. For example one of my classmate in M.A Linguistics was in habit of using:

"Bhai" with every third or fourth sentence. Once his audience was a girl instead of boy. When he said "Bhai, main explain kar raha thaa..." The girl corrected him and said "bhai nahi bhan!" and he promptly replied, "Oh bhai, I mean..."

In this way a person's speech is distinguished from other individuals and form any speech community. ***Idiolect is a minor speech variety than sociolect, which is used by any social class***. Idiolect varies with individual whereas ***sociolect varies with class defined on socio-economic bases***. ***Idiolect, sociolect and dialect are the varieties which depend on their user***. However, there is another scheme of language varieties distinguishing from one and another in term of their use rather than user. Register is one of them.

Register: - Human beings are not static. Their thinking, choice, and behavior vary according to need and situation. As they adapt their behavior according to the situation, they adapt their language. This adaptation of language according to situation, context and purpose forms a language variety that is called 'Register'. ***David Crystal defines Register as: "A variety of language defined according to its use in a social situation***".

Language of individual varies from situation to situation. At some occasions people talk very formally, on some other occasions they talk technically as well as formally. At some other occasion they become informal yet technical and sometimes informal and non-technical. Following is the example of all these 'levels of formalities':

Formal technical: "We obtained some sodium chloride."

Formal non-technical: "We obtained some salt."

Informal technical: "We got some sodium chloride."

Informal non-technical: "We got some salt."

There are two other levels: Slang, and vulgar. Question is that why a person adopts these different levels of formalities? Michael Halliday in his "Language as Social Semiotic" defines ***register as*** "***A complex scheme of communicative behaviour***". He observes that this scheme of behaviour has three dimensions: ***Field, Tenor, and Mode.*** These three dimensions determine speaker's choice of 'linguistic items'.

Field implies why and about what the communication is? In simple, what is the purpose and subject matter of communication? For example, a doctor's communication with other doctors will be containing more medical terminology i.e., he will be using medical register.

The same doctor will communicate with his patient in as simple language as possible. So the patient is 'Tenor' that means to whom the communication is being done. Other example of determination of speech by 'Tenor' is the difference of a person's communication with a teacher than with a friend.

Mode is the means of communication. If the mode of communication is letter, its language will be different from direct conversation. If it is an essay, its language will be differing from that of letter even though written about the same topic.

'Register' as a language variety differs from dialect, sociolect and idiolect. These differences are:

Register	**Dialect**
Register is a language variety according to use.	Dialect is language variety according to user.
It may be related to any particular profession or situation.	It may be related to any region or social class
It shows what the user of language is doing	It shows who the user is.
Register is a set of particular linguistic items to be used in a particular situation.	Dialect is a set of linguistic items to be used by people of particular area or class.

Up till now the different variations within a language were being dealt but there are certain situations where two or more languages are used which causes such variations that are beyond the range of one language. One of these variations is known as pidgin. There is a situation in which two or more languages are used with in a society. That is known as 'Diglossia'. Let's discuss the situation.

Diglossia: - Diglossia is not a language variety but ***a 'linguistic situation' where more than one languages are used***. In English language, term Diglossia was introduced by Charles Ferguson. He used this term to refer to those societies where two very different varieties of the same language were being used. He said***: "Diglossia is a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialect of the language (which may include standard or regional standards), there is very highly codified (often grammatically complex) superposed variety."***

In Ferguson's theory that society is 'diglossic' where two 'divergent' varieties of the same language are used, out of which one is 'highly codified'. Arabic speaking countries are the best examples of 'Diglossia'. Throughout the Arabic peninsula there are two varieties of Arabic language in use: Classical Arabic, and Vernaculars. Classical Arabic, which is based on the Qur'anic language, is highly codified and complex and has stable grammatical structure since The Holy Qur'an is revealed. This language is 'Lingua Franca' of Arabic Peninsula and is being taught in schools and also the language of media. Everyone has to learn this variety especially and not acquired "by being born in right kind of family". Everywhere in diglossic society, vernaculars are used for daily routine conversation.

It is obvious from Ferguson's definition that only that society was considered diglossic where two varieties, one high and another low, of the same language were used. However, later on, Joshua Fishman, extend the term to that society where two different languages are used. According to this extension almost all societies become diglossic society.

Ferguson also purposed that there is a strong tendency to give one language higher status or prestige and reserve it for specific occasion and purposes. According to this notion, Pakistani society is strongly a diglossic society where there are not two but three languages exist with different status. In Punjab for example, Punjabi is used at personal level, Urdu is used on social level and English is 'reserved' for high formal occasions. The existence of different languages in a society provides them to emerge into each other and sometimes results into a new mixture of languages that is called Pidgin.

Pidgin: - Pidgin is an '***odd mixture' of two languages*** which cannot be said a divergent variety of 'a language' but of two or more languages. Here languages mixed up oddly that from morphemes to sentence structure everything reduces and mingles strangely. ***David crystal defines pidgin as a language with a markedly reduced grammatical structure, lexicon, and stylistic range, compared with other languages, and which is native language of none and are formed by two mutually unintelligible speech communities attempting to communicate***.

The vocabulary of a pidgin comes mainly from one particular language called the "lexifier". An early "pre-pidgin" is quite restricted in use and variable in structure. But the later "stable

pidgin" develops its own grammatical rules which are quite different from those of the lexifier. These names of pidgins themselves reflect how the vocabulary emerges: chinglish "Chinese English" or engrish "English Chinese". However it becomes more complex with the passage of time.

Since pidgin emerges out of practical need of communication between two different language communities having no greater language to interact, it is also called 'contact language'. R. A. Hudson in his Sociolinguistics states: ***"Pidgin is a variety especially created for the purpose of communication with some other group, and not used by any community for communication among themselves."*** So pidgin is outcome of interaction between two entirely different 'speech communities'. It develops because neither of the communities 'learns' the language of others due to different reasons.

Sometimes practically it is impossible to learn either of the languages so quickly and there is strong need of interaction, as for business purposes or immediate political needs. Most of the present pidgins have developed in European colonies. A few examples are: Hawaii Creole English, AAVE, Papiamentu "Geordie Cameroon Pidgin Krio "Singlish" Tok Pisin, Bislama. Out of these, many have developed as Creoles.

Major difference between pidgin and Creole is that former has no native speakers but later has. In fact, when any pidgin is acquired by children of any community it becomes Creole. At that time it develops its new structures and vocabulary. In other words when a pidgin becomes 'lingua franca' it is called Creole.

An old example of pidgin, that later developed into creole, was "lingua franca". It referred to a mix of mostly Italian with a broad vocabulary drawn from Turkish, Persian, French, Greek and Arabic. This mixed language was used for communication throughout the medieval and early modern Middle East as a diplomatic language. Term "lingua franca" has since become common for any language used by speakers of different languages to communicate with one another.

Lingua Franca: - Lingua franca is any inter-language used beyond its native speakers for the sake of communication between the speech communities having different languages. David Crystal defines it as: ***"An auxiliary language used to enable routine communication to take place between groups of people who speak different native languages".***

Term 'lingua franca' is an old one and its origin is Italian means "Frankish language". It was derived from the medieval Arab Muslim use of "Franks" mean ancient Germanic people. The Muslims used it as a generic term for Europeans during the period of the Crusades. Formerly, the term referred to an old pidgin, mixture of Italian, Turkish, Arabic, Persian, Greek and French. This pidgin was widely used in the Mediterranean area from the 14th century or earlier and still in use in the 20th century. This language served as diplomatic and trade language. However, now this term refers to any language that serves to communicate between different larger speech communities.

There are many languages which have served as 'Lingua Franca' during the course of history. For instance, during the domination of Roman Empire, lingua franca was Latin in the East

and Greek in the west. With the rise of the Arab Muslims, Arabic became lingua franca in the East from South Asia to North Africa and even western part of southern Europe. Persian also have enjoyed this status around 15th century till 19th century in Indian-subcontinent and Central Asia. Until the late-19th and early-20th centuries, Classical Chinese served as both a lingua franca and diplomatic language for Far East Asia, used by China, Korea, Japan and Vietnam in interstate communications. In Europe, from 18th century till World War II, French worked as Interlingua among European nations and now English has occupied this place and is serving as diplomatic and commerce language around the globe.

Conclusion

We have studied different varieties of language and have compared their different aspect. We have observed that language varies from larger communities, down to an individual. Even language of an individual varies from occasion to occasion. We find that there are different levels of formalities with in a language and their use depends of speaker's purpose, mode and audience. Moreover it also varies due to socio-economic position of individual or group. This variation of language with social difference, makes this notion more clear that language is a social phenomenon and inextricably tied with social and cultural traditions.

Bilingualism

Bilingualism has been derived from Latin word bi means "two" and lingualism means "tongue". ***Monolingualism refers to the ability to use a single language***. ***Bilingualism is the ability to use two languages*** effectively. The ability to ***use multiple languages is known as multilingualism***.

Individual & Societal Bilingualism

Bilingualism exists as a possession of an individual. It is also possible to talk about bilingualism as a characteristic of a group or community of people [societal bilingualism]. Bilinguals and multilinguals are most often located in groups, communities or in a particular region (e.g. Catalans in Spain). Co-existing languages may be in a process of rapid change, living in harmony or one rapidly advancing at the cost of the other, or sometimes in conflict. Where many language minorities exist, there is often language shift.

Bilingualism as a Norm

Bilingualism-more generally, multilingualism-is a major fact of life in the world today. To begin with, the world's estimated 5,000 languages are spoken in the world's 200 sovereign states (or 25 languages per state), so that communication among the citizens of many of the world's countries clearly requires extensive bi- (if not multi-)lingualism. In fact, David Crystal (1997) estimates that two-thirds of the world's children grow up in a bilingual environment. Considering only bilingualism involving English, the statistics that Crystal has gathered indicate that, of the approximately 570 million people world-wide who speak English, over 41 percent or 235 million are bilingual in English and some other language. One must conclude that, far from being exceptional, as many lay people believe, bilingualism/multilingualism--which, of course, goes hand in hand with multiculturalism in many cases--is currently the rule throughout the world and will become increasingly so in the future.

Global Multilingualism

The political history of the 19th and 20th centuries and the ideology of 'one state--one nation--one language' have given rise to the idea that monolingualism has always been the default or normal case in Europe and more or less a precondition for political loyalty. Facing this situation, it has been overlooked that the vast majority of the world's population--in whatever form or conditions--is multilingual. This is quite obvious when we look at the linguistic maps of Africa, Asia or Southern America at any given time.

When we talk of the knowledge of languages, we come across terms like Monolingualism, Bilingualism and Multilingualism. Simply speaking, they mean one, two or more languages. It is evident that the distinction is of degree only. Different people use term “Bilingualism” in different ways. For some Bilingualism means an equal ability to communicate in two languages. For others, it means the ability to communicate in two languages but with the possibility of greater skill in one language.

The traditional definition of Bilingualism is something like “the ability to use two languages freely and fluently with native speaker like proficiency”. This approach to bilingualism appears to rule out a great many people, especially learners, who have a good working knowledge of a second language and a fair ability to express themselves, but who cannot claim to have the accuracy and fluency of a native speaker. This type of perfect bilingualism is extremely rare. However, it is not uncommon for people to approximate to perfect bilingualism by being equally competent in both languages over a fairly wide range of situations. So we should prefer to view Bilingualism as “language ability which can be placed on a line from monolingualism to ambilingualism”. It means this ability can occur anywhere on a scale from speaking only one’s native language to speaking two or more languages with equal skill.

Bilingualism in its broad definition is very common indeed all over the world. Monolingualism speech communities are extremely rare. People are required to attempt to learn at least one other language. Over 70% of the earth;s population are thought to be bilingual or multilingual, and there is good reason to believe that bilingualism or multilingualism has been the norm for most human beings at least for the last few millennia. In countries like Switzerland, Canada and the United States, people speak more than one language. Two wellknown examples of officially bilingual countries are Canada and Belgium. An equally well-known example of an officially multilingual country, which has not experienced any comparable language-problems, is Switzerland. Other countries, though not officially bilingual or multilingual, have two or more different languages spoken within their borders. Most countries of the world fall into this latter category. Furthermore, although it does not follow from what has been said so far, in most countries whether they are officially bilingual or multilingual or not, there are whole communities that are bilingual or multilingual in the sense that their members commonly use two or more languages in their daily lives. It is not the case, of course, that all the citizens of an officially bilingual or multilingual country use, or even know, more than one language.

In New Guinea, in southeast Asia, in India, in the Caucasus, in the Amazon rain forest, people routinely learn two or three neighbouring languages as well as their own, and the same was true of Australia before the European settlement. Even today, many millions of European are at least bilingual, speaking both their own mother tongue and the national lenguage of the country they

live in, and many of them can additionally speak a global language or world language like English or French.

People of a country may feel obliged to study a foreign language under political pressure, or adopt it of their own free will to join the main stream of human relationship.Individual bilingualism, however, doesn't have to be the result of political dominance by a group using different language. It can simply be the result of having two parents who speak different languages. If a child simultaneously acquires the French spoken by her mother and the English spoken by her father, then the distinction between the two languages may not even be noticed. There will simply be two ways of talking according to the person being talked to. However, even in this type of bilingualism, one language tends eventually to become the dominent one, with the others in subordinate role.
Sociolinguists have identified two main types of bilingualism: Co-ordinate and Compound.

Co-ordinate bilinguals tend to keep the two languages separate, and have language choice governed by language domains(area of language activity). They may think in their dominant language but have the ability to switch from one language to another when the need arises.

Compound bilinguals have their two languages as a merged system. They have a single semantic base or competence and can use it to produce other language. They move from one language to another with much less hesitation. The compound bilinguals use both language at the same time interchangeably. Compound bilingualism results in code-switching which means change from one language to another. This change of switch may take place from one language to another in the same situation, or from one sentence to another sentence in the discourse, or with in the same sentence.

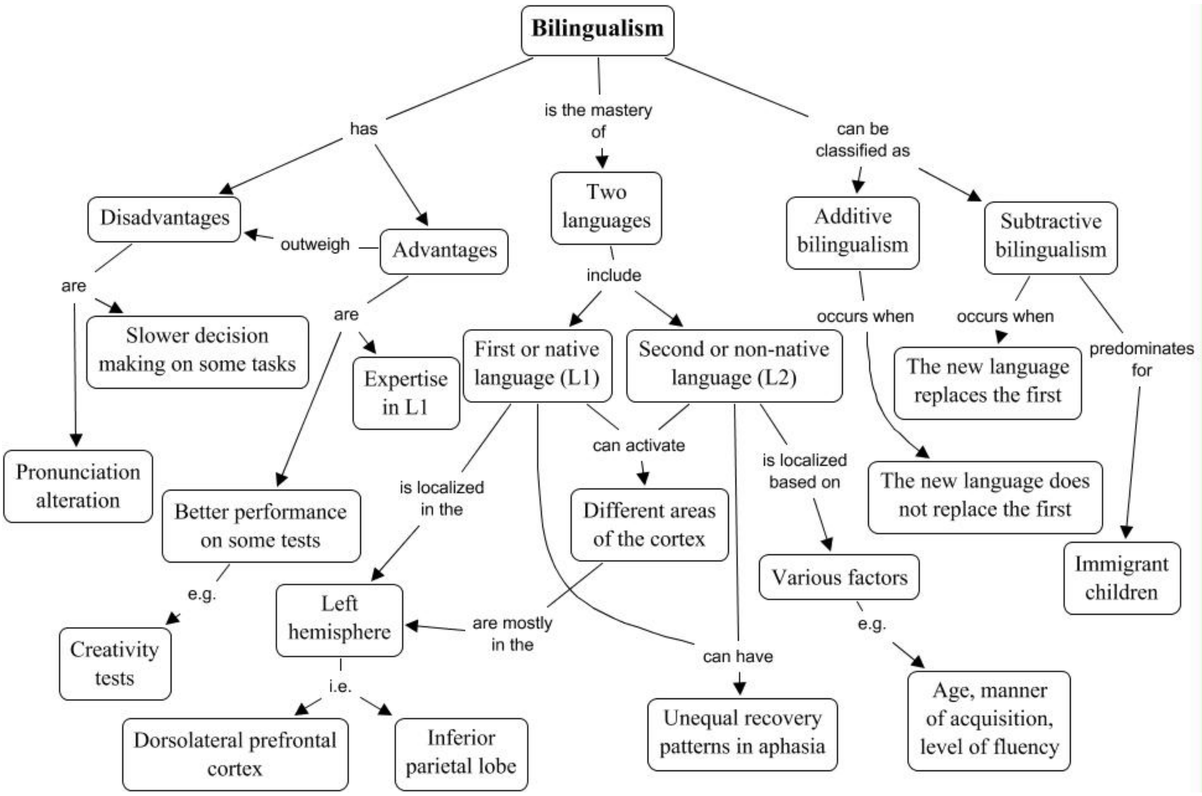
The classification of bilinguals just given may or may not be well founded from a psychological, and neurophysiological, point of view. But it is one that has guided a good deal of recent research. At the very least, it serves to emphasize the fact that there are many different kinds of bilingual individuals.

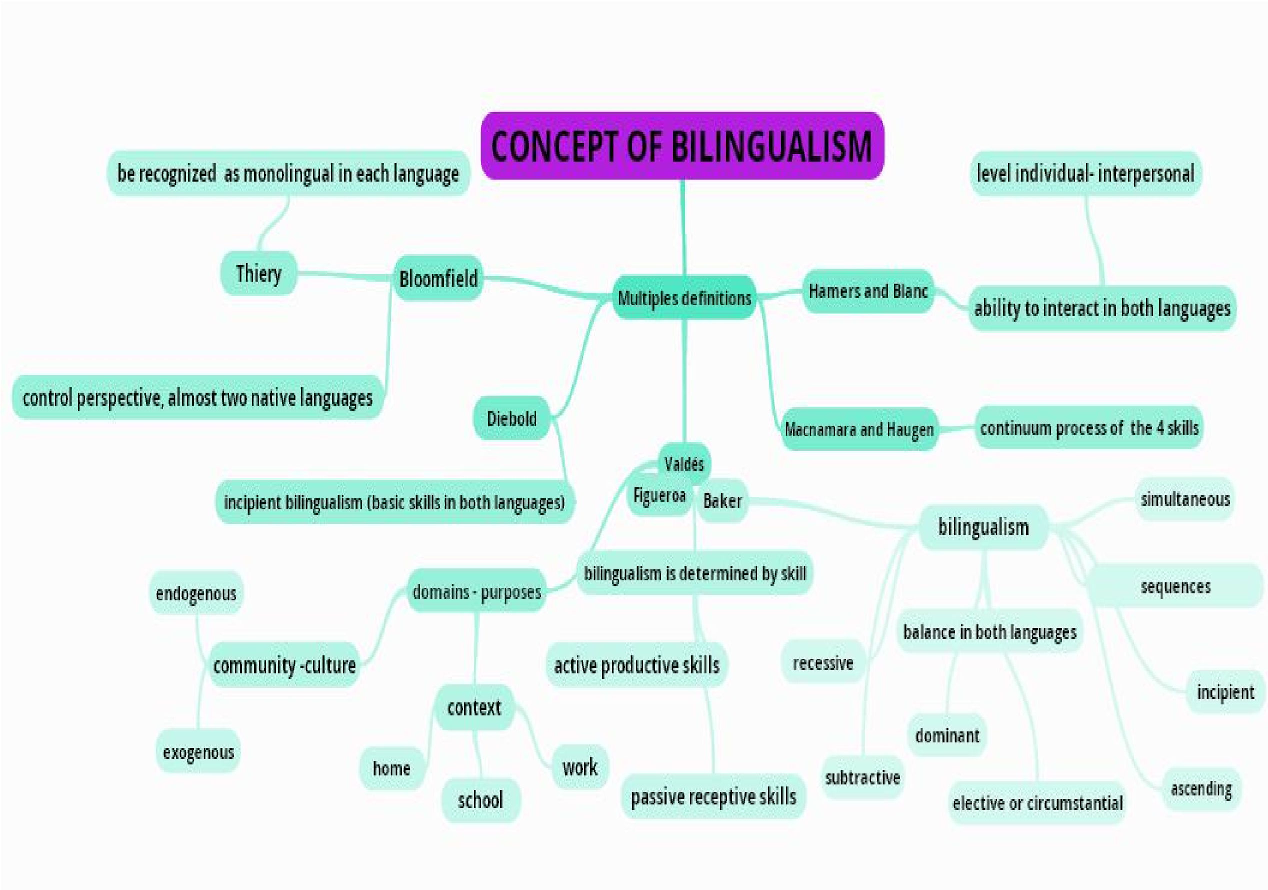
Similarly, there are many different kinds of bilingual communities: different in respect of whether one language is clearly dominant or not for most members; whether one language is dominent for some, but not for others; whether some members approximate to perfect bilingualism or not; whether both languages are acquired simultaneously or not; and so on. However regardless of of all these differences, there is one thing that most, if not all, bilingual communities have in common: a fairly clear functional differentiation of the two languages in respect of what many sociolinguiats refer to as domains. For example, one such domain might the home, this being defined in terms, not simply of the actual place where the conversation occurs, but also of the participants, the topic of conversation, and other relevant variables.

Thus one language might be the language of the home, in the sense that it would always be used in talking informally with other members of the family at home about domestic matters. However, another language might be used outside the home, or inside the home when strangers

are present (even though they might well be bilingual too) or when the topic of conversation is other than domestic. This notion of domain is intuitively attractive.

Bilingualism or multilingualism can be the property of an individual, but equally it can be the property of an entire speech community in which two or more languages are routinely used. The existence of bilingual and multilingual societies raises a number of important social, political and educational issues. In what languages should education be delivered, and at what levels? What languages should be accepted for publication and broadcasting? In what languages should laws be written, and what languages should be accepted in court proceedings?





Code Switching

The practice of moving back and forth between two languages or between two dialects or registers of the same language is called code switching. It occurs far more often in conversation than in writing.

Examples and Observations:

"Code-switching performs several functions:

First, people may use code-switching to hide fluency or memory problems in the second language (but this accounts for about only 10 percent of code switches).

Second, code-switching is used to mark switching from informal situations (using native languages) to formal situations (using second language).

Third, code-switching is used to exert control, especially between parents and children.

Fourth, code-switching is used to align speakers with others in specific situations (e.g., defining oneself as a member of an ethnic group).

Code-switching also 'functions to announce specific identities, create certain meanings, and facilitate particular interpersonal relationships'

In a relatively small Puerto Rican neighborhood in New Jersey, some members freely used code-switching styles and extreme forms of borrowing both in everyday casual talk and in more formal gatherings. Other local residents were careful to speak only Spanish with a minimum of loans on formal occasions, reserving code-switching styles for informal talk. Others again spoke mainly English, using Spanish or code-switching styles only with small children or with neighbors.

African American Vernacular English and Standard American English

"It is common to find references to black speakers who code switch between AAVE [African American Vernacular English] and SAE [Standard American English] in the presence of whites or others speaking SAE. In employment interviews (Hopper & WIlliams, 1973; Akinnaso & Ajirotutu, 1982), formal education in a range of settings (Smitherman, 2000), legal discourse (Garner & Rubin, 1986), and various other contexts, it is advantageous for blacks to have code-switching competence. For a black person who can switch from AAVE to SAE in the presence of others who are speaking SAE, code switching is a skill that holds benefits in relation to the way success is often measured in institutional and professional settings. However, there are more dimensions to code switching than the black/white patterns in institutional settings."

"A Fuzzy-Edged Concept"

"The tendency to reify code switching as a unitary and clearly identifiable phenomenon has been questioned by Gardner-Chloros (1995: 70), who prefers to view code switching as a 'fuzzy-edged concept.' For her, the conventional view of code switching implies that speakers make binary choices, operating in one code or the other at any given time, when in fact code switching overlaps with other kinds of bilingual mixture, and the boundaries between them are difficult to establish. Moreover, it is often impossible to categorize the two codes involved in code switching as discrete and isolatable."

Code Switching and Language Change

"The role of CS, along with other symptoms of contact, in language change is still a matter of discussion. On the one hand, the relationship between contact and language change is now generally acknowledged: few espouse the traditional view that change follows universal, language-internal principles such as simplification, and takes place in the absence of contact with other varieties (James Milroy 1998). On the other hand, some researchers still downplay the role of CS in change, and contrast it with borrowing, which is seen as a form of convergence.

Language Change

Language change is variation over time in a language's phonetic, morphological, semantic, syntactic, and other features.

Causes of language change

Economy	Speakers tend to make their utterances as efficient and effective as possible to reach communicative goals. Purposeful speaking therefore involves a trade-off of costs and benefits.
The principle of least effort	Speakers especially use economy in their articulation, which tends to result in phonetic reduction of speech forms. See vowel reduction, cluster reduction, lenition, and elision. After some time a change may become widely accepted (it becomes a regular sound change) and may end up treated as a standard. For instance: going to [ˈɡoʊ.ɪŋ.tʊ] → gonna [ˈɡɔnə] or [ˈɡʌnə], with examples of both vowel reduction [ʊ] → [ə] and elision [nt] → [n], [oʊ.ɪ] → [ʌ].
Analogy	Reducing word forms by likening different forms of the word to the root.
Language Contact	Borrowing of words and constructions from foreign languages.
The medium of communication	is also one of the causes of language change.
Cultural Environment	Groups of speakers will reflect new places, situations, and objects in their language, whether they encounter different people there or not
Migration/Movement	Speakers will change and create languages, such as pidgins and creoles.

Types of language change

All languages change continuously, and do so in many and varied ways. Marcel Cohen details various types of language change under the overall headings of the external evolution and internal evolution of languages.

Lexical changes

The study of lexical changes forms the diachronic portion of the science of onomasiology. The ongoing influx of new words in the English language (for example) helps make it a rich field for investigation into language change, despite the difficulty of defining precisely and accurately the vocabulary available to speakers of English. Throughout its history English has not only borrowed words from other languages but has re-combined and recycled them to create new meanings, whilst losing some old words.

Dictionary-writers try to keep track of the changes in languages by recording (and, ideally, dating) the appearance in a language of new words, or of new usages for existing words. By the same token, they may tag some words as "archaic" or "obsolete".

Phonetic and phonological changes

The concept of sound change covers both phonetic and phonological developments. The sociolinguist William Labov recorded the change in pronunciation in a relatively short period

in the American resort of Martha's Vineyard and showed how this resulted from social tensions and processes.[Even in the relatively short time that broadcast media have recorded their work, one can observe the difference between the pronunciation of the newsreaders of the 1940s and the 1950s and the pronunciation of today. The greater acceptance and fashion ability of regional accents in media may also reflect a more democratic, less formal society — compare the widespread adoption of language policies.

The mapping and recording of small-scale phonological changes poses difficulties, especially as the practical technology of sound recording dates only from the 19th century. Written texts provide the main (indirect) evidence of how language sounds have changed over the centuries . But note Ferdinand de Saussure's work on postulating the existence and disappearance of laryngeals in Proto-Indo-European as an example of other methods of detecting/reconstructing sound-changes within historical linguistics.

Spelling changes

Standardisation of spelling originated relatively recently. Differences in spelling often catch the eye of a reader of a text from a previous century. The pre-print era had fewer literate people: languages lacked fixed systems of orthography, and the handwritten manuscripts that survive often show words spelled according to regional pronunciation and to personal preference.

Semantic changes

Semantic changes are shifts in meaning of the existing words. They include:

Pejoration	in which a term acquires a negative association
Amelioration	in which a term acquires a positive association
Widening	in which a term acquires a broader meaning
Narrowing	in which a term acquires a narrower meaning

The appearance of a new word marks only the beginning of its existence. Once generally adopted as part of the language, the meanings and applications it has for speakers can shift dramatically, to the point of causing misunderstandings. For example, "villain" once meant a peasant or farmhand, but has come to imply a criminal individual in modern English. This exemplifies a word that has undergone pejoration, which means that a negative association has become attached to it. Conversely, other words have undergone amelioration where a more positive meaning prevails. Thus, the word 'wicked' (generally meaning 'evil'), as of 2009 means 'brilliant' in slang or in a colloquial context.

Other ways of semantic change include narrowing and broadening. Narrowing a word semantically limits its alternative meanings. For example the word "girl" once meant 'a young child' and "hound" (Old English hund) referred to any dog, whereas in modern English it demotes a particular type of canid. Examples of words that have been broadened semantically include "dog" (which once referred to a particular breed).

Syntactic change

Syntactic change is the evolution of the syntactic structure of a natural language. Over time, syntactic change is the greatest modifier of a particular language. Massive changes may occur both in syntax and vocabulary and are attributable to either creolization or relexification.

Sociolinguistics and Language Change

The sociolinguist Jennifer Coates, following William Labov, describes linguistic change as occurring in the context of linguistic heterogeneity. She explains that “linguistic change can be said to have taken place when a new linguistic form, used by some sub-group within a speech community, is adopted by other members of that community and accepted as the norm.”

Can and Patton (2010) provide a quantitative analysis of twentieth century Turkish literature using forty novels of forty authors. Using weighted least squares regression and a sliding window approach, they show that, as time passes, words, in terms of both tokens (in text) and types (in vocabulary), have become longer. They indicate that the increase in word lengths with time can be attributed to the government-initiated language “reform” of the 20th century. This reform aimed at replacing foreign words used in Turkish, especially Arabic- and Persian-based words (since they were in majority when the reform was initiated in early 1930s), with newly coined pure Turkish neologisms created by adding suffixes to Turkish word stems (Lewis, 1999).

Can and Patton (2010), based on their observations of the change of a specific word use (more specifically in newer works the preference of ama over fakat, both borrowed from Arabic and meaning 'but', and their inverse usage correlation is statistically significant), also speculate that the word length increase can influence the common word choice preferences of authors.

Quantifying Language Change

Altintas, Can, and Patton (2007) introduce a systematic approach to language change quantification by studying unconsciously-used language features in time-separated parallel translations. For this purpose, they use objective style markers such as vocabulary richness and lengths of words, word stems and suffixes, and employ statistical methods to measure their changes over time.

Language Shift and Social Status

Languages perceived to be "higher status" stabilise or spread at the expense of other languages perceived by their own speakers to be "lower-status".

Historical examples are the early Welsh and Lutheran bible translations, leading to the liturgical languages Welsh and High German thriving today, unlike other Celtic or German variants.

For prehistory, Forster and Renfrew (2011) argue that in some cases there is a correlation of language change with intrusive male Y chromosomes but not with female DNA. They then

speculate that technological innovation (transition from hunting-gathering to agriculture or from stone to metal tools) or military prowess (as in the abduction of British women by Vikings to Iceland) causes immigration of at least some males, and perceived status change. Then, in mixed-language marriages with these males, prehistoric women would often have chosen to transmit the "higher-status" spouse's language to their children, yielding the language/Y-chromosome correlation seen today.

Relationship between Language and Culture

Introduction

In any culture or region, language is much more than semantics, much more than what the written page or the spoken word can contain. Language does not end at the meaning or the use of words associated to a culture" words represent beliefs, history, and the culture of their origin and they must be used accordingly.

Language

Language as one element of culture has a very important role in human life. Language allows a person communicating with others in meeting their needs. Thus, it can be said is the main function of language as a **communication tool**. This does not mean that the language has only one function. Another function is as **a tool to express self-expression**, **a tool to make integration** and **social adaptation**, as well as **a tool to hold social control**.

Based on these functions we can say that language is a means of communication between members of the public symbol of the sound produced by means of said human. Language is a symbol of the sound produced by means of said human, and the system has means that are arbitrary; used by men in their life as a means of communication between each other to form, express, and communicate thoughts and feelings.

Based on the notions described above, it is clear that the language is a communication tool produced by the tool man has said symbol, system, meaning, and social are arbitrary and culturally. Every language has a symbol. With the symbol he will facilitate communication, although not directly dealing with the object. This is because each symbol already contains a concept or understanding. In order for the meaning of the symbols are understood, every language user must understand and follow the system language is used. Language system contains rules or rules that must be obeyed by the user's language. If the rules are not obeyed, the delivery information may be chaotic or communication cannot happen.

Languages are arbitrary means no direct relationship between the symbol with the symbolized. Symbolic emergence of an object is based on the convention. However, even so to be able to understand a language must be studied and used as a communication tool.

Culture

Culture is the whole communication system that binds and allows operation of a set of people called the public. Thus culture can be defined as a ***"system of rules of communication and interaction that allows a society occurs, preserved, and preserved".***

The relation between human and culture is inseparable. Similarly, between the Pakistani and Pakistani culture. This is because human beings live alongside Pakistan in a unit area of ethnic communities, also live in a unity of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. In this regard, they hold one culture, Pakistan is the national culture.

Culture is a result of creative initiative and the work of humans in an effort to improve the standard of living and adapt to their environment. These limits are more emphasized on the fact that humans are capable of producing culture, because humans are living beings who have mind and reason.

Relationship between Language and Culture

According to Sapir (1921), ***"language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desire by means of voluntarily produced symbols."*** Language is a part of culture and a part of human behavior.

It is often held that the function of language is to express thought and to communicate information. Language also fulfills many other tasks such as greeting people, conducting religious service, etc.

Krech（1962）explained the major functions of language from the following three aspects:

1. Language is the primary vehicle of communication;

2. Language reflects both the personality of the individual and the culture of his history. In turn, it helps shape both personality and culture;

3. Language makes possible the growth and transmission of culture, the continuity of societies, and the effective functioning and control of social group.

It is obvious that language plays a paramount role in developing, elaborating and transmitting culture and language, enabling us to store meanings and experience to facilitate communication. The function of language is so important in communication that it is even exaggerated by some scholars.

The problem of the relationship between language, culture and thought bothered many linguists and philosophers since ancient time. To think about this problem, we need to begin with the definition of language and culture. Language is generally accepted as a system of arbitrary vocal symbols used for human communication. And there is a most widely accepted definition of culture: culture is the total accumulation of beliefs, customs, values, behaviors,

institutions and communication patterns that are shared, learned and passed down through the generation in an identifiable group of people.

The definitions of language and culture imply that the two are closely connected to each other. On one hand, culture seems so inclusive, it permeates almost every aspect of human life including languages people use. On the other hand, when people need to share a culture, they communicate through language.

However, the definition alone cannot provide us with a clear understanding on the relationship between language and culture. Problems remain unsolved as: how does culture influence people's linguistic behavior? And does language influence the culture in return. Various studies have been carried out, among them, a well-known hypothesis is the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis made by two American linguists Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf. The **Sapir-Whorf hypothesis** describes the relationship between language, culture and thought. The core idea is that man's language moulds his perception of reality. We see the world in the way that our language describes it, so that the world we live in is a linguistic construct.

The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis has two major components: linguistic determinism and linguistic relativity. The former holds the idea that the way one thinks is determined by the language one speaks, because one can only perceive the world in terms of the categories and distinctions encoded in the language. The latter means that the categories and distinctions encoded in one language system are unique to that system and incommensurable with those of others, therefore, the difference among languages must be reflected in the differences in the worldviews of their speakers.

Since the formulation of the hypothesis, discussions have never been ended. Many linguists and philosophers are against the linguistic determinism. They argue if language determines thought totally, and if there is no thought without language, speakers of different languages will never understand each other. Nevertheless, the weak interpretation of the hypothesis is now widely accepted that language does have influence on thought and culture. Evidence is easy to be found. A well-known example is that Eskimos have countless words for snow while there is only one word 'snow' in English. Therefore, a 'snow world' in Eskimo's eye and an English speaker's eye would be so different. This example shows that people's perceptions of their surroundings are modified by the conceptual categories their languages happen to provide.

The problem get more and more philosophical, as Winston Churchill once said, 'we shaped our buildings and afterwards our buildings shaped us.' We describe our experience and culture by using language, and the categories built into language, its structures influence our perceptions--language in turn shapes our thought and culture. Therefore, we should take a dialectical point of view on the relationship between language and culture. As is mentioned at the beginning, language and culture are inextricably intertwined. On one hand, language is a part of human being. It reflects people's attitudes, beliefs, and worldviews. Language both expressed and embodies cultural reality. On the other hand, language is a part of culture. It helps perpetuate the culture and it can influence the culture to a certain extent.

Conclusion

Language is a major component and supporter of culture as well as a primary tool for transferring message, which is inextricably bound with culture. Learning a second language also involves learning a second culture to varying degrees. On the other hand, language is influenced and shaped by culture. It reflects culture. Cultural differences are the most serious areas causing misunderstanding, unpleasantness and even conflict in cross-cultural communication. So both foreign language learners and teachers should pay more attention to cultural communication information.

S.T Coleridge

The Romantic Movement in England

At the end of the 18th century a new literature arose in England. It was called Romanticism, and it opposed most of the ideas held earlier in the century. Romanticism had its roots in a changed attitude toward humankind. The forerunners of the Romanticists argued that humans are naturally good; society makes them bad. If the social world could be changed, all men might be happier. Many reforms were suggested: better treatment of people in prisons and **almshouses** (old homes), fewer death penalties for minor crimes, and an increase in charitable institutions.

The Romanticists believed that all people are kin and deserve the treatment to which human beings are by nature entitled. Every person has a right to life, liberty, and equal opportunity. These ideas had been well stated in the American Declaration of Independence. In France a revolution of the common people began in 1789. Many Englishmen hoped that the new democracies—France and the United States—would show the way for the rest of the world to follow. Along with democracy and individualism came other ideas. One of these ideas was that the simple, humble life is best. Another was that people should live close to nature. Thus the Romantic Movement was inherently anti-progress, if progress meant industrialization.

Because of this concern for nature and simple folk, authors began to take an interest in old legends, folk ballads, antiquities, ruins, "noble savages," and rustic characters. Many writers started to give more play to their senses and to their imaginations. Their pictures of nature became livelier and more realistic. They loved to describe rural scenes, graveyards, majestic mountains, and roaring waterfalls. They also liked to write poems and stories of such eerie or supernatural things as ghosts, haunted castles, fairies, and mad folk.

Thus Romanticism grew. The movement cannot be precisely defined. It was a group of ideas, a web of beliefs. No one Romantic writer expressed all these ideas, but each believed enough of them to set him apart from earlier writers. The Romanticists were emotional and imaginative. They acted through inspiration and intuition. They believed in democracy, humanity, and the possibility of achieving a better world.

The First Great Romanticists

William Blake was both poet and artist (see Blake, William). He not only wrote books, but he also illustrated and printed them. Many of his conservative contemporaries thought him insane because his ideas were so unusual. Chief among these "insane" ideas was his devotion to freedom and universal love. He was interested in children and animals—the most innocent of God's creatures. As he wrote in Songs of Innocence (1789):

When the voices of children are heard on the green,
And laughing is heard on the hill,
My heart is at rest within my breast,
And everything else is still.

Certainly no one has put more wonder and mystery into beautiful melodic verse than did Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The strange, haunting supernaturalism of The Rime of the Ancient Mariner (1798) and Christabel (1816) have universal and irresistible appeal.

A close friend of Coleridge's for many years was William Wordsworth. Together they brought out a volume of verse, Lyrical Ballads (1798), which sounded the new note in poetry. This book really signalled the beginning of English Romanticism. Coleridge found beauty in the unreal, Wordsworth found it in the realities of nature.

From nature Wordsworth learned that life may be a continuous development toward goodness. He believed that if people heed the lessons of nature they will grow in character and moral worth. (See also Wordsworth, William.)

Charles Lamb, a schoolmate of Coleridge's, for the most part had little of the serious quality that one sees in the authors of Lyrical Ballads; nor was he an ardent lover of nature. A city man, he showed how a person could live happily among his books by his own fireside. His best-known essay is the playful Dissertation on Roast Pig (1822). In Tales from Shakespeare (1807), he and his sister Mary rewrote many of Shakespeare's plays into stories for children. (See also Lamb, Charles.)

Interest in the past and in people and a love of rugged scenery are found in the works of Sir Walter Scott. The Lay of the Last Minstrel (1805) and The Lady of the Lake (1810) are representative of Scott's poems. Between 1814 and 1832 Scott wrote 32 novels. They include Guy Mannering (1815) and Ivanhoe (1819). (See also Scott, Walter.)

Jane Austen, a gifted writer of realistic novels, had difficulty finding a publisher for her skillfully drawn portraits of English middle-class people. Pride and Prejudice (1813) is her best-known work. (See also Austen, Jane.)

Among the lesser Romantic figures was Robert Southey, who was poet laureate of England and author of The Story of the Three Bears and The Battle of Blenheim. An industrious writer, he earned his living solely by his pen. William Hazlitt, on the other hand, earned his way by lecturing and by writing for critical magazines, such as The Edinburgh Review. (See also Hazlitt, William; Southey, Robert.)

The Younger Romanticists

By 1812 the older generation of Romanticists had grown conservative. They no longer supported radical causes or championed the oppressed. The younger Romantic writers, however, quickly and noisily took up the cry for liberty and justice.

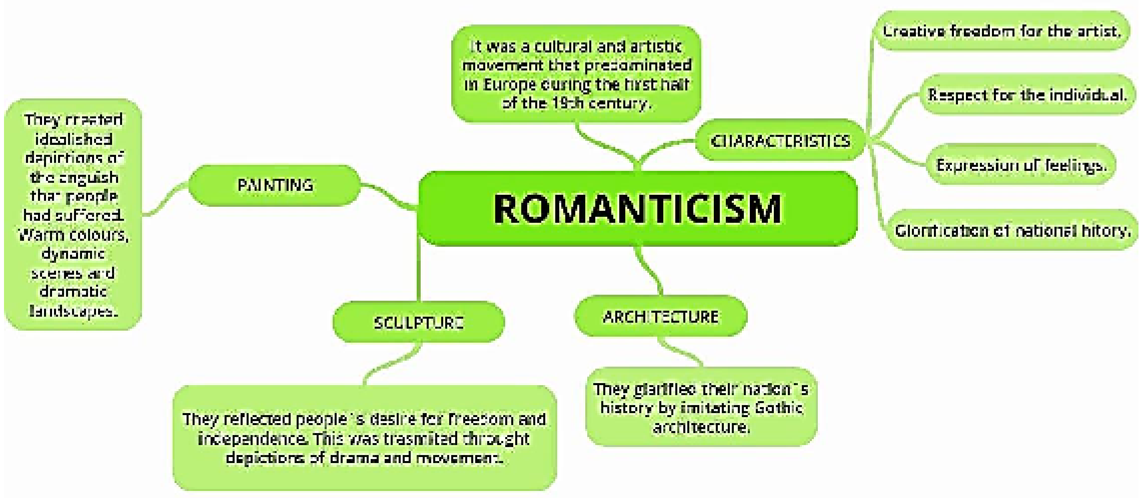
George Gordon Byron was an outspoken critic of the evils of his time. He hoped for human perfection, but his recognition of man's faults led him frequently to despair and disillusionment (Manfred, 1817; Cain, 1821). Much of his work is satire, bitterly contemptuous of human foibles (Don Juan, 1819–24). His narrative poems (The Corsair, 1814; Mazeppa, 1819), about wild and impetuous persons, brought him success. He was a skilled versifier with a remarkable ear for rhythms. Byron influenced the youth of his day more than any other Romanticist. “Byronism” was a mood adopted by thousands of young men.

Percy Bysshe Shelley was the black sheep of a well-to-do, conservative family. Sonnets, songs, and poetic dramas flowed from his pen in the last four years of his life. Many of these works are profound and meditative (Prometheus Unbound, 1820). Others are exquisitely lyrical and beautiful (The Cloud, To a Skylark, Ode to the West Wind). Adonais (1821), his tribute to Keats, ranks among the greatest elegies.

John Keats was a greater poet than either Byron or Shelley (see Keats, John). He believed that true happiness was to be found in art and natural beauty (Ode on a Grecian Urn, 1819; Ode to a Nightingale, 1819). His verses are lively testimony to the truth of his words in Endymion (1818):

A thing of beauty is a joy forever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness;

Other Romanticists who deserve mention are Leigh Hunt, whose Abou Ben Adhem continues to be a favorite; Thomas Moore, whose Believe Me, If All Those Endearing Young Charms is still a favorite of vocal groups; and Thomas De Quincey, known best for his Confessions of an English Opium Eater (1822). De Quincey, however, ought to be better known for his useful distinction between the “literature of knowledge” and the “literature of power.”



The English Romantic Movement as return to Nature

Nature stands as a source of inspiration for the poets but poets have taken it differently when they have written poetry in different Eras of history. For romantics, nature constituted in poetry differently but for 18th century poets, nature’s role was different. Romanticism was a reaction against 18th century poets’ outlook. Nature was admired by Romantics as it existed even wild and they considered Nature as their teacher, their guide, their source of inspiration and their mother while Nature for 18th century poets stood for normal reality of universal law. Dr. Johnson said, “Nothing can please many, and please long but just representations of general nature”.

The Romantic age of English literature began as a deliberate movement in 1798 with the publication of Lyrical Ballads. It ended in 1832 with the death of Sir Walter Scott. It was not a sudden outburst but the result of long and gradual growth and development. The poets of the Romantic School– Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Keats etc.—were not even the first romantics of England, for the Elizabethan literature is essentially romantic in spirit. The pre-Romantics of the late 18th century William Cowper, Thomas Gray, Oliver Goldsmith, William Blake and Robert Burns helped pave the way for this movement by turning their interest away from the classicism of the Age of Pope and towards nature, country people, and simplicity of expression.

In 1798, William Wordsworth and S. T. Coleridge published a collection of poems entitled as Lyrical Ballads and with it began the new age known as the Romantic Age. This new poetry, Known as romantic poetry, has revolutionary notes in comparison with the social and satirical poetry of the school of Alexander Pope. It is rather an inevitable reaction of the artificial and critical poetry of the eighteenth century. Romantic poets and novelists turned to the common people and simple things of field and home and daily life that common people could understand. High imagination, subjectivity, liberalism, love of

nature, Hellenism, and the use of supernatural powers characterized the literature of this period.

The basic aims of Romanticism were various: a return to nature and to belief in the goodness of humanity; the rediscovery of the artist as a supremely individual creator; the development of nationalistic pride; and the exaltation of the senses and emotions over reason and intellect. In addition, Romanticism was a philosophical revolt against rationalism. The characteristic features of English Romantic poetry are:

(1) Love and worship of Nature and dislike for the urban life.

(2) Love for the Medieval Age.

(3) Love for the supernatural and the mystical.

(4) Poetry came to be regarded as the spontaneous expression of the poet's own subjective feelings and did not conform to the poetic conventions of classical doctrines.

(5) Completely abandoned the 'Heroic Couplet' and substituted it with simpler verse forms like the ballads which belonged to the English rural Folk.

(6) The 'poetic diction' of the Neo-Classical Age was completely overthrown and the language of the ordinary people became the language of Romantic poetry.

(7) The subjects of Romantic poetry were often ordinary people: "The Idiot Boy".

The Romantic period of English literature was mainly a period of poetry. This poetry was largely produced by the five great names which dominated the age: William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, George Gordon Lord Byron, P. B. Shelley and John Keats. William Wordsworth began this new tradition in poetry with this simple, heart-felt poems of humble and rustic life. He chose common people for his poetry.

Love for nature is one of Wordsworth's predominant themes. Nature took a different role in each of the Romantic poets and even the Pre-Romantics and Victorians writings, but each of these writers has that one major thing in common. They all write extensively on the role of nature in the lives of people. Like Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelly, John Keats is definitely under the impression of nature being a great force: almost divine.

The English Romantic Writers expressed a particular view of nature, man and the supernatural. They had a strong sense of the beauty in the world around them and took great pleasure in nature. Some, like Shelley and Keats, actually worshiped nature instead of god. Romantic poets are found essentially imaginative and their imaginative vigour expresses itself not merely in a colorful vision of the external world but also in a mystic communion. Mysticism is an inseparable part of romantic imagination and this is the essence of Wordsworth's pantheism, Coleridge's metaphysical speculation and Shelly's myth-making power.

Zest for the beauties of exterior world characterizes all romantic poetry. Romantic poetry carries us away from the suffocating atmosphere of critics into the fresh and invigorating company of the out–of–door world. It not only sings of the sensuous beauty of nature, but also sees into the 'heart of things' and reveals the soul that lies behind. Their hearts overflow with sympathy for the poor and the down trodden. They glorify the innocence and simplicity of the common man. They try to see the heart of man and understand human nature. They find the divine in Man.

In end, English Romanticism is thus both a revolt and a revival; it is a revolt against 18th century traditions and conventions; it is a revival of old English meters and old English masters of poetry.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Samuel Taylor Coleridge was born on October 21st, 1772, in Devonshire, England. His father, John Coleridge, was a vicar of a parish and master of a grammar school. After his father died in 1781, Coleridge attended Christ's Hospital School in London, where he met lifelong friend Charles Lamb.

Coleridge's father had always wanted his son to be a clergyman, so when Coleridge entered Jesus College, at the University of Cambridge in 1791. Coleridge's Christian views as he became a supporter of William Frend, a Fellow (an elite academic) at the college whose Unitarian (naming God as one person, not 'persons') beliefs made him a controversial figure.

En route to Wales in June 1794, Coleridge met a student named Robert Southey. Influenced by Plato's Republic, they constructed a vision of pantisocracy (equal government by all), which involved immigrating to the New World (America) with ten other families to set up a commune. Coleridge and Southey envisioned the men sharing the workload, a great library, philosophical discussions, and freedom of religious and political beliefs.

After finally visiting Wales, Coleridge returned to England to find that Southey had become engaged to a woman named Edith Fricker. As marriage was an integral part of the plan for communal living in the New World, Coleridge decided to marry another Fricker daughter, Sarah. Coleridge's marriage was unhappy and he spent much of it apart from his wife.

While the pantisocracy was still in the planning stages, Southey abandoned the project to pursue his legacy in law. Left without an alternative plan, Coleridge spent the next few years beginning his career as a writer. He never returned to Cambridge to finish his degree.

Due to increasing nervousness and stress, Coleridge turned to opium, in search for a drug that could relax his nerves and reverse his depression. Laudanum, a mixture of opium and alcohol, soon became Coleridge's source of literary genius, as he experienced opium dreams of complete imagination. This addiction would lead to his financial and physical downfall.

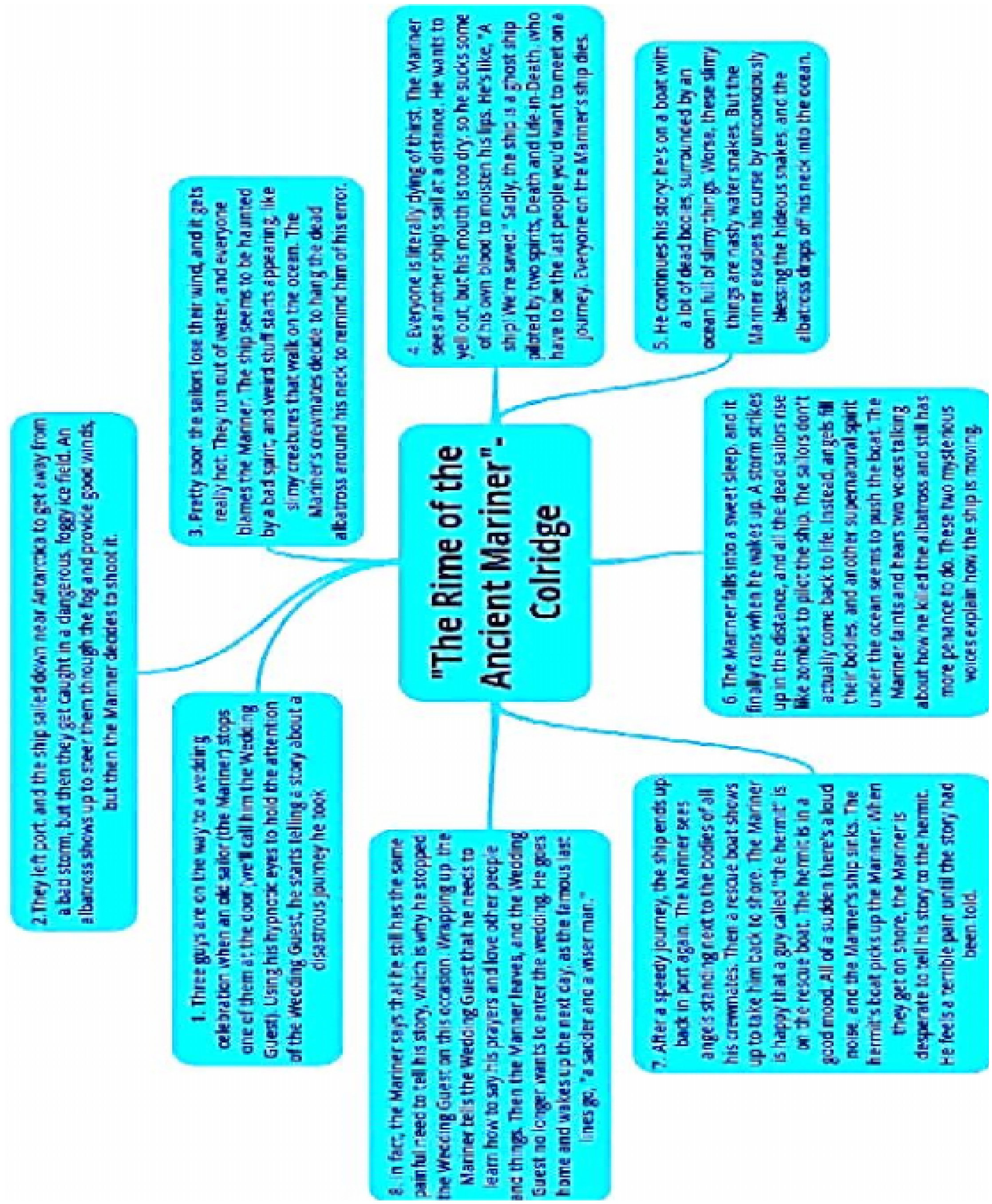
In 1795 Coleridge befriended William Wordsworth, who greatly influenced Coleridge's verse. Coleridge, whose early work was celebratory and conventional, began writing in a more natural style. In his "conversation poems," such as Frost at Midnight and This Lime-Tree Bower my Prison, Coleridge used his intimate friends, such as Charles Lamb, and their experiences as subjects. From 1797 to 1798 he lived near Wordsworth and his sister, Dorothy, in Somersetshire. In 1798 the two men collaborated on a joint volume of poetry entitled Lyrical Ballads. The collection is considered the first great work of the Romantic school of poetry and contains Coleridge's famous poem, The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.

In 1798 the two poets travelled to the Continent together. Coleridge spent most of the trip in Germany, studying the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, Jakob Boehme, and G.E. Lessing. While there he mastered the German language and began translating. When he returned to England in 1800, he settled with family and friends at Keswick. Over the next two decades Coleridge lectured on literature and philosophy, wrote about religious and political theory, spent two years on the island of Malta in an effort to overcome his poor health and his opium addiction, and lived off of financial donations and grants.

Still addicted to opium, he moved in with the physician James Gillman in 1816. In 1817, he published Biographia Literaria, which contained his finest literary criticism. He continued to publish poetry and prose, notably Sibylline Leaves (1817), Aids to Reflection (1825), and Church and State (1830). He died in London on July 25th, 1834 aged 61.

Though he's really only known today for his poetry, Coleridge’s contributions to the field of criticism and our language were many. For instance, he not only coined the word 'selfless,' he introduced the word 'aesthetic' to the English language. Coleridge summed himself up this way, in the epitaph he wrote for himself:

Beneath this sod
A Poet lies; or that which once was he.
O lift one thought in prayer for S.T.C.
That he, who many a year with toil of breath,
Found Death in Life, may here find Life in Death.


"The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"- Colridge
1. Three guys are on the way to a wedding celebration when an old sailor (the Mariner) stops one of them at the door (we'll call him the Wedding Guest). Using his hypnotic eyes to hold the attention of the Wedding Guest, he starts telling a story about a disastrous journey he took
2.They left port, and the ship sailed down near Antarctica to get away from a bad storm, but then they get caught in a dangerous, foggy ice field. An albatross shows up to steer them through the fog and provide good winds, but then the Mariner decides to shoot it.
3. Pretty soon the sailors lose their wind, and it gets really hot. They run out of water, and everyone blames the Mariner. The ship seems to be haunted by a bad spirit, and weird stuff starts appearing, like slimy creatures that walk on the ocean. The Mariner's crewmates decide to hang the dead albatross around his neck to remind him of his error.
4. Everyone is literally dying of thirst. The Mariner sees another ship's sail at a distance. He wants to yell out, but his mouth is too dry, so he sucks some of his own blood to moisten his lips. He's like, "A ship! We're saved." Sadly, the ship is a ghost ship piloted by two spirits, Death and Life-in-Death, who have to be the last people you'd want to meet on a journey. Everyone on the Mariner's ship dies.
5. He continues his story: he's on a boat with a lot of dead bodies, surrounded by an ocean full of slimy things. Worse, these slimy things are nasty water snakes. But the Mariner escapes his curse by unconsciously blessing the hideous snakes, and the albatross drops off his neck into the ocean.
6. The Mariner falls into a sweet sleep, and it finally rains when he wakes up. A storm strikes up in the distance, and all the dead sailors rise like zombies to pilot the ship. The sailors don't actually come back to life. Instead, angels fill their bodies, and another supernatural spirit under the ocean seems to push the boat. The Mariner faints and hears two voices talking about how he killed the albatross and still has more penance to do. These two mysterious voices explain how the ship is moving.
7. After a speedy journey, the ship ends up back in port again. The Mariner sees angels standing next to the bodies of all his crewmates. Then a rescue boat shows up to take him back to shore. The Mariner is happy that a guy called "the hermit" is on the rescue boat. The hermit is in a good mood. All of a sudden there's a loud noise, and the Mariner's ship sinks. The hermit's boat picks up the Mariner. When they get on shore, the Mariner is desperate to tell his story to the hermit. He feels a terrible pain until the story had been told.
8. In fact, the Mariner says that he still has the same painful need to tell his story, which is why he stopped the Wedding Guest on this occasion. Wrapping up, the Mariner tells the Wedding Guest that he needs to learn how to say his prayers and love other people and things. Then the Mariner leaves, and the Wedding Guest no longer wants to enter the wedding. He goes home and wakes up the next day, as the famous last lines go, "a sadder and a wiser man."

"The Rime of Ancient Mariner" : Characters List

Ancient Mariner: The poem's protagonist. He is unnaturally old, with skinny, deeply-tanned limbs and a "glittering eye." He sets sail from his native country with two hundred other men who are all saved from a strange, icy patch of ocean when they are kind to an Albatross that lives there. Impulsively and inexplicably, he shoots the Albatross with his crossbow and is punished for his crime by a spirit who loved the Albatross. He is cursed to be haunted indefinitely by his dead shipmates, and to be compelled to tell the tale of his downfall at random times. Each time he is compelled to share his story with someone, he feels a physical agony that is abated only temporarily once he finishes telling the tale.

Wedding Guest: One of three people on their way to a wedding reception; he is next of kin to the bridegroom. The Ancient Mariner stops him, and despite his protests compels him to sit and listen to the entirety of his story. He is afraid of the Ancient Mariner and yearns to join the merriment of the wedding celebration, but after he hears the Ancient Mariner's story, he becomes both "sadder and...wiser."

The Sailors: Two hundred seamen who set sail with the Ancient Mariner one clear, sunny day and find themselves in the icy world of the "rime" after a storm, from which the Albatross frees them. They feed and play with the Albatross until the Ancient Mariner inexplicably kills it. They begin to suffer from debilitating heat and thirst. They hang the Albatross's corpse around the Ancient Mariner's neck to punish him. When Life-in-Death wins the Ancient Mariner's soul, the sailors' souls are left to Death and they curse the Ancient Mariner with their eyes before dying suddenly. Even though their souls fly out, their bodies refuse to rot and lie open-eyed on the deck, continuously cursing the Ancient Mariner. After the rain returns, the sailors come alive and silently man the ship, singing beautiful melodies. When the ship reaches the harbor, they once again curse the Ancient Mariner with their eyes and then disappear, leaving only their corpses behind. The Ancient Mariner is destined to suffer the curse of a living death and continually be haunted by their cursing eyes.

Albatross: A great, White Sea bird that presumably saves the sailors from the icy world of the "rime" by allowing them to steer through the ice and sending them a good, strong wind. The Albatross, however, also makes a strange mist follow the ship. It flies alongside the ship, plays with the sailors, and eats their food, until the Ancient Mariner shoots it with his crossbow. Its corpse is hung around the Ancient Mariner's neck as a reminder of his crime and falls off only when he is able to appreciate the beauty of nature and pray once more. The Albatross is loved by a powerful spirit who wreaks havoc on and kills the sailors while leaving the Ancient Mariner to the special agony of Life-in-Death.

Death: Embodied in a hulking form on the ghost ship. He loses at dice to Life-in-Death, who gets to claim the Ancient Mariner's soul; instead, Death wins the two hundred sailors.

The Night-mare Life-in-Death: Embodied in a beautiful, naked, ghostly woman with golden hair and red lips. She wins at dice over Death and gets to claim the Ancient Mariner's soul, condemning him to a limbo-like living death.

Pilot: The captain of the small boat that rows out to the Ancient Mariner's ship. He loses his mind when the Ancient Mariner abruptly comes to life and begins to row his boat.

Pilot's Boy: The assistant to the Pilot; he rows the small boat. He loses his mind when the Ancient Mariner, whom he thinks is dead, abruptly comes to life and takes the oars from him.

Hermit: A recluse (solitary) who prays three times a day and lives in communion with nature in the woods. He accompanies the Pilot and the Pilot's boy on the small boat because "he loves to talk with mariners / from a far countree." The Ancient Mariner reveres the Hermit as a righteous and holy man, and asks him to absolve him of his sin. The Hermit is the first person to whom the Ancient Mariner is compelled to tell his tale.

First Voice: One of two voices presumably belonging to a spirit. The Ancient Mariner hears the First Voice after he is knocked unconscious when the ship jolts forward. He explains that the Ancient Mariner offended a spirit by killing the Albatross, because the spirit loved the bird. Other than this moment, the First Voice relies on the Second Voice to explain the Ancient Mariner's situation to him.

Second Voice: The second of two voices presumably belonging to a spirit. The Second Voice is softer than the First Voice-"as soft as honey-dew"-and more knowledgeable. He explains to the First Voice that the Ancient Mariner will pay for his crime much more dearly than he already has. Even though the First Voice tells the Second Voice that the Ancient Mariner angered a spirit who loved the Albatross, the latter explains that the Moon and air move the ship in lieu of wind, and not the spirit who loved the Albatross. Then he urges the First Voice onward, as they are hurrying somewhere.

"The Rime of Ancient Mariner" : Summary

Summary : Parts I-IV

Three young men are walking together to a wedding, when one of them is detained by a grizzled old sailor. The young Wedding-Guest angrily demands that the Mariner let go of him, and the Mariner obeys. But the young man is transfixed by the ancient Mariner's "glittering eye" and can do nothing but sit on a stone and listen to his strange tale. The Mariner says that he sailed on a ship out of his native harbor—"below the kirk, below the hill, / Below the lighthouse top"—and into a sunny and cheerful sea. Hearing bassoon music drifting from the direction of the wedding, the Wedding-Guest imagines that the bride has entered the hall, but he is still helpless to tear himself from the Mariner's story. The Mariner recalls that the voyage quickly darkened, as a giant storm rose up in the sea and chased the ship southward. Quickly, the ship came to a frigid land "of mist and snow," where "ice, mast-high, came floating by"; the ship was hemmed inside this maze of ice. But then the sailors encountered an Albatross, a great sea bird. As it flew around the ship, the ice cracked and split, and a wind from the south propelled the ship out of the frigid regions, into a foggy stretch of water. The Albatross followed behind it, a symbol of good luck to the sailors. A pained look crosses the Mariner's face, and the Wedding-Guest asks him, "Why look'st thou so?" The Mariner confesses that he shot and killed the Albatross with his crossbow.

At first, the other sailors were furious with the Mariner for having killed the bird that made the breezes blow. But when the fog lifted soon afterward, the sailors decided that the bird had actually brought not the breezes but the fog; they now congratulated the Mariner on his deed. The wind pushed the ship into a silent sea where the sailors were quickly stranded; the winds died down, and the ship was

"As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean."

The ocean thickened, and the men had no water to drink; as if the sea were rotting, slimy creatures crawled out of it and walked across the surface. At night, the water burned green, blue, and white with death fire. Some of the sailors dreamed that a spirit, nine fathoms deep, followed them beneath the ship from the land of mist and snow. The sailors blamed the Mariner for their plight and hung the corpse of the Albatross around his neck like a cross.

A weary time passed; the sailors became so parched, their mouths so dry, that they were unable to speak. But one day, gazing westward, the Mariner saw a tiny speck on the horizon. It resolved into a ship, moving toward them. Too dry-mouthed to speak out and inform the other sailors, the Mariner bit down on his arm; sucking the blood, he was able to moisten his tongue enough to cry out, "A sail! a sail!" The sailors smiled, believing they were saved. But as the ship neared, they saw that it was a ghostly, skeletal hull of a ship and that its crew included two figures: Death and the Night-mare Life-in-Death, who takes the form of a pale woman with golden locks and red lips, and "thicks man's blood with cold." Death and Life-in-Death began to throw dice, and the woman won, whereupon she whistled three times, causing the sun to sink to the horizon, the stars to instantly emerge. As the moon rose, chased by a single star, the sailors dropped dead one by one—all except the Mariner, whom each sailor cursed "with his eye" before dying. The souls of the dead men leapt from their bodies and rushed by the Mariner.

The Wedding-Guest declares that he fears the Mariner, with his glittering eye and his skinny hand. The Mariner reassures the Wedding-Guest that there is no need for dread; he was not among the men who died, and he is a living man, not a ghost. Alone on the ship, surrounded by two hundred corpses, the Mariner was surrounded by the slimy sea and the slimy creatures that crawled across its surface. He tried to pray but was deterred by a "wicked whisper" that made his heart "as dry as dust." He closed his eyes, unable to bear the sight of the dead men, each of who glared at him with the malice of their final curse. For seven days and seven nights the Mariner endured the sight, and yet he was unable to die. At last the moon rose, casting the great shadow of the ship across the waters; where the ship's shadow touched the waters, they burned red. The great water snakes moved through the silvery moonlight, glittering; blue, green, and black, the snakes coiled and swam and became beautiful in the Mariner's eyes. He blessed the beautiful creatures in his heart; at that moment, he found himself able to pray, and the corpse of the Albatross fell from his neck, sinking "like lead into the sea."

Summary : Parts V-VII

The Mariner continues telling his story to the Wedding-Guest. Free of the curse of the Albatross, the Mariner was able to sleep, and as he did so, the rains came, drenching him. The moon broke through the clouds, and a host of spirits entered the dead men's bodies, which began to move about and perform their old sailors' tasks. The ship was propelled forward as the Mariner joined in the work. The Wedding-Guest declares again that he is afraid of the Mariner, but the Mariner tells him that the men's bodies were inhabited by blessed spirits, not cursed souls. At dawn, the bodies clustered around the mast, and sweet sounds rose up from their mouths—the sounds of the spirits leaving their bodies. The spirits flew around the ship, singing. The ship continued to surge forward until noon, driven by the spirit from the land of mist and snow, nine fathoms deep in the sea. At noon, however, the ship stopped, then began to move backward and forward as if it were trapped in a tug of war. Finally, it broke free, and the Mariner fell to the deck with the jolt of sudden acceleration. He heard two disembodied voices in the air; one asked if he was the man who had killed the Albatross, and the other declared

softly that he had done penance for his crime and would do more penance before all was rectified.

In dialogue, the two voices discussed the situation. The moon overpowered the sea, they said, and enabled the ship to move; an angelic power moved the ship northward at an astonishingly rapid pace. When the Mariner awoke from his trance, he saw the dead men standing together, looking at him. But a breeze rose up and propelled the ship back to its native country, back to the Mariner's home; he recognized the kirk, the hill, and the lighthouse. As they neared the bay, seraphs—figures made of pure light—stepped out of the corpses of the sailors, which fell to the deck. Each seraph waved at the Mariner, who was powerfully moved. Soon, he heard the sound of oars; the Pilot, the Pilot's son, and the holy Hermit were rowing out toward him. The Mariner hoped that the Hermit could shrive (absolve) him of his sin, washing the blood of the Albatross off his soul.

The Hermit, a holy man who lived in the woods and loved to talk to mariners from strange lands, had encouraged the Pilot and his son not to be afraid and to row out to the ship. But as they reached the Mariner's ship, it sank in a sudden whirlpool, leaving the Mariner afloat and the Pilot's rowboat spinning in the wake. The Mariner was loaded aboard the Pilot's ship, and the Pilot's boy, mad with terror, laughed hysterically and declared that the devil knows how to row. On land, the Mariner begged the Hermit to shrive him, and the Hermit bade the Mariner tell his tale. Once it was told, the Mariner was free from the agony of his guilt. However, the guilt returned over time and persisted until the Mariner traveled to a new place and told his tale again. The moment he comes upon the man to whom he is destined to tell his tale, he knows it, and he has no choice but to relate the story then and there to his appointed audience; the Wedding-Guest is one such person.

The church doors burst open, and the wedding party streams outside. The Mariner declares to the Wedding-Guest that he who loves all God's creatures leads a happier, better life; he then takes his leave. The Wedding-Guest walks away from the party, stunned, and awakes the next morning "a sadder and a wiser man."

"The Rime of Ancient Mariner" : Critical Analysis

The Ancient Mariner illustrates the working of the inexorable law of one life. Any infringement of the law inevitably invites punishment. The Mariner shoots the innocent and friendly albatross, thus suffering misery in the form of loneliness and spiritual anguish. He becomes aware of the enormity of his sin and undergoes severe penance. This extreme penance burns out his ego, the sense of separateness, and finally he realizes oneness of all life. He discovers the joy of human companion in God and declares the moral, "He prayeth best, who loveth best."

The journey of The Ancient Mariner is symbolic. He undergoes an experience which belongs to a world beyond the phenomenal world. In this supernatural world, the ordinary law of cause and effect does not operate. In The Ancient Mariner, Coleridge constructs a series of cause-effect situations which on the face of it, are logical and irrational. The introduction of the storm blast, the polar spirit, Nightmare, Life-in-Death and the troop of spirits is not subject to the law of cause and effect.

Through the ministry of awe, the Mariner is led to realise the existence of a spiritual order of universal love, the sacramental vision, the vision of oneness of life. We are not separate and independent entities. We are part of one web of Life. When this truth dawns upon him, his whole gestalt undergoes a radical change. He views his thoughts and acts as a spectator, a bystander watching at the roadside. His ego was annihilated

and was reborn into self which pervades the whole universe. Evil and good deeds have both disappeared as if he had performed them in a dream.

The Ancient Mariner is a harmonious whole. The natural, the supernatural and the human are artistically fused. The poem emerges as a finished work of art. We are led to see into the mystery of life that is made up of both the natural and the supernatural. Finally we come to believe with the poet the sovereign law of life and have enshrined in the lines:

He prayeth best, who loveth best,
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

In Part I of the poem, the Mariner intrudes with the festivities of a wedding going on the background, and detains one of the three wedding guests to listen to his tale. The sudden appearance of the Mariner with his 'long grey beard', 'glittering eye' and 'skinny hand' strikes a sombre and discordant note to the gay atmosphere of the wedding. The wedding guest is impatient to get away, but the Mariner hypnotizes him with his appearances and speech in such a way that he is rooted to the ground and is forced to hear out the Mariner like a three-year-old child. The gay atmosphere of the wedding is portrayed by the use of expressions like 'merry din', 'loud bosom', 'bride pacing the hall red as a rose', 'the merry minstrelsy'. The Mariner begins to narrate his journey which also commences on a happy note: 'the ship was cheered', 'merrily did we drop.'

The wedding guest is the symbol of social life as yet uninitiated to the spiritual life, whereas the Mariner stands for spiritual life having realized the aloneness of his self. The narration of his sombre story by the Mariner is interspersed with the description of rejoicing going on in the wedding house. The sombre and the cheerful are woven fine so as to present the whole picture of life.

After line 40 of the narration, the atmosphere suddenly becomes sombre with the advent of the storm blast. The ship has entered the world of Nature beyond the control of man. The ship is now at the mercy of the elements of Nature. The bright cheerful atmosphere becomes dismal, horrible and dangerous. There is ice all around which is here the symbol of death. The unfavourable wind is blowing and driving the ship to the polar region. The mariners are in a hopeless and helpless situation. They see no succour to their misery.

The sudden appearance of an albatross on the ship brought relief to their frayed nerves. The bird provided the much-needed company to relieve them of the tedium of loneliness, and to give them solace. The appearance of the bird augurs well for the Mariners as the ice splits and a favourable South wind starts blowing. The storm has blown over and the ship once again sails smoothly. At this point it is revealed in dramatic manner that the Mariner, driven by some unconscious impulse, has killed the innocent, auspicious and friendly bird.

The Part II of the poem begins with the change of wind. The ship sailing northwards comes out of Antarctic and enters the Pacific Ocean and is heading towards the Equator. The sin of killing the friendly bird haunts the Mariner and his companions. They blame the Mariner for this gruesome murder of the good bird that had caused the unfavourable wind to blow. After sometime, when the sun shines brightly and clears off the fog and mist, they change their opinion and justify the killing of the albatross. In this way they make themselves accomplices in the crime. But their euphoria is short-lived. The ship soon enters the silent and still sea. It becomes close and the ship stands still. Dark

sadness supervenes. The sun looks like the moon turning the day into virtual night. There is no sign of life anywhere. Death stalks the whole atmosphere. The ship and the ocean appear as 'painted', bereft of all life. There is extreme heat. The irony of their situation is that there is water all around but they cannot take even a drop to quench their thirst. They are stupefied by acute thirst and paralyzed by terror. Their tongues are 'withered' at the roots and their throats 'choked'. The words 'withered' and 'choked' show the intensity of their thirst.

Corruption is rampant everywhere. Things are rotting in the stagnant sea. Abominable slimy creatures are crawling upon the sea presenting a horrible sight. The Albatross at this stage begins to be avenged. A tormenting spirit dogs them to avenge the killing of the bird. The shipmates cast an accusing look at him and hold him responsible for their miserable condition. They hang the dead albatross around his neck in place of the cross thus making him a damned sinner.

The nominal groups, animate and inanimate, abound in this part of the poem. The animate nominal groups refer to the Mariner and his companions. The inanimate nominal groups like 'sea', 'mist', 'wind', 'breeze', 'fog', 'copper sky', 'noon', 'moon', 'night', relate to the objects of Nature. 'Death fires', 'a witch's oil', 'dream', 'the spirit', 'the nine fathom deep' are objects showing the supernatural in a manner that everything is received with credibility. The expressions like 'silent sea', 'copper sky', 'bloody sun', 'slimy things', 'slimy sea', strike terror in the mind of the reader. The repetition of the nominal water shows the desperate situation of the mariners. The nominal 'sun' is repeated three times. Coleridge uses the rising and setting of the sun not only to indicate the time and the direction of the ship but to show the change of direction in the Mariner's mind also.

In a dazed state afflicted with extreme thirst and heat, time hangs heavy on the shipmates. Suddenly the Mariner spies something moving towards them. A ship of a sort is approaching them. Thirst and heat has rendered them speechless. The Mariner bits his arm and sucks blood to quench his thirst and is thus able to speak. He regains his power of speech and informs his companion about the approaching ship. At first they are glad to see the ship coming, but soon they are disillusioned and consequently feel horrified on seeing the mysterious movements of the ship without wind or tide. The ribs of the ship appear as bars against the rays of the setting sun. The horrible inmates of the ship were Nightmare, Life-in-Death and Death. The Life-in-Death struck terror in their mind with her 'red lips', golden yellow looks and 'white skin'. Life-in-Death and Death diced for the ship's crew and the former wins the Mariner. In the meantime the sun sets and it becomes dark.

In Part III of the poem, the human nominal groups again provide cohesion as they relate to the Mariner and his companions, round whom the poem revolves. Though this part is full of supernatural beings and incidents, yet the setting remains natural. 'A speck', 'a mist', 'a shape', 'Life-in-Death', 'a spectre bark' are the objects showing the supernatural. The air of reality is imparted by the natural setting. The supernatural appears in human form with his strength and weakness. The expressions like 'horned Moon' and 'the star dogged Moon' deepen the supernatural atmosphere. Nature acts in such a way as to advance the action of the story. 'The spectre bark' appears on the scene to seal the fate of the mariners. The nominal 'weary' occurs five times and the impending collapse and death. The broad and burning face of the setting sun forebodes terrible happenings. The nominal 'Moon' is repeated twice. The appearance of the 'Star-dogged Moon' is the precursor of mass death of the mariners. The moon, as it were, exercises both good and evil effect. It is the star between its horns that represents the demonic vengeance upon the mariners. As the Life-in-Death begins her work, the two hundred ship-mates drop down dead one by one. Their souls pass by the Mariner making 'whizz' sound similar to

that made by his crossbow when he killed the Albatross. So the 'whizz' sound reminded him of his heinous crime.

The use of most of the verbs like 'parched', 'glazed', 'unslaked', 'baked' bring out the extreme thirst and the utter desolation under which the mariners are smarting. Extreme thirst and fright has benumbed them. The sight of the skeleton ship makes the heart of the Mariner 'beat fast' and 'thicked' his blood with fear. Pitch darkness increases their fear. Darkness seems to 'sip' the Mariner's blood. The ship-mates are so overwhelmed with horror that they can neither 'groan' nor 'sigh' and in their utter despair abandoned themselves to their fate.

In Part IV of the poem, the Mariner goes through the anguish of remorse and repentance. His whole being is transformed. He, who had earlier expressed revulsion at the sight of the slimy water snakes, is now filled with love for them. His whole gestalt, the total perspective to life, has undergone a radical change. Earlier encased in his little ego, he viewed the snakes as something separate from himself. He even regretted that human beings were lying dead and rotting while the ugly snakes were alive. Now blessed by the divine grace he has come to realize that outward beauty is skin deep and underneath every form surges the same spirit in all creatures. There is nothing high or low, ugly and beautiful. All the contraries disappear at the spiritual attitude. On the realization of this truth, he is redeemed of his sin. The dead albatross fell off his neck and sank into the sea to symbolically mark his redemption.

At the stage of the narration of the story, the wedding guest is overwhelmed with fear when he hears that all the mariners had dropped down dead. The Mariner's 'skinny hand' and 'glittering eye' fan his fears that the Mariner is none other than a ghost talking to him.

The nominal group 'alone' occurs four times in two lines. It expresses the Mariner's utter loneliness and his frustrated craving for human companionship. The heinous crime of killing the albatross weighs heavily on his soul and torments him. The utter isolation is symbolized by the ribbed sea bed. The Mariner stands forlorn amidst the rotting corpses of his ship-mates on the deck surrounded by the rotting sea infested with abominable water snakes. The extreme physical and spiritual loneliness bring our genuine remorse and repentance in the Mariner. Being forsaken by man and God, and he finds himself in the boundary situation whereby he dies to his old egoistic self and is reborn.

The nominal 'weary eye' shows the Mariner in a desperate situation. The Mariner is utterly fed up with his hellish life and expresses his wish to die. The nominals 'slimy thing', 'rotting sea', 'rotting deck' relate to all pervading corruption and evil.

The 'white' moonlight is a contrast to the ominous red shadow of the ship. The yearning for a movement of the moon replaces the sense of revulsion for the rotting stagnation felt by the Mariner. The movement of the moon symbolizes life that can put an end to the rot which has set in the static universe. The work of retribution takes place under the light of the sun while redemption occurs under the light of the moon.

The 'spring' is an image of divine grace and benediction. It is noteworthy that the internal and the external images blend in the poem. The spring of love that gushed from the Mariner's heart is followed by the longed for shower of rain.

The use of verbs like 'lie', 'die', and 'closed' creates a death-like atmosphere. The repetition of the word 'fear' engenders fear in the heart of the readers also.

The 'albatross' and 'the water snakes' stand for one life. The Mariner's realization of the truth of one life ushers in his redemption.

In part V of the poem, with the redemption of his sin, the Mariner feels relieved and a great weight of guilt is off his mind. He feels light and falls into pleasant sleep. Earlier he could not sleep for seven nights because of the curse that afflicted him and the nagging conscience that tormented him day and night. When he awakes from his sweet sleep, he finds that it is raining. There is drought no more. Rain is the symbol of divine grace with which the Mariner is now blessed. Now he finds himself at one with all nature. The dead bodies are manned by the spirits and they rise up to do their assigned jobs on the ship. The ship moves on. The mariner's nephew is at his work beside him, but there is no communication between them. Though physically quite near, they are far apart spiritually. It is intolerable and painful to the Mariner. At this stage of the narration of the story, the wedding guest interrupts the Mariner and gives vent to his fears. But the Mariner at once silences him and allays his fear saying the dead had not come to life. Only their bodies moved because they were possessed by the spirits.

The Mariner comes out of his shell of egoism and enjoys the company of birds and the heavenly bodies. The spirit from the South Pole carries the ship as far as the Equator. At this stage, the Polar Spirit leaves the ship. The ship moves on silently. The penance of the Mariner falls down on the deck and passes into a trance. When he comes out of the trance, he is a completely changed man.

On coming out of his trance, the Mariner hears the Polar Spirit's fellow demons engaged in conversation. One demon tells the other that the Mariner is the very guilty person who has committed the heinous crime of killing the friendly and innocent guest bird. The other demon remarks that the man has already undergone penance enough and shall do more penance.

This part is changed with supernatural atmosphere. The 'sleep' which the Mariner has experienced, is' in fact, the vision he has had of the ideal universe which is interrelated and interdependent.

The 'dream' state which is invoked here is, in fact, the visionary state into which the Mariner falls and experiences supernatural things. He has the vision in which he hears the two voices of the Polar Spirit's fellow demons.

The nominal 'rain' stands for divine grace and heralds the removal of the curse and the drought with which the place is afflicted. It rescues the Mariner from the jaws of death. The vision of 'a hundred fire flags' awakens in him the awareness of the ideal universe. The Sun is shown as the source of both light and sound which are the manifestations of the single identity.

The dead bodies of the mariners working on the ship present a ghastly and horrible scene. It strikes terror in the heart of the wedding guest as well as readers.

The use of verbs like 'shook', 'burst', 'hurried', 'danced', 'roared' mark the advent of movement of life in a death-like situation. When the curse is removed, the Mariner's loneliness is broken. The ship begins to move. Even the dead mariners seem to rise to life. The helmsman 'steered' as the mariners 'worked at the ropes. They 'raised' their limbs. The Ancient Mariner himself pulled at a rope.

The rescue of the Mariner from damnation and death by the divine grace is celebrated by Nature and Super nature. The birds sing sweet songs to mark the occasion.

In part VI, the conversation between the two demon spirits continues. When questioned by the first spirit, the second replies that the course of the ship is being directed by the benign Moon. The ship is moving at a supernatural speed so as to reach its destination before the Mariner comes out of his trance because the physical frame of the Mariner will

not be able to stand the strain and stress of the fantastic speed of the ship. Coleridge makes use of the scientific principle of Venturi effect when he makes the Second Demon explain to the First Demon that the extraordinary speed is achieved by decreasing the air pressure in front of the ship and increasing it from behind. When the Mariner comes out of his trance at night, the ship resumes its normal speed. The atmosphere is calm and the mind of the Mariner is at ease.

The dead man still stands s on the deck staring at him with cursing look. The Mariner dares not look back to the past unpleasant events. He looks to the hopeful future. The welcome gentle breeze blows over him and showers benediction on him. He is overwhelmed with joy when he spies the familiar landmarks like the lighthouse, the hill, the church appearing in reverse order. He recognizes that he is in his own native country. Purged of all dross of guilt, he can now pray.

As the angelic spirit leaves the dead bodies, the bodies drop down once again, lifeless and flat. Before leaving the deck, the spirits signal to the shore for rescue. The Mariner sees a boat carrying the Pilot, the Pilot's boy and the Hermit, coming toward the ship. He is glad to think that the Hermit will redeem his soul of sin.

The nominals, 'the ocean', 'the moon', 'wave', 'wind', and 'breeze' describe Nature in its tranquil moments. Peace pervades the whole Nature, so does it in the mind of the Mariner. The pleasant and soothing whiteness of the Moon has replaced the burning red Sun. The benign Moon acts as the guiding and presiding power. The redemption of the Mariner starts under the silent, moving Moon. The Hermit acts as priest of both Nature and God and unites the Mariner with Man and God.

The phrase 'tell me' is repeated twice to show the impatience and curiosity on the part of the First Spirit to know what makes the ship move at that supernatural speed. Silence and calm has replaced the noise and agitation. The divine grace works through the seraph band that man the dead bodies to make them work on the deck and finally signal to shore to secure help for the Mariner. The verbs 'shrieve' and 'wash away' are used to stand for the removal of the stain of sin from the soul of the Mariner.

The part VII, the concluding part of the poem, finds the Mariner in his own native country. The boat, carrying the Pilot, the Pilot's boy and the Hermit, approaches the ship. They are amazed to find the ship dilapidated, desolate and diabolical. The Pilot hesitates to take the boat further to the ship, but the Hermit urges him to 'push on.' The Mariner is so stupefied that he can neither speak nor stir. As soon as the boat comes close beneath the ship, the ship goes down 'like lead' and sinks. The sky and ocean resound with the loud and dreadful sound the ship makes while sinking. The Mariner is 'stunned' and 'floated' on the ocean like a drowned man. The crew of the boat takes him to be dead and retrieves his body. When the Mariner opens his mouth to speak, the Pilot is so terrified that he falls down senseless. The Hermit too is afraid and prays to ward off his fear. When the Mariner begins to row, the Pilot's boy goes mad with fear.

When they land on the shore, the Mariner entreats the Hermit to redeem him of the sin, but the stain of sin cannot be washed away so easily. He finds himself condemned permanently, tied to the wheel of penance. From time to time, throughout his future life, he is doomed to travel from place to place and unburden the agony of his soul by narrating his ghastly tale to a suitable listener.

When the vesper bell rings he informs the wedding guest that he must go to Church to pray. He teaches the wedding guest that the best prayer is love and reverence for all creatures, as the same spirit pervades all phenomenal manifestations. The Mariner's words have profound effect on the wedding guest and lead him to realize the truth of

oneness of life. The wedding guest is now a totally changed man. He renounces the pleasure of wedding rejoicings and turns to pray.

Most of the nominals like 'wood', 'sea', 'moss', 'old oak stump', 'leaves', 'brook', 'snow', 'hill' relate to Nature and objects of Nature. 'Church' stands for religious life while 'wedding' for worldly pleasures. The Mariner chooses religious life and spurns the worldly life of social relation. Social relations are a hindrance to spiritual growth and progress. So the wedding guest also turns away from the 'bridegroom's door' and is left 'sadder and wiser'. The word 'sadder' here means more steadfast, grave and serious rather than simply cheerless.

The poet emphasizes the point that human love is meaningful only when it is understood in the context of universal love.

Most of the verbal and nominal groups relate to the central action of the poem. They also form the subject matter of the poem. The spirit, with which the whole poem is charged with, is summed up in the following lines:

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small

The telling words of the Mariner bring about unobtrusive change in the being of not only the wedding guest but of the reader too, who is led to realize intimate kinship of man with all things.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner : Major Themes

The Natural World: The Physical: While it can be beautiful and frightening (often simultaneously), the natural world's power in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" is unquestionable. In a move typical of Romantic poets both preceding and following Coleridge, and especially typical of his colleague, William Wordsworth, Coleridge emphasizes the way in which the natural world dwarfs and asserts its awesome power over man. Especially in the 1817 text, in which Coleridge includes marginal glosses, it is clear that the spiritual world controls and utilizes the natural world. At times the natural world seems to be a character itself, based on the way it interacts with the Ancient Mariner. From the moment the Ancient Mariner offends the spirit of the "rime," retribution comes in the form of natural phenomena. The wind dies, the sun intensifies, and it will not rain. The ocean becomes revolting, "rotting" and thrashing with "slimy" creatures and sizzling with strange fires. Only when the Ancient Mariner expresses love for the natural world-the water-snakes-does his punishment abate even slightly. It rains, but the storm is unusually awesome, with a thick stream of fire pouring from one huge cloud. A spirit, whether God or a pagan one, dominates the physical world in order to punish and inspire reverence in the Ancient Mariner. At the poem's end, the Ancient Mariner preaches respect for the natural world as a way to remain in good standing with the spiritual world, because in order to respect God, one must respect all of his creations. This is why he valorizes the Hermit, who sets the example of both prayer and living in harmony with nature. In his final advice to the Wedding Guest, the Ancient Mariner affirms that one can access the sublime, "the image of a greater and better world," only by seeing the value of the mundane, "the petty things of daily life."

The Spiritual World: The Metaphysical: "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" occurs in the natural, physical world-the land and ocean. However, the work has popularly been interpreted as an allegory of man's connection to the spiritual, metaphysical world. In the epigraph, Burnet speaks of man's urge to "classify" things since Adam named the animals. The Ancient Mariner shoots the Albatross as if to prove that it is not an airy spirit, but rather a mortal creature; in a

"classify" the Albatross. Like all natural things, the Albatross is intimately tied to the spiritual world, and thus begins the Ancient Mariner's punishment by the spiritual world by means of the natural world. Rather than address him directly; the supernatural communicates through the natural. The ocean, sun, and lack of wind and rain punish the Ancient Mariner and his shipmates. When the dead men come alive to curse the Ancient Mariner with their eyes, things that are natural-their corpses-are inhabited by a powerful spirit. Men (like Adam) feel the urge to define things, and the Ancient Mariner seems to feel this urge when he suddenly and inexplicably kills the Albatross, shooting it from the sky as though he needs to bring it into the physical, definable realm. It is mortal, but closely tied to the metaphysical, spiritual world-it even flies like a spirit because it is a bird.

The Ancient Mariner detects spirits in their pure form several times in the poem. Even then, they talk only about him, and not to him. When the ghost ship carrying Death and Life-in-Death sails by, the Ancient Mariner overhears them gambling. Then when he lies unconscious on the deck, he hears the First Voice and Second Voice discussing his fate. When angels appear over the sailors' corpses near the shore, they do not talk to the Ancient Mariner, but only guide his ship. In all these instances, it is unclear whether the spirits are real or figments of his imagination. The Ancient Mariner-and we the reader-being mortal beings, require physical affirmation of the spiritual. Coleridge's spiritual world in the poem balances between the religious and the purely fantastical. The Ancient Mariner's prayers do have an effect, as when he blesses the water-snakes and is relieved of his thirst. At the poem's end, he valorizes the holy Hermit and the act of praying with others. However, the spirit that follows the sailors from the "rime", Death, Life-in-Death, the voices, and the angels, are not necessarily Christian archetypes. In a move typical of both Romantic writers and painters, Coleridge locates the spiritual and/or holy in the natural world in order to emphasize man's connection to it. Society can distance man from the sublime by championing worldly pleasures and abandoning reverence for the otherworld. In this way, the wedding reception represents man's alienation from the holy - even in a religious tradition like marriage. However, society can also bring man closer to the sublime, such as when people gather together in prayer.

Liminality: "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" typifies the Romantic fascination with liminal spaces. A liminal space is defined as a place on the edge of a realm or between two realms, whether a forest and a field, or reason and imagination. A liminal space often signifies a liminal state of mind, such as the threshold of the imagination's wonders. Romantics such as Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Keats valorize the liminal space and state as places where one can experience the sublime. For this reason they are often - and especially in the case of Coleridge's poems - associated with drug-induced euphoria. Following from this, liminal spaces and states are those in which pain and pleasure are inextricable. Romantic poets frequently had their protagonists enter liminal spaces and become irreversibly changed. Starting in the epigraph to "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", Coleridge expresses a fascination with the liminal state between the spiritual and natural, or the mundane and the divine. Recall that this is what Burnet calls the "certain [and] uncertain" and "day [and] night."

In the Ancient Mariner's story, liminal spaces are bewildering and cause pain. The first liminal space the sailors encounter is the equator, which is in a sense about as liminal a location as exists; after all, it is the threshold between the Earth's hemispheres. No sooner has the ship crossed the equator than a terrible storm ensues and drives it into the poem's ultimate symbolic liminal space, the icy world of the "rime." It is liminal by its very physical makeup; there, water exists not in one a single, definitive state, but in all three forms: liquid (water), solid (ice), and gas (mist). They are still most definitely in the ocean, but surrounding them are mountainous icebergs reminiscent of the land. The

"rime" fits the archetype of the Romantic liminal space in that it is simultaneously terrifying and beautiful, and in that the sailors do not navigate there purposely, but are rather transported there by some other force. Whereas the open ocean is a wild territory representing the mysteries of the mind and the sublime, the "rime" exists just on its edge. As a liminal space it holds great power, and indeed a powerful spirit inhabits the "rime."

As punishment for his crime of killing the Albatross, the Ancient Mariner is sentenced to Life-in-Death, condemned to be trapped in a limbo-like state where his "glittering eye" tells of both powerful genius and pain. He can compel others to listen to his story from beginning to end, but is forced to do so to relieve his pain. The Ancient Mariner is caught in a liminal state that, as in much of Romantic poetry, is comparable to addiction. He can relieve his suffering temporarily by sharing his story, but must do so continually. The Ancient Mariner suffers because of his experience in the "rime" and afterwards, but has also been extremely close to the divine and sublime because of it. Therefore his curse is somewhat of a blessing; great and unusual knowledge accompanies his pain. The Wedding Guest, the Hermit, and all others to whom he relates his tale enter into a momentary liminal state themselves where they have a distinct sensation of being stunned or mesmerized.

Religion: Although Christian and pagan themes are confounded at times in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", many readers and critics have insisted on a Christian interpretation. Coleridge claimed that he did not intend for the poem to have a moral, but it is difficult not to find one in Part 7. The Ancient Mariner essentially preaches closeness to God through prayer and the willingness to show respect to all of God's creatures. He also says that he finds no greater joy than in joining others in prayer:

"To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
And youths and maidens gay!"

He also champions the Hermit, who does nothing but pray, practice humility before God, and openly revere God's creatures. The Ancient Mariner's shooting of the Albatross can be compared to several Judeo-Christian stories of betrayal, including the original sin of Adam and Eve, and Cain's betrayal of Abel. Like Adam and Eve, the Ancient Mariner fails to respect God's rules and is tempted to try to understand things that should remain out of his reach. Like them, he is forbidden from being truly close to the sublime, existing in a limbo-like rather than an Eden-like state. However, as a son of Adam and Eve, the Ancient Mariner is already a sinner and cast out of the divine realm. Like Cain, the Ancient Mariner angers God by killing another creature. Most obviously, the Ancient Mariner can be seen as the archetypal Judas or the universal sinner who betrays Christ by sinning. Like Judas, he murders the "Christian soul" who could lead to his salvation and greater understanding of the divine. Many readers have interpreted the Albatross as Christ, since it is the "rime" spirit's favorite creature, and the Ancient Mariner pays dearly for killing it. The Albatross is even hung around the Ancient Mariner's neck to mark him for his sin. Though the rain baptizes him after he is finally able to pray, like a real baptism, it does not ensure his salvation. In the end, the Ancient Mariner is like a strange prophet, kept alive to pass word of God's greatness onto others.

Imprisonment: "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" is in many ways a portrait of imprisonment and its inherent loneliness and torment. The first instance of imprisonment occurs when the sailors are swept by a storm into the "rime." The ice is "mast-high", and the captain cannot steer the ship through it. The sailors' confir

"rime" foreshadows the Ancient Mariner's later imprisonment within a bewildered limbo-like existence. In the beginning of the poem, the ship is a vehicle of adventure, and the sailors set out in one another's happy company. However, once the Ancient Mariner shoots the Albatross, it quickly becomes a prison. Without wind to sail the ship, the sailors lose all control over their fate. They are cut off from civilization, even though they have each other's company. They are imprisoned further by thirst, which silences them and effectively puts them in isolation; they are denied the basic human ability to communicate. When the other sailors drop dead, the ship becomes a private prison for the Ancient Mariner.

Even more dramatically, the ghost ship seems to imprison the sun:

"And straight the sun was flecked with bars,

(Heaven's Mother send us grace!)

As if through a dungeon-grate he peered

With broad and burning face."

The ghost ship has such power that it can imprison even the epitome of the natural world's power, the sun. These lines symbolize the spiritual world's power over the natural and physical; spirits can control not only mortals, but the very planets themselves. After he is rescued from the prison that is the ship, the Ancient Mariner is subject to the indefinite imprisonment of his soul within his physical body. His "glittering" eye represents his frenzied soul, eager to escape from his ravaged body. He is imprisoned by the addiction to his own story, as though trapped in the "rime" forever. In a sense, the Ancient Mariner imprisons others by compelling them to listen to his story; they are physically compelled to join him in his torment until he releases them.

Retribution: "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" is a tale of retribution, since the Ancient Mariner spends most of the poem paying for his one, impulsive error of killing the Albatross. The spiritual world avenges the Albatross's death by wreaking physical and psychological havoc on the Ancient Mariner and his shipmates. Even before the sailors die, their punishment is extensive; they become delirious from a debilitating state of thirst, their lips bake black in the sun, and they must endure the torment of seeing water all around them while being unable to drink it for its saltiness. Eventually the sailors all die, their souls flying either to heaven or hell. There are at least two ways to interpret the fact that the sailors suffer with the Ancient Mariner although they themselves have not erred. The first is that retribution is blind; inspired by anger and the desire to punish others, even a spirit may hurt the wrong people. The second is that the sailors are implicated in the Ancient Mariner's crime. If the Ancient Mariner represents the universal sinner, then each sailor, as a human, is guilty of having at some point disrespected one of God's creatures-or if not, he would have in the future. But the eternal punishment called Life-in-Death is reserved for the Ancient Mariner. Presumably the spirit, being immortal, must endure eternal grief over the murder of its beloved Albatross. In retribution, it forces the Ancient Mariner to endure eternal torment as well, in the form of his curse. Though he never dies - and may never, in a sense - the Ancient Mariner speaks from beyond the grave to warn others about the harsh, permanent consequences of momentary foolishness, selfishness, and disrespect of the natural world.

The Act of Storytelling: In "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," Coleridge draws our attention not only to the Ancient Mariner's story, but to the act of storytelling itself. The Ancient Mariner's tale comprises so much of the poem that moments that occur outside of it often seem like interruptions. We are not only Coleridge's audience, but the Ancient Mariner's. Therefore, the messages that the protagonist delivers to his audier

us, as well. Storytelling is a preventative measure in the poem, used to dissuade those who favor the pleasures of society (like the Wedding Guest and, presumably, ourselves) from disregarding the natural and spiritual worlds. The poem can also be seen as an allegory for the writer's task. Coleridge uses the word "teach" to describe the Ancient Mariner's storytelling, and says that he has "strange power of speech." In this way, he compares the protagonist to himself: both are gifted storytellers who impart their wisdom unto others. By associating himself with the Ancient Mariner, Coleridge implies that he, and by extension all writers, are not only inspired but compelled to write. Their gift is equally a curse; the pleasure of writing is marred with torment. According to this interpretation, the writer writes not to please himself or others, but to sate a painful urge. Inherent in the writer's task is communication with others, whom he must warn lest they suffer a similar fate. Just as the Ancient Mariner is forced to balance in a painful limbo between life and death, the writer is compelled and even condemned to balance in the liminal space of the imagination "until [his] tale is told." Like a writer, he is equally enthralled and pained by his imagination. Both are addicts, and storytelling is their drug; it provides only momentary relief until the urge to tell returns. In modern psychological terms, the Ancient Mariner as well as the writer relies on "the talking cure" to relieve himself of his psychological burden. But for the Ancient Mariner, the cure - reliving the experience that started with the "rime" by repeating his "rhyme" - is part of the torture. Coleridge paints an equally powerful and pathetic image of the writer. The Ancient Mariner is able to inspire the Wedding Guest so that he awakes the next day a new man, yet he is also the constant victim of his own talent - a curse that torments, but never destroys.

"The Rime of Ancient Mariner" : As a Christian Allegory

Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "The Rime of an Ancient Mariner" is a lyrical ballad that seems more like a miniature epic. However, not only it is a ballad talking about the adventure of an old mariner who is cursed for life because he kills an albatross; deeper than that, it is also a religious allegory conveying numerous themes pertaining to Christianity. On the one hand, if one reads "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" simply as a tale at sea, the poem stands remarkable because of its simple rhyme and easy flow. On the other hand, if one reads deeper into the intricate details, symbolism, themes, and literary aspects, Coleridge will therefore have produced a masterpiece.

Furthermore, many critics agree that there are several religious connotations in this ballad; however, very few agree upon it being a religious allegory carrying a main religious theme that reflects Christian beliefs. This paper will discuss all the possible religious notions conveyed in Coleridge's artwork.

Christianity preaches that life is a trial by which we either pass and go to heaven, or fail and go to purgatory. Also, the human body is a victim of the human thought and action, which is represented by the soul. Therefore, in relation to the ballad, we can refer to the ship as the human body and the Mariner who steers the ship and leads it to destruction as the human soul. This ship led by the Mariner goes through a trial of storm and winds, but fails because of the Mariner. In Christianity, when a person is over with the trial (dies), his body rots away, "…for dust you are and to dust you will return," (Genesis 3:16 – 19), and the soul remains alive, either tortured, or pleased. The ship sinks. However, the Mariner becomes a captive of Life-in-Death (purgatory) and remains perpetually cursed for the mistake he has done.

Another symbolism conveyed through Coleridge's ballad is the Albatross that symbolizes Jesus Christ. When things start to fall apart in the ship, and the storm destroys all, the Albatross appears as a good omen that saves the ship from the remnants of the storm.

Just as the time when Christ was born and things gradually started to improve, sick people were healed, the blind saw, the deaf heard, and the mute spoke.

"*At length did cross an Albatross,*
Thorough the fog it came ;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name."

(Mariner, p. 424)

The Albatross leads the ship to its right track, just as Christ leads His followers to heaven. "Our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Philippians 3:20). However, salvation is not a mate during the trip, for the bird is killed. Another reference of the Albatross to Christ is when the Mariner kills it by a cross-bow, as a symbol of the cross Christ died on. Also, after the murder, guilt strikes him for killing a good spirit: "*Instead of the cross, the Albatross/About my neck was hung*" (p. 426). Again, referring back to the Holy Bible we see that Judea kills himself because of the great guilt of turning in Christ to the cross and denying his name three times before dawn (just as he was told by the Lord.)

After killing the albatross, a second skeletal ship appears carrying Death and Life-in-Death. This ship represents man's life without Christ; Christianity states that life without religion and faith is void and empty. Hence, the skeletal ship carries death and its partner and reaches for the Mariner, since his life appears to be without Christ, for he kills His symbol.

The Mariner's story can also be related to Cain's, the son of Adam and Eve, who kills his brother. God curses him to forever wander, but marks him with a sign so that no one shall kill him (mark of Cain). The Mariner, here, becomes cursed forever and doesn't die, but lives Life-in-Death, which is much worse than dyeing. He is destined to wander around with a burden and narrate his story whenever necessary to make him feel better.

Moving away from symbolism, numerological Christian references are also significant in the ballad. Number three represents The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit (The Holy Trinity), as well as Christ's resurrection on the third day after He got crucified. In the ballad, in Part III, Death-in-Life wins the battle and whistles three times. Furthermore, the Hermit, his son, and the Mariner, together in one boat, are very relevant to the Trinity, where the Hermit and his son are the Father and Son, and the Mariner is the soul (as I had mentioned), the Holy Spirit. Number seven is significant in the Bible because it counts the number of days it took God to create the earth. In the ballad, the Mariner remains afloat for seven days until he gets rescued by the boat; and for seven days and seven nights he is haunted by the curse of the dead shipmates' open eyes. Nevertheless, the poem is made of seven parts; Part III includes the climax - the important part of the story - where the Mariner gets cursed, and Part VII is where the ballad ends with the moral.

Another important religious theme is the one that relates the Mariner's story to Adam and Eve's, conveying the notion of sin, punishment, and regret. The first people on earth were the first sinners, so does Genesis say. Adam and Eve were the cause of all humankind's suffering, just like the Mariner's sin which causes his shipmates pain and torture. In both stories, a sin is committed, a punishment and a curse are set, and regret is felt after living the curse, which leads to moments of epiphany. The snake in Adam and Eve's story is a major character that encouraged them to sin. In the Rime of the Ancient Mariner however, the religious irony stands in the snakes, for they are there for him to bless in order to be freed of the curse. Ironically, the Mariner needs to praise the

cause of his torture (for if it wasn't for Adam and Eve's snake we'd all be in paradise now), in order to feel better.

Finally, the theme of narration sums up the whole story; the Mariner narrates his story to the wedding guest, and will always have to narrate it wherever he goes. Relating this theme to religion, it can be the notion of preaching. On the surface, the Mariner narrates his story to feel better. On a deeper level, the Mariner preaches the moral of respect and reverence towards God's creatures. In the Bible, the theme of preaching is very significant, for this is one reason why Jesus was sent to us, and that was the job of the apostles after Him. Here, the Mariner could be a symbol of Christ himself who suffers in order to preach the message to others in order to save them from mankind sin.

Therefore, once this ballad is read and apprehended, one would realize how deep its Christian allegory is and how important it is to understand the symbols conveyed by the author to the reader. There is no doubt that Samuel Taylor Coleridge is one of the best poets of his time; for this ballad, with its intricate meanings and rimes, could've never been written as such by an ordinary poet. In fact, "The Rime of an Ancient Mariner" is one of the poems that carry various themes in which a person would enjoy studying and writing about in depth. The more we read it, the more we learn about it, and the more we admire it.

"The Rime of Ancient Mariner" : Use of Literary Devices

To point out some of the several literacy devices used in a lyrical ballad, Rime of the Ancient Mariner by Samuel Taylor Coleridge has been chosen. The literary devices explained with examples from the ballad include alliteration, anaphora, assonance, consonance, elision, hyperbole, imagery, inversion, irony, metaphor, onomatopoeia, oxymoron, paradox, personification, rhyme scheme, simile and symbols.

Alliteration: Alliteration is a literary device where words are used in quick succession and begin with letters belonging to the same sound group. Whether it is the consonant sound or a specific vowel group, the alliteration involves creating a repetition of similar sounds in the sentence. Alliterations are also created when the words all begin with the same letter. Alliterations are used to add character to the writing. For example in part 2, line 102-103;

The breezes blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow follow'd free:

The bold word is an example of alliteration in the poem.

Anaphora: The term anaphora refers to a type of parallelism created when successive phrases or lines begin with the same words. The repetition can be as simple as a single word or as long as an entire phrase. For example in part 1, line 27-28:

Below the Kirk, below the Hill,
Below the Light-house top.

Here, 'below' is used as anaphora to create a litany and rhyme.

Assonance: It is the effect created when there is a repetition of a vowel sound in stressed syllables with different consonant sounds. Assonance can be understood to be a kind of alliteration. What sets it apart from alliterations is that it is the repetition of only vowel sounds. This effect is used widely throughout the ballad to establish its rhythm. For example in part 1, line 21-22:

The Ship was cheer'd, the Harbour clear'd--
Merrily did we drop

Assonance appears in the long 'e' sound in cheer'd and clear'd.

Consonance: Consonance refers to repetition of sounds in quick succession produced by consonants within a sentence or phrase. The repetitive sound is often found at the end of a word. Consonance is the opposite of assonance. For example in part 1, line 27-28:

And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the Sea.

The words 'bright' and 'right' have the same last consonants, creating the effect of consonance.

Elision: Elision refers to the leaving out of an unstressed syllable or vowel, usually in order to keep a regular meter in a line of poetry. It is the deliberate omission of a sound between two words. In Rime of the Ancient Mariner, elision is used repeatedly:

It crack'd and growl'd, and roar'd and howl'd--
Like noises of a swound. (Line 61-62)
It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew. (Line 67-68)
And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe: (Line 91-92)

The highlighted words are examples of elision.

Hyperbole: A hyperbole is a literary device wherein the author uses specific words and phrases that exaggerate and overemphasize the basic crux of the statement in order to produce a grander, more noticeable effect. The purpose of hyperbole is to create a larger-than-life effect and overly stress a specific point. Such sentences usually convey an action or sentiment that is generally not practically or realistically possible or plausible but helps emphasize an emotion. For example in lines

As idle as a painted Ship
Upon a painted Ocean. (Line 117-118)

This hyperbole is used because it stretches the truth so that we understand how still the boat is.

Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink. (Line 121-122)

The poet has used exaggeration to define the ancient mariner's thirst when he is stranded in the ocean and how he can't drink a drop of that huge mass of water.

Imagery: In poetry, one of the strongest devices is imagery when the poet uses words and phrases to create 'mental images' for the reader. Imagery helps the reader to visualize and hence more realistically experience the author's writings. The usage of descriptive words and similes, amongst other literary forms, in order to awaken the readers' sensory perceptions is referred to as imagery. Imagery is not limited to only visual sensations, but also refers to sensations of taste, smell, touch and hearing as well. For example

The ice was here, the ice was there,

The ice was all around:
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound! (Line 59-62)

These lines appeal specifically to the sense of sight and hearing when the ice is described as cracking, growling, roaring and howling noises.

Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink. (Lines 121-122)

These lines portray the intense thirst the narrator felt which plays with the reader's sense of taste.

Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea. (Lines 125-126)

These lines appeal to the sense of touch because we are repulsed by the reading the description of 'slimy insects' with their legs and the sea as 'slimy'.

Inversion: The term 'inversion' refers to the practice of changing the conventional placement of words. It is a literary practice typical of the classical poetry. It is usually used for the purpose of laying emphasis. It helps to arrange the poem in a manner that catches the attention of the reader not only with its content but also with its physical appearance; a result of the peculiar structuring. For example Coleridge inverts the word order from time to time, as the following lines demonstrate:

Instead of the cross, the Albatross
*About my neck was hung. (*Lines 141-142)

The normal word order of this line would be 'was hung about my neck'.

The naked hulk alongside came (line 195)

Here the normal word order would be 'came alongside'.

Irony: The use of irony refers to playing around with words such that the meaning implied by a sentence or word is actually different from the literal meaning derived. Often, irony is used to suggest the stark contrast of the literal meaning being put forth. The deeper, real layer of significance is revealed not by the words themselves but the situation and the context in which they are placed. For example:

Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink. (Lines 119-122)

These lines signify that water is everywhere, but there is none to actually drink.

Metaphor: A metaphor refers to a meaning or identity ascribed to one subject by way of another. In a metaphor, one subject is implied to be another so as to draw a comparison between their similarities and shared traits. The first subject, which is the focus of the sentences, is usually compared to the second subject, which is used to convey a degree of meaning that is used to characterize the first. The purpose of using a metaphor is to take an identity or concept that we understand clearly (second subject) and use it to better understand the lesser-known element (the first subject). For example:

They coil'd and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire. (Lines 281-282)

In the above stated lines, the metaphor is the comparison of the wake of the waves left by the sea snakes with fire.

O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessèd them unaware: (Lines 282-285)

A 'spring of love gushed from my heart' is the metaphor used for love in this line by Coleridge. It shows how beautiful the bride and groom looked that the ancient mariner blessed them with a spring of love gushing from his heart.

Onomatopoeia: The term refers to words whose very sound is very close to the sound they are meant to depict. In other words, it refers to sound words whose pronunciation to the actual sound or noise they represent. For example

It crack'd and growl'd, and roar'd and howl'd (Line 61)

The words in bold are onomatopoeia i.e. when pronounced they portray the sounds of actions they represent.

Oxymoron: It allows the author to use contradictory, contrasting concepts placed together in a manner that actually ends up making sense in a strange, and slightly complex manner. An oxymoron is an interesting literary device because it helps to perceive a deeper level of truth and explore different layers of semantics while writing. For example:

And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold: (Line 51-52)

The phrase wondrous cold is an oxymoron.

And through the drifts the snowy clifts
*Did send a dismal sheen: (*Line 55-56)

'Dismal sheen' is the oxymoron used in these lines.

Paradox: A paradox refers to the use of concepts or ideas that are contradictory to one another, yet, when placed together they hold significant value on several levels. The uniqueness of paradoxes lies in the fact that a deeper level of meaning and significance is not revealed at first glance, but when it does crystallize, it provides astonishing insight. For example:

Her beams bemocked the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charmèd water burnt alway
A still and awful red. (Lines 267-271)

This warring imagery of the moon spreads frosty colors across the ship, but the water burns red in its shadow. While the moon might calm the curse momentarily, it still lies beneath.

Personification: Personification refers to the practice of attaching human traits and characteristics with inanimate objects, phenomena and animals.

The Sun came up upon the left,

Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea. (Lines 25-28)

In these lines, the sun is personified as a human being.

Her beams bemocked the sultry main,
*Like April hoar-frost spread; (*Line 267-268)

The moon in these lines is personified as a mocking woman.

Rhyme Scheme: It is the practice of rhyming words placed at the end of the lines. Rhyme scheme refers to the order in which particular words rhyme. If the alternate words rhyme, it is an "a-b-a-b" rhyme scheme, which means "a" is the rhyme for the lines 1 and 3 and "b" is the rhyme affected in the lines 2 and 4. For example most stanzas in 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner' have four-lines, called a 'quatrain', but not all of the stanzas have exactly four lines. The second and fourth line of each four-line stanza rhyme, providing a song like rhythm; e.g. 'hand' and 'sand' in the first stanza. But some stanzas have five lines. In these stanzas the second line rhymes with the fifth, the third line rhymes with the fourth. Some stanzas contain six lines. In these stanzas the second, fourth and sixth lines rhyme.

Simile: It is the practice of drawing parallels or comparisons between two unrelated and dissimilar things, people, beings, places and concepts. By using similes a greater degree of meaning and understanding is attached to an otherwise simple sentence. The reader is able to better understand the sentiment the author wishes to convey. Similes are marked by the use of the words 'as' or 'such as' or 'like'. For example

Every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whizz of my crossbow! (Lines 223-224)

In these lines, there is the comparison of the passing of a soul to the sound of a shot arrow.

The sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky
*Lay like a load on my weary eye (*Lines 251-252)

Comparison of the sky and sea to a weight on the eye is the simile in these lines.

Symbol: A symbol is literary device that contains several layers of meaning, often concealed at first sight, and is representative of several other aspects or concepts and traits than those that are visible in the literal translation alone. Symbol is using an object or action that means something more than its literal meaning. For example, in the Rime of the Ancient Mariner, the Mariner is an actual symbolic representation of Adam. The Ancient Mariner slaying of the Albatross is equal to Adam and Eve eating the forbidden fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. The moon and sun also play an important symbol in this story. The sun represents God's influence of wrathful power but the moon has a more positive association than the sun. Generally troubling outcome happens to the Mariner during the day while more favorable result happens by moon light. For example, the mariner's curse lifts and he returns home by moonlight.

"The Rime of Ancient Mariner" : As a Ballad

Ballad is a short narrative folk song that fixes on the most dramatic part of a story, moving to its conclusion by means of dialogue and a series of incidents. It is one of the earliest forms of literature The Ancient Mariner by S.T. Coleridge is a literary ballad.

Following this age old tradition Coleridge created a marvelous ballad poem. Here goes a discussion on what have made The Ancient Mariner a perfect ballad.

Use of Refrains: The refrain of words, lines and sometimes stanza is a special feature of folk ballads. Coleridge makes use of refrain in a subtle way. He makes use of refrain for emphasis or for reminding us of the essence of a thing. In the following lines refrain is clearly meant for emphasis. In the following lines repetition is clearly meant for emphasis:

Water, water everywhere
Nor any drop to drink."

Musical arrangement of words: Coleridge has shown great skill in arranging the words of his verses in a melodious manner. For the sake of musical arrangement of words he has frequently employed alliteration, assonance, and various rhythms. In the following passage he has employed the hissing sounds of "s" to convey the idea of movement in a musical manner.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sailed softly too
Sweetly sweetly blew the breeze
On me alone it blew.

Supernatural Machinery and Mysticism: Supernatural element is an essential element of ballads of all description. Coleridge in this poem has built in a large supernatural machinery to draw and effective and purposeful contrast between things natural and things human. The supernatural world or life has logic of its own and comes into action to impose the due punishment. It even controls, influences, and takes advantages of natural elements like the wind, the stars, the rain, the fog and the mist. The Ancient Mariner is also packed with mystery of an awful nature. The Mariner's ship is becalmed. The ocean begins to rot. Then the ship begins to sail without a tide. The Mariner tells nothing of who he is and little of what he does. In the poem we find him as a helpless soul passing through strange experiences.

Short ballad stanzas: The poem is written in short ballad stanzas. Many of them are four-line stanzas. But some are also five line, or six line stanzas. The verses are iambic tetrameters followed by iambic trimeters. The rhythms are various. The stanza is the same that occurs in Thoma's Pery's ballads. But Coleridge's stanza is more polished and finished than Percy's.

Modernity: The Ancient Mariner has touches of modernity. The psychological effect in which the poem abounds is something modern and original. In old ballads entire emphasis is laid upon external events. In Ancient Mariner the poet describes not only the external events but also what happens in the mind of the ancient Mariner. Thus we are told that The Ancient Mariner felt extremely fear stricken when the ghost-ship disappeared all of a sudden on the sea.

Fear at my heart at a cup
My life blood seemed to sip.

In the light of the above discussion, it may be concluded that "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" is obviously a ballad in its form. The poem has everything- a vivid story, dramatic action, verbal music, a scenic setting, and mystery. It is a beautiful ballad possessing all the characteristics of a ballad in a more polished and finished form.

"The Rime of Ancient Mariner" : Use of Symbols

Symbolism can be defined as the practice, system and art of representing ideas by means of symbols. The term 'symbol' although is a word, a phrase, an object, or a clause even, yet it always represents an abstraction. So the thing represented is an idea, quality, condition, or any other abstract thing.

Kinds of symbols: Coleridge has employed symboli in "The Rime of The Ancient Mariner". These symbols are summed up in two artistic symbolic Categories – symbols of distance and symbols of life in Middle Ages.

The symbols of the art of storytelling serve to heighten the illusion; credibly the marvels, provide an approach to them, a middle distance, which makes them appropriately more remote. There is also nearer distance. The Wedding Guest is a symbol of the middle distance. He stands between the Ancient Mariner and his voyage in a land of marvels. The marginal comment of the poet is a symbol of nearer distance. It stands between the reader and the marvel land of poetry.

Further, the Hermit, the pilot and the Pilot's boy, the background of the sea-port hill, the church, and the lighthouse are symbols of the vanished life of the middle ages. Hence in the words of Stoll, "when the Mariner and his strip, equally bewitched arrive, the effect of the mere sight of them on normal every day Hermit, pilot and pilot boy is startling, shocking. The effect of that, in turn, upon the Wedding Guest and also the reader is convincing".

The Mariner: A symbol of inquiring spirit: Adopting the spiritual point of view we can look upon the Ancient Mariner as a symbol of "an unusually inquiring spirit", and his voyage as a 'mental adventure'. The Mariner's tale is a story of a voyage into the interior. Not only into the unfathomable depths of the sources of human action; the story also takes us beyond the human world altogether. Again, it is a voyage of extreme contrasts of suffering and of expiation, of the human and social and an altogether alien cosmos with its own terrible yet beautiful order.

Moon symbolism: In The Ancient Mariner, a weak or waning moon is pretty clearly a powerful symbol for loss of mother love. In Part-III the crescent moon rises after life in death has won the Mariner's soul and Death has won his ship mates, lives. Here the moon rises in the eas6t, while the moon always rises in the west.

Shooting of the Albatross: The Albatross, following the ship, stands for the power of Nature coming to the help of the Mariner and his crew. It saves them from snow and fog. The bird seems to suggest some redeeming force in creation that guides humanity:

"As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name".

The **shooting of the Albatross** comes quite suddenly and irrationally. It symbolizes the **sin of ignorance** the act is explicitly called 'hellish'. As a result, the ship is becalmed in a tropic sea. Parching heat replaces icy cold. The Mariner gradually discovers from the result of his action that the killing of the Albatross is the violation of a great sanctity. The sympathy between Nature and voyage is broken and terrible, retribution follows. The knowledge of evil is symbolized by the 'shiny things' that crawl on the retiring ocean, and the 'death-fires' and 'witch's oil' burning by night.

Conclusion: Coleridge defines a symbol as something which presents the eternal in the temporal, and the universal in the particular. It is through the use of symbols that a poet

conveys universal truth. The Ancient Mariner, being a tale of the supernatural, is also symbolic and allegorical.

Through a set of symbols the poem becomes a moral allegory which says,

"He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast".

The whole poem illustrates the moral of an intimate kinship between all living things. God is on the side of pity and love, and the forces of the universe become hostile to those who show cruelty towards animals. According to Bowra, this poem is a "myth of guilt and redemption".

"The Rime of Ancient Mariner" : As an Allegory

An allegory is described as a fictional literary narrative or artistic expression that conveys a symbolic meaning parallel to but distinct from, and more important than, the literal meaning. Allegory has also been defined as an extended metaphor. The symbolic meaning is usually expressed through personifications and other symbols

"The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" is an allegory that symbolizes the inherent struggle of human beings facing the ideas of sin and redemption. In writing this poem, Coleridge spent four months of sustained writing upon his purpose of supposing that supernatural situations are real. This purpose is seen clearly in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", which demonstrates salvation, and the power of sympathetic imagination. The story of the ancient mariner takes place on a sea voyage around the horn of Africa and through the Pacific Ocean to England, which Coleridge uses to symbolize the passage into the spirit world of guilt, retribution, and rebirth.

In discussing the symbolism of guilt in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", it is important to understand that in the eyes of the Romantics God was one with Nature. Because of this belief a sin against Nature was seen as a sin against God. In line 82 of the poem, the Mariner simply says, "I shot the Albatross." In saying this, the reader often questions why the bird was shot. There is no explanation. The Albatross was shot without reason or motive very much like the sin of humans. Here the poem begins to take on its allegorical purpose in which the Albatross symbolizes not only sin, but possibly Jesus as well. In Christianity, Jesus died upon the cross for the sins of humanity. He was punished in order for humankind to be forgiven. Like Jesus, the Albatross died not for its own sins, but rather for the sins of humans-the sin of the Mariner.

In order for the Mariner to be forgiven of this sin he must first admit his guilt. In lines 91 through 96 he does so by saying,

"And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe:
For all averred, I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow!"

It is this admission of guilt that allows the process of forgiveness for the Mariner to begin. It also allows the Albatross to become a reminder of the Mariner's sin, a representation of Christ's suffering, and a symbol of the Christian cross. In lines 40 and 41 it says:

"Instead of the cross,
the Albatross About my neck was hung."

The next symbolic theme in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" is that of retribution. In lines 143-146 Coleridge illustrates a time of draught for the sailors on the voyage. Without any water to drink they are suffering. This symbolizes the spiritual draught that human beings face in Christianity. Without the love for Christ human beings are thirsting for spiritual enlightenment and forgiveness-without which they suffer.

Also as a symbol for retribution in the poem is the appearance of Life in Death. In Christianity, in order to experience everlasting life in heaven, humans must succumb to death first. Coleridge uses supernatural events to show real life situations in his poem. The real life situation of life in death in Christianity is symbolized as a supernatural being in in lines 188-193 of the poem. This symbolism of Life-in-Death is expressed through personification in saying,

"Her lips were red, her looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold:
Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The Night-mare Life-in-Death was she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold."

The final symbolic theme in Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" is that of rebirth. This rebirth is seen in the Mariner's realization that all creatures are a part of God. In lines 272-281 the Mariner discusses the beauty of the water snakes that are around the boat. This realization leads to the Mariner's rebirth when in lines 284-285 he says:

"A spring of love gushed from my heart
And I blessed them unaware."

It is at this moment of recognition that the Albatross falls from the Mariner's neck because he no longer needs it as a reminder of his sin. He has been forgiven in his heart as he sees the beauty that God is in Nature.

Another symbol of rebirth in the poem is seen in the rain. After a draught of endless time through which the Mariner did not realize his sin or the beauty of Nature in God, he finally feels rain that he can drink, and be quenched from his physical and spiritual draught. With his recognition the Mariner experiences rain as a symbol of baptism and rebirth in lines 299-300 when he says:

"I dreamt that they were filled with dew;
And when I awoke, it rained."

In Christianity, baptism symbolizes the rebirth of the human from his or her sin into a new enlightenment, as does the rain in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner."

In the conclusion to the poem, Coleridge provides closure to the spiritual journey of the Mariner by expressing his Anglican upbringing. In lines 574-577 the Mariner asks a holy Hermit for forgiveness and is given penance. To fulfill his spiritual rebirth the Mariner is told by the Hermit in lines 578-581 to tell the story of his journey of death in life and rebirth in love to others. This penance is what allows the Mariner to be reborn.

The last stanza of the poem tells the reader of the wedding guest who has been listening to the story all along. It expresses the moral of the story in saying,

"He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and a wiser man,

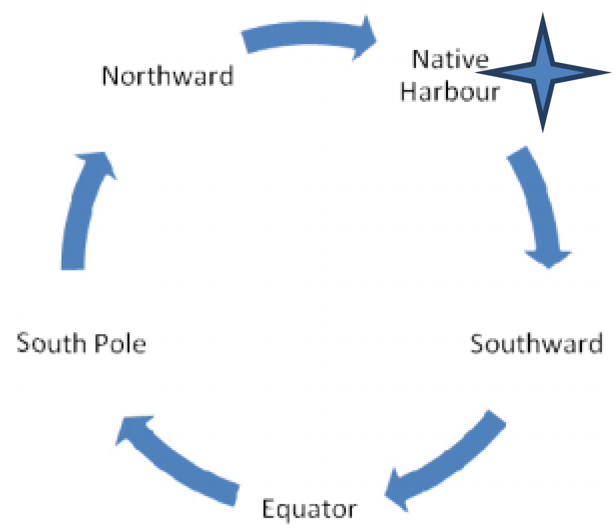
He rose the morrow morn."

Coleridge uses "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" to transport the reader into a spiritual journey of guilt, retribution, and rebirth as a symbol of the journey of Christianity. Expressing the inherent struggles of humanity for sin and redemption, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" allows the reader to suppose that supernatural situations are real. Coleridge uses supernatural events to bring to live the ideas he expresses in his work. "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" clearly demonstrates the ideals of Christianity as salvation and the power of sympathetic imagination.

"The Rime of Ancient Mariner" : Depiction of Spiritual Journey

S.T. Coleridge's 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner', being a multi-meaningful poem, has now become one of the most famous poems in English literature. In general, it is a story of a mariner's interesting voyage or journey on the sea, but, at the same time, includes many supernatural elements. Actually, there is a story of a spiritual journey under the inner fold of the poem showing three stages of human soul – innocence, experience, and super or greater innocence through self- realization. Again, it is also a poem of guilt and redemption, sin and suffering, crime and punishment. Now, we will evaluate both of the journeys and other ideas of the poem and the similar examples of journey in other great pieces of English literature.

Physically the ship of the ancient Mariner leaves the harbour for southward with a good wind and fair weather till it reaches the Equator. Then it is driven by a storm towards the South Pole where huge ice-burgs dangerously float in the sea and no living creature is visible. With the coming of an Albatross, a favourable south-wind begins to blow and the ship sails northwards. But by the killing of the Albatross, the Mariner experiences many extremely horrible and mysterious incidents. At last the ship sails swiftly over the sea and the Mariner sees his native harbour. So the Mariner's physical journey may be marked in this way as shown in diagram:



Besides the physical journey of the Mariner, the main significance lies in the spiritual journey where there is a development of a soul from the stage of innocence to the stage of experience, and from stage of experience to the stage of super innocence where one can know one's own self. In order to show this, the poet uses some symbols and some horrible and mysterious incidents that intensify the mode of the journey.

At the innocent stage of this journey, we observe that all are favourable for innocent joy, natural atmosphere. The Mariner says-

"The ship was cheered the harbour cleared
Merrily did we drop"

He starts his journey with the cheerful faces of all people at the harbour including the ship, with no mark of disorder. This reminds us of the merry-time of birth when we generally begin our journey in this world. Again, there appears an Albatross bearing good omen and happenings. Here the Albatross is not a simple bird but it represents innocence, nature and God Himself. The Mariner says:

"As if it had been a Christian soul
We hailed it in God's name.''

In our world, similarly, Christ bearing good things for us came to save humanity. Moreover, the bird is an innocent creation of nature making a relation between God and our innocent world.

But the stage of innocence does not last long. It comes to an end with the killing of Albatross by the Mariner, as Christ was killed. Then the stage of experience begins. We should mention a stanza now-

God save thee, ancient Mariner
From the fiends that plague thee thus!-
Why look'st thou so?
With my cross-bow
I shot the Albatross.

Here a question may generally be raised that why the Mariner suddenly kills the bird. The answer may- from the indication of 'fiends' in the stanza above – be that something 'evil' prompted the Mariner to shoot the 'Albatross'

Indeed, this killing is not an ordinary one, rather it is symbolically the killing of God's representative, breaking of the relation between man and nature as well as man and God. Thus in the spiritual world, he commits a great sin.

In addition, in every religion we see a system of punishment for one's sin. So, here the Mariner must be punished -either physically or spiritually or both.

In the meantime, his physical punishment has already begun. The previous 'glorious Sun' has now become 'bloody Sun' just above them. They become as lifeless as painted picture and cannot do anything. The poet expresses it exactly in the stanza below-

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion,
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

#

Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink
Even,
Water, water, every where
Nor any drop to drink.

Additionally their spiritual punishment also begins -

The very deep did rot: O Christ
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.
…..

The death fires danced at night

The water, like a witch's oils.

Here extremely spiritual horror, from where the Mariner wants to be released by God, has been expressed. But as he feels hatred to the lower creation of nature created by God, his punishment is later increased with the Albatross which is hung about his neck, as the symbol of his sin.

In this way both of their mental and physical punishments gradually increase. Suddenly a skeleton- ship appears between them and the Sun, as if an executioner between the criminal and the justice. There are in the ship, Death and life-in-Death playing at dice and their stake being the Mariner. The result is as follows-

The game is done! I've won! I've won!
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.
…..
The sun's rim dips; the stars rush out:

That is the Mariner is won by Death in life, and with this, the court of the Sun is closed. Consequently all the sailors become dead, and only the Mariner remains 'alive but in death' to suffer lifelong agony. However the cause of the sailors' punishment is that they shared some of the Mariner's crime by supporting him to kill the bird. But Mariner will suffer a lot. So he becomes 'alone on a wide wide sea' and no saint takes pity on his 'soul in agony'.

Moreover, he discriminates between the upper creation and lower creation. He thinks that there are so many beautiful men but in death, while –

'A thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on and so did I

Consequently, he cannot say any prayer, rather his heart becomes 'as dry as dust', and yet the stage of experience continues.

Next, there happens a self- realization in the Mariners spirit or mind; he loves and blesses the lower creatures and can pray; and becomes free from his sin, Albatross, and reaches the stage of greater innocence

O happy living things! No tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart.
And I blessed them unaware:
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.
…..
The self- same moment I could pray;
From my neck so free
The Albatross fell of, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

At the end of the part V, from the second one of the two voices, we know the condition of the Mariner in the stage of greater innocence-

'The man hath penance done
And penance more will do'

Then he sees his native harbour and is rescued by the Pilot of the boat carrying a Hermit, after his boat has been sunk into the sea; he feels relief from his agony only

when he has related the story of his journey to the Hermit. Since then, the Mariner occasionally experiences the same agony, and relates his journey to the men whom he chooses and thus gets relief. Actually, this indicates us the Christian term, 'Confession of saints'.

Then, what is the result of this spiritual journey? – The Mariner prefers walking to the church to worldly merriment. Moreover, the wedding guest, having heard the whole story of the Mariner, does not go to the feast- as he has also become experienced like the Mariner through this journey and next becomes 'A sadder and a wise man.'

To sum up the discussion, we can say that journey does not prevail only in the 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner.' Rather in every step of our life, we are always making journey – either physical or mental. However, the experienced stage of our soul is more important than the innocent. Because innocence is governed by God or natural intuition; but in the stage of experience there happens an experiment through which we may overcome the stage of experience and may reach the stage of greater innocence.

"The Rime of Ancient Mariner" : Sin and Redemption

The premise of sin and redemption is evident in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's famous ballad "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner". The poem focuses on the trials and tribulations of the main character, the mariner. The narrative starts as the mariner and his ship set off to sea.

The mariner's sin is fundamentally unpremeditated and unfounded. According to the editors of Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, "Sin is a vitiated state of human nature in which the self is estranged from God". Sin was precisely what happened to the mariner. In a display of utter disregard for one of god's creatures, the mariner shot the albatross. The murder of the Albatross came abruptly and for no apparent reason. "…With my crossbow I shot the Albatross!" illustrates how motiveless the killing of the albatross really was.

The idea of a crime against God implements itself through a crime against nature. If the mariner murders a human, the crime is then against man, and thus eclipses the religious significance involved in the murder. The implication of a crime against God progresses when the crewmembers remove the cross from around the mariner's neck; and replace it with the albatross:

> *"Ah, well a day!*
> *What evil looks had I from old and young!*
> *Instead of the cross,*
> *The Albatross about my neck was hung"*

This action is an important element in the advancement of the poem. By replacing the mariner's cross with the albatross, the crewmember's action symbolically characterized the exodus of the Holy Spirit from the mariner. The death of the creature of God, like the death of Jesus, will work to aid in the redemption and salvation of the mariner.

The crewmembers played a vital role in the sin of the mariner. The crewmember's first reaction to the murder of the albatross is to rebuke it as shown by this quote,

> *"Ah Wretch! Said they, such birds to slay*
> *That made the breeze to blow".*

By making a remark, the crewmembers formed the first foundation of their sin. By judging the mariner, the crewmembers submitted themselves to the judgment of

heaven. By doing so, they set themselves up for a punishment that could be deemed far worse that any that they might have deserved.

The second sin of the crewmembers comes when they overlook the murder of the albatross by saying:

> *"T'was right, said they, such birds to slay*
> *That bring the fog and mist".*

As the crewmembers notice that the murder of the albatross bears no immediate effect on the weather, they consequently approve of the murder. By doing so, the crewmembers made themselves collaborators in the crime. Subsequently, the breeze vanished and the sky became foggy again.

> *"Down dropped the breeze,*
> *The sails dropped down,*
> *T'was sad as sad could be;*
> *And we did speak only to break the silence of the sea".*

The crewmembers again contradict themselves and condemn the mariner for what he had done:

> *"Ah, well a day!*
> *What evil looks had I from old and young!*
> *Instead of the cross,*
> *The Albatross about my neck was hung"*

After an encounter with life-in-death, the crewmembers all drop dead. The deaths of the crewmembers were justified in that the fellow mariners have, made the desire the measure of the act: they first condemn the act, when the think the bird had brought the fog; then in the dead calm, again condemn the act. By doing so, the crewmembers isolate themselves from nature and thereby, from god since nature is the work of god.

The sun and the moon play a symbolic role in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner". Robert Penn Warren states: "There is a constant contrast between moonlight and sunlight, and the main events of the poem can be sorted out according to the kinds of light in which they occur". In the poem, the good events correlate with the moon, and the bad events take place while under the sun. Coleridge highlights the importance of the distinction between the two kinds of light.

In "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", as the voyage begins, the sun is burning brightly overhead. The crew is in good spirits, but soon hereafter a storm strikes the ship sending it wildly off course. At night, when the moon comes out, the Albatross first shows up "in mist or cloud, on mast or shroud, it perched for vespers nine; whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white, glimmered the white moon-shine".

The moon is not the only element of nature that is associated with the albatross, the wind relates with the bird as well. As shown when the albatross first showed up,

> *"And a good south wind sprung up behind;*
> *the albatross did follow …".*

Before long, the mariner shoots the albatross, and the rising of the sun soon follows. Immediately upon the rising of the sun, the mariners accept the murder of the albatross. The sun is symbolically the cause of their acceptance of the crime.

The crewmembers justify the crime because the bird had brought the fog and mist or, the moon. To say it another way, the crewmembers renounce the fog and mist, which are one and the same with the moon. At this point, the sun is first introduced. According to Warren the sun is, "the light which shows the familiar as familiar, it is the light of practical convenience, it is the light in which pride preens (cleans) itself, which had risen so promisingly and so gloriously".

Part III is split into two scenes, one of the sun, one of the moon, in even balance. In part III, there is an elaborate description of the sun. As the sun goes down, the moon comes out, and a description is given of it as well. Warren states that in the moon there are three phases of the redeeming process, which are:

"First, the recognition of happiness and beauty; second, love; third; the blessing of the creatures; fourth, freedom from the spell".

As the mariner and his ship make their way home, he spots his home port, which he sees in the moonlight.

While the theme of sin has been thoroughly covered, the premise of redemption is left open for explanation. Redemption is the act of being pardoned after one has requested forgiveness. This is mostly seen in the bible when Jesus encourages his followers to pray to god for forgiveness, and they would be saved. According to this definition, redemption is exactly what the mariner experienced. He saw the sea snakes, he recognized their beauty, and he blessed them by saying,

"Oh happy living things!
No tongue their beauty might declare…
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
and I blessed them unaware"

He quietly blessed them. The act of blessing the sea snakes was the first step towards the mariner's redemption. According to Humphry House: "Just as the albatross was not a mere bird, so these are not mere water-snakes – they stand for all happy living things".

The first step towards redemption for the mariner was the recovery of love and the recovery of the power of prayer. As the mariner blesses the sea snakes, the albatross, which has been hung around his neck, falls off and sinks into the sea. This symbolically is the return of Christ to the mariner. The second redemption of the mariner comes when the crewmembers reappear. The reappearance of the crewmembers comes to be the relief from the curse.

The Hermit and the Wedding Guest are the important figures in the redemption of the mariner. The Hermit is a priest of god and the Wedding Guest is the catalyst into which the mariner confides his story, as he is doomed to do for the remainder of his days. The Hermit is not only a priest of God, he is also a priest of society. It is the Hermit that accepts the mariner back into society. The Wedding Guest is a crucial figure in the plot as he is the way of confession for the mariner. While at first the Wedding Guest fears that the mariner is a ghost, the mariner assures the Wedding Guest that he is a true human,

"Be calm, thou wedding guest!
'Twas not those souls that fled in pain"

As the mariner's story continues, the Wedding Guest becomes sucked in and cannot make himself leave the mariner. This is because whenever the mariner comes into

contact with someone that he needs to tell his story to, he and his subject become powerless but to listen to each other. In this way the story of sin and redemption is narrated to educate the listeners and make them wiser and sadder.

"The Rime of Ancient Mariner" : Gothicism

Gothicsim is a style in fictional literature characterized by gloomy settings, violent or grotesque action, and a mood of decay, degeneration. The Gothic begins with later -eighteenth-century writers' turn to past; in the context of the Romantic Period the Gothic is a type of imitation medievalism. When it was launched in the later eighteenth century the Gothic features accounts of terrifying experiences in ancient castles -experiences connected with dungeons, secret passageways, flickering lamps, screams, moons, bloody hands, ghosts, graveyards and the rest. By extension, it came to designate the mysterious, fantastic, supernatural, and again the terrifying, especially the pleasurably terrifying, in literature more generally.

The Gothic is a prominent and distinctive element in the writings of the Romantic Ag. The mode had originated in novels of the mid-eighteenth century that in radical opposition to the Enlightenment ideals of order, decorum, and rational control. It had opened to literary exploration the realm of nightmarish terror, violence.

The Gothic introduces a genre that both influenced Romantic poetry and in its day for outstripped it in popularity. This topic cluster explores signs of Gothic influence in some of the most frequently read works of Coleridge e.g. , the account of the skeleton ship and crew's reaction in Coleridge's The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner is full of strange, uncanny or "Gothic" elements. Gothic horror fiction was very popular at the time it was written. The Gothic elements in the poem;

- The strange weather
- The albatross as a bird of good men
- Death and life-in-death
- The spirit from the land of mist and snow, and the two spirits the mariner hears in his trance
- The angelic spirits which move the bodies of the dead men
- The madness of the pilot and his boy
- The mariner's strange power of speech

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner has been acclaimed to be one of the many original works of Gothic literature because of its supernatural, horrific and romantic elements that are brought together within its narrative and language. The most dominant Gothic elements are the supernatural quality which can be found in the mariner's voyage, and also The Mariner's killing of the albatross, the terrifying death of his shipmates and the grotesque descriptions of the supernatural spirits are chief Gothic elements in the Rime of the Ancient Mariner that develop the story.

"Kubla Khan"

Summary

The speaker describes the "stately pleasure-dome" built in Xanadu according to the decree of Kubla Khan, in the place where Alph, the sacred river, ran "throu

measureless to man / Down to a sunless sea." Walls and towers were raised around "twice five miles of fertile ground," filled with beautiful gardens and forests. A "deep romantic chasm" slanted down a green hill, occasionally spewing forth a violent and powerful burst of water, so great that it flung boulders up with it "like rebounding hail." The river ran five miles through the woods, finally sinking "in tumult to a lifeless ocean." Amid that tumult, in the place "as holy and enchanted / As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted / By woman wailing to her demon-lover," Kubla heard "ancestral voices" bringing prophesies of war. The pleasure-dome's shadow floated on the waves, where the mingled sounds of the fountain and the caves could be heard. "It was a miracle of rare device," the speaker says, "A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!"

The speaker says that he once saw a "damsel with a dulcimer," an Abyssinian maid who played her dulcimer and sang "of Mount Abora." He says that if he could revive "her symphony and song" within him, he would rebuild the pleasure-dome out of music, and all who heard him would cry "Beware!" of "His flashing eyes, his floating hair!" The hearers would circle him thrice and close their eyes with "holy dread," knowing that he had tasted honeydew, "and drunk the milk of Paradise."

Commentary

Along with "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," "Kubla Khan" is one of Coleridge's most famous and enduring poems. The story of its composition is also one of the most famous in the history of English poetry. As the poet explains in the short preface to this poem, he had fallen asleep after taking "an anodyne" prescribed "in consequence of a slight disposition" (this is a euphemism for opium, to which Coleridge was known to be addicted). Before falling asleep, he had been reading a story in which Kubla Khan commanded the building of a new palace; Coleridge claims that while he slept, he had a fantastic vision and composed simultaneously—while sleeping—some two or three hundred lines of poetry, "if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as things, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or conscious effort."

Waking after about three hours, the poet seized a pen and began writing furiously; however, after copying down the first three stanzas of his dreamt poem—the first three stanzas of the current poem as we know it—he was interrupted by a "person on business from Porlock," who detained him for an hour. After this interruption, he was unable to recall the rest of the vision or the poetry he had composed in his opium dream. It is thought that the final stanza of the poem, thematizing the idea of the lost vision through the figure of the "damsel with a dulcimer" and the milk of Paradise, was written post-interruption. The mysterious person from Porlock is one of the most notorious and enigmatic figures in Coleridge's biography; no one knows who he was or why he disturbed the poet or what he wanted or, indeed, whether any of Coleridge's story is actually true. But the person from Porlock has become a metaphor for the malicious interruptions the world throws in the way of inspiration and genius, and "Kubla Khan," strange and ambiguous as it is, has become what is perhaps the definitive statement on the obstruction and thwarting of the visionary genius.

Regrettably, the story of the poem's composition, while thematically rich in and of itself, often overshadows the poem proper, which is one of Coleridge's most haunting and beautiful. The first three stanzas are products of pure imagination: The pleasure-dome of Kubla Khan is not a useful metaphor for anything in particular (though in the context of the poem's history, it becomes a metaphor for the unbuilt monument of imagination); however, it is a fantastically prodigious descriptive act. The poem becomes especially evocative when, after the second stanza, the meter suddenly tightens; the resulting lines

are terse and solid, almost beating out the sound of the war drums ("The shadow of the dome of pleasure / Floated midway on the waves...").

The fourth stanza states the theme of the poem as a whole (though "Kubla Khan" is almost impossible to consider as a unified whole, as its parts are so sharply divided). The speaker says that he once had a vision of the damsel singing of Mount Abora; this vision becomes a metaphor for Coleridge's vision of the 300-hundred-line masterpiece he never completed. The speaker insists that if he could only "revive" within him "her symphony and song," he would recreate the pleasure-dome out of music and words, and take on the persona of the magician or visionary. His hearers would recognize the dangerous power of the vision, which would manifest itself in his "flashing eyes" and "floating hair." But, awestruck, they would nonetheless dutifully take part in the ritual, recognizing that "he on honey-dew hath fed, / And drunk the milk of Paradise."

Analysis of Kubla Khan as a Dream Poem

Coleridge's dream faculty is his strong point as a poet and he is a dreamer of dreams and his Kubla Khan(1798) is not the product of his observation but has come out from mysterious dreams. Coleridge himself claimed that the poem "Kubla Khan" was the product of a hallucinatory dream experienced after he had taken opium "in consequence of a slight indisposition." On awaking, he began to commit the experience to paper but was interrupted by "a person on business from Porlock." On returning to his desk, he found that the intensity of his impressions had faded. The poem claims to be "scattered lines and images" from a longer, forgotten work. Whether the story is true or not, the poem takes the unrecapturable nature of such dreams as its theme. It opens with sumptuous images of a mythic land, in which a powerful ruler orders the construction of a fabulous palace. It is an edifice of dream, a fragment of pure romance and a product of a dream rooted in imagination.

Apparently Kubla Khan lacks any logical coherence of ideas. It has the essence of poetry and dream because its aim is to delight, not to present the truth. Farther, it has procession of images which are Vague. All these romantic associations are concentrated within a short space to arouse a sense of wonder, mystery and awe. Such romantic images include ancient forests and hills, caverns which are measureless to man, spots of greenery, music of dulcimer, a damsel with a dulcimer, milk of paradise, a waning moon, and a woman waiting for her demon lover:

"But oh! That deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedern cover.
A savage place! As holy and enchanted.
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon lover".

So to say, the images are not also linked logically. They come one after the other through association as happens in dreams. In first four lines Kubla Khan orders a palace to be built. In the ensuring four lines, it is built,

"In xanadu did Kubla Khan,
A stately pleasure dome decree"

With walls and tower girdled round
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills"

In the midst of highly romantic description of landscape, the poet introduces an entirely different note:

"Ancestral voices prophesying war"

Farther when the dream is broken midway, the poet feels himself unable to give description of the pleasure dome. So the poet wishes romantically to revive within him the symphony and the song.

The poem has two parts. In the first part there is a record of the vision or dream. The second part is the poet's efforts to realize that dream and to build that dome in the air. In fact, Kubla Khan is the most perfect example of what might pleasure dome, its sacred river, its panting fountain, its caves of ice, its ecstatic figure with flashing eyes and floating hair, Kubla Khan is clearly a poem about poetic inspiration. Though symbolism and loose disconnections the poetic mood of ecstasy can not be missed in this poem. The organic links among the different parts of this poem is its symbolic unity which simultaneously defines a world of separation of head and heart, action and contemplation, the matter of fact world and the realm of imagination. The richness of this poem is its dream quality, multiple point of view and an apparent ambiguity.

There are temporary changes in the metre because the poem has dreamy origin. In this connection three points may be mentioned:

(i) There is irregularity of the rhymes.

(ii) There is unevenness of the lines

(iii) There are temporary changes.

As if the words images and visions are so loose and floating in the world of conscience which is best poetically revealed in the poem. For example:

"It was a miracle of rare device
A sunny pleasure dome with eaves of ice.
A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I san".

Again Coleridge conveys the idea of harmony and order by imitating the word order of the Latin language, using strong single-syllable rhymes, and providing a percussive beat heightened by alliteration. The poem offers sensual images of an oriental paradise: There are "gardens bright with sinuous rills" and "many an incense-bearing tree". With a powerful sense of movement, the poem follows the progress of the river Alph in order to focus on a violent natural force beyond the palace walls: a "chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething." Coleridge describes this place with a mass of contradictory adjectives: It is "holy," "enchanted," and "savage," its massive force like that of a living being. If, as literary critics have suggested, this place is a metaphor for the imagination, its blasts might be compared to Wordsworth's definition of the poetic process as "a spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling."

Possible Interpretations of Kubla Khan

If a man could pass through' Paradise in a Dream, & have a flower presented to him as a pledge that his Soul had really been there, & found that flower in his hand when he awoke -- Aye! And what then? Kubla Khan is a fascinating and exasperating poem written by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Almost everyone, who has read it, has been charmed by its magic. It must surely be true that no poem of comparable length in English or any other language has been the subject of so much critical commentary. Its fifty-four lines have spawned thousands of pages of discussion and analysis. Kubla Khan is the sole or a major subject in five book-length studies; close to 150 articles and book-

chapters have been devoted exclusively to it; and brief notes and incidental comments on it are without number.

Despite this deluge, however, there is no critical unanimity and very little agreement on a number of important issues connected with the poem: its date of composition, its meaning, its sources in Coleridge's reading and observation of nature, its structural integrity (i.e. fragment versus complete poem), and its relationship to the Preface by which Coleridge introduced it on its first publication in 1816. Coleridge's philosophical explorations appear in his greatest poems. 'Kubla Khan', with its exotic imagery and symbols, rich vocabulary and rhythms, written, by Coleridge's account, under the influence of laudanum, was often considered a brilliant work, but without any defined theme. However, despite its complexity the poem can be read as a well-constructed exposition on human genius and art.

Throughout the nineteenth century and during the first quarter of the twentieth century Kubla Khan was considered, almost universally, to be a poem in which sound overwhelms sense. With a few exceptions (such as Lamb and Leigh Hunt), Romantic critics -- accustomed to poetry of statement and antipathetic to any notion of a great artist -- summarily dismissed Kubla Khan as a meaningless farrago of sonorous phrases beneath the notice of serious criticism. It only demonstrated, according to William Hazlitt, that Mr. Coleridge can write better nonsense verses than any man in England --and then he added, politically, it is not a poem, but a musical composition.

For Victorian and Early Modern readers, on the other hand, Kubla Khan was a poem not below but beyond the reach of criticism, and they adopted (without the irony) Hazlitt's perception that it must properly be appreciated as verbalised music. When it has been said, wrote Swinburne of Kubla Khan, that such melodies were never heard, such dreams never dreamed, such speech never spoken, the chief thing remains unsaid, and unspeakable. There is a charm upon this poem, which can only be felt in silent submission of wonder. Even John Livingston Lowes -- culpable, if ever anyone has been, of murdering to dissect - insisted on the elusive magic of Coleridge's dream vision: For Kubla Khan is as near enchantment, as we are like to come in this dull world. While one may track or attempt to track individual images to their sources, Kubla Khan as a whole remains utterly inexplicable - a dissolving phantasmagoria of highly charged images whose streaming pageant is, in the final analysis, as aimless as it is magnificent.

There are, in short, as many different interpretations of Kubla Khan as there are critics who have written about it. Kubla Khan, a poem about poetic process Generally speaking, the most popular view by far is that Kubla Khan is concerned with the poetic process itself. What is Kubla Khan about? This is, or ought to be, an established fact of criticism: Kubla Khan is a poem about poetry. On this reading, the Tartar prince Kubla Khan, who causes a pleasure-dome and elaborate gardens to be constructed in Xanadu, is a type of the artist, whose glorious creation, as the ancestral voices from the deep caverns warn, is a precariously balanced reconciliation of the natural and the artificial. The dream of Xanadu itself is an inspired vision which expresses dramatically the very nature of vision: the fountain that throws up its waters from an underground ocean and so gives birth to the sacred river that meanders five miles through Kubla's hortus conclusus before sinking again into the subterraneous depths images the sudden eruption of the subconscious into the realm of the conscious mind and its eventual inevitable recession back into the deep well of the unconscious.

Kubla Khan records an early, perhaps largely unconscious, exploration of critical perceptions united only loosely in an inchoate theory of literature. Freudian Analysis a poem such as Kubla Khan - so provokingly enigmatic and so deliciously suggestive -also provides an irresistibly fertile ground for psychological speculation, especially

of Freudian critics. When Coleridge called the poem a psychological curiosity in his 1816 Preface and confessed that Kubla Khan was the record of an actual dream, he unwittingly opened wide the door to analysts anxious to expound the latent psychological implications of his symphony and song. One of the earliest of the Freudian readings was offered in 1924 by Robert Graves, who proposed that Kubla Khan expressed Coleridge's subconscious determination to shun the mazy complications of life by retreating to a bower of poetry, solitude and opium - a serene refuge beyond the bitter reproaches of Mrs. Coleridge (the woman who is wailing for her demon lover) and almost beyond the gloomy prophecies of addiction uttered by the ancestral voices of Lamb and Charles Lloyd. By comparison with recent Freudian interpretations, this is pretty tame stuff. Nevertheless, it was enough to alert I.A. Richards almost immediately to the chilling possibilities of such an approach: The reader acquainted with current methods of [psychological] analysis, he warned, can imagine the results of a thoroughgoing Freudian onslaught.

In general, the Freudians treat Kubla Khan as an unconscious revelation of personal fantasies and repressed, usually erotic, urges; but there is little agreement about the precise nature of these subliminal drives. Douglas Angus argues that the poem illustrates psychoneurotic pattern of narcissism that reflects Coleridge's abnormal need for love and sympathy; Eugene Sloane, however, is convinced that Kubla Khan is an elaborate development of a birth dream, expressing an unconscious desire to return to the warmth and security of the womb (the hair in line 50, for example, is floating in amniotic fluid);and Gerald Enscoe finds the core of the poem's meaning in the unresolved struggle between two conflicting attitudes toward the subject of erotic feeling, i.e. the attitude . . .that the sexual impulse is to be confined within a controlled system is opposed to the anarchistic belief that the erotic neither should nor can be subjected to such control.

Still other readers prefer to follow Robert Graves by concentrating on what the poem implies about Coleridge's experience with opium: James Bramwell reads Kubla Khan as a dream-fable representing Coleridge's conscience in the act of casting him out, spiritually and bodily, from the paradise of his opium paradise; and Eli Marcovitz, who sets out to treat the poem as we would a dream in our clinical practice, confidently concludes that Kubla Khan is almost a chart of the psychosexual history of a personality ineluctably embarked on the road to addiction: It depicts the life of the poet -- his infancy and early childhood, the pleasures and deprivations of the oral period, the stimulation and dread of his oedipal period, the reaction to the death of his father at nine, the fear of incest and geniality with the regression to passive-femininity and morality, and the attempt to cope with his life's problems by the appeal to the muse and to opium.

Who would have supposed, without guidance, that so much repressed meaning was compressed into fifty-four lines? Even this brief sampling illustrates clearly enough the limitations and liabilities of using Freudian keys to unlock the mysteries of Kubla Khan. In the first place, of course, there is no received consensus (as we have just seen) about precisely what the poem reveals about Coleridge's subconscious mind. Nor is there agreement about the symbolic significance of the major images: is the stately pleasure-dome to be identified as the female breast (maternal or otherwise), or does it represent, as some think, the mons veneris? Similarly, what are we to make of the violent eructation of the fountain forced with ceaseless turmoil from the deep romantic chasm -- the ejaculation of semen, or the throes of parturition? And then there is the hapless Abyssinian maid, who has been variously identified as Coleridge's muse, as his mother, as Mary Evans (an early flame), as Dorothy Wordsworth, and (since Abyssinian damsels are Negroid) as the symbol of Coleridge's repressed impulse toward miscegenation.

A second and more serious problem with many Freudian readings, as the foregoing examples make clear, is a tendency to ignore basic rules of evidence and to indulge, as a consequence, in strained and unwarranted speculation. In one account, for example, we are asked (without irony) to believe that the last two lines of Kubla Khan point by indirection to fellatio, cunnilingus and deep oral attachment to the mother. Another analyst, James F. Hoyle, interprets Coleridge's enforced retirement to the farmhouse near Porlock as the neurotic person's 'vegetative retreat' to parasympathetic preponderance with over stimulation of gastrointestinal functions, resulting in diarrhoea -- and then, as if this were not enough, goes on to conclude that the costive opium taken to check the attack of dysentery probably helped in converting depression to hypomania and so was instrumental in transforming the diarrhoea of Coleridge's failure in poetry and life to the logorrhoea of Kubla Khan.

Literary criticism has more and more become a science of solutions. When a lurking mystery is discovered, analytical floodlights are trained upon it to dispel the shadows and open its dark recesses. But Kubla Khan, as Charles Lamb acutely perceived, is an owl that won't bear daylight. We must learn to take the poem on its own terms and, instead of attempting to salvage it by reducing it to a coherent substratum of symbols, we must reconcile ourselves to the fact that no single interpretation will ever resolve the complexities of so protean a product of the human imagination. Mystery and ambiguity, verisimilitude and teasing suggestiveness, are essential ingredients in Kubla Khan -- a poem which reflects, though darkly, Coleridge's largely subconscious ruminations on poetry, paradise, and the heights and depths of his own unfathomable intellectual and spiritual being. Kubla Khan is one of those ethereal finger-pointing so prized by Keats; it is a poem that has no palpable design upon us, and it provides at least one instance of an occasion on which Coleridge did not let go by a fine isolated verisimilitude caught from the Penetration of mystery, from being incapable of remaining content with half knowledge.

"Dejection: An Ode"

Summary

The speaker recalls a poem that tells the tale of Sir Patrick Spence: In this poem, the moon takes on a certain strange appearance that presages the coming of a storm. The speaker declares that if the author of the poem possessed a sound understanding of weather, then a storm will break on this night as well, for the moon looks now as it did in the poem. The speaker wishes ardently for a storm to erupt, for the violence of the squall might cure his numb feeling. He says that he feels only a 'dull pain," "a grief without a pang"—a constant deadening of all his feelings. Speaking to a woman whom he addresses as "O Lady," he admits that he has been gazing at the western sky all evening, able to see its beauty but unable fully to feel it. He says that staring at the green sky will never raise his spirits, for no "outward forms" can generate feelings: Emotions can only emerge from within.

According to the speaker, "we receive but what we give": the soul itself must provide the light by which we may hope to see nature's true beauty—a beauty not given to the common crowd of human beings ("the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd"). Calling the Lady "pure of heart," the speaker says that she already knows about the light and music of the soul, which is Joy. Joy, he says, marries us to nature, thereby giving us "a new Earth and new Heaven, / Undreamt of by the sensual and the proud."

The speaker insists that there was a time when he was full of hope, when every tribulation was simply the material with which "fancy made me dreams of happiness." But now his afflictions press him to the earth; he does not mind the decline of his mirth

but he cannot bear the corresponding degeneration of his imagination, which is the source of his creativity and his understanding of the human condition, that which enables him to construct "from my own nature all the natural man." Hoping to escape the "viper thoughts" that coil around his mind, the speaker turns his attention to the howling wind that has begun to blow. He thinks of the world as an instrument played by a musician, who spins out of the wind a "worse than wintry song." This melody first calls to mind the rush of an army on the field; quieting, it then evokes a young girl, lost and alone.

It is midnight, but the speaker has "small thoughts" of sleep. However, he hopes that his friend the Lady will be visited by "gentle Sleep" and that she will wake with joyful thoughts and "light heart." Calling the Lady the "friend devoutest of my choice," the speaker wishes that she might "ever, evermore rejoice."

Commentary

In this poem, Coleridge continues his sophisticated philosophical exploration of the relationship between man and nature, positing as he did in "The Nightingale" that human feelings and the forms of nature are essentially separate. Just as the speaker insisted in the earlier poem that the nightingale's song should not be called melancholy simply because it sounded so to a melancholy poet, he insists here that the beauty of the sky before the storm does not have the power to fill him with joy, for the source of human feeling is within. Only when the individual has access to that source, so that joy shines from him like a light, is he able to see the beauty of nature and to respond to it. (As in "Frost in Midnight," the city-raised Coleridge insists on a sharper demarcation between the mind and nature than the country-raised Wordsworth would ever have done.)

Coleridge blames his desolate numbness for sapping his creative powers and leaving him without his habitual method of understanding human nature. Despite his insistence on the separation between the mind and the world, Coleridge nevertheless continues to find metaphors for his own feelings in nature: His dejection is reflected in the gloom of the night as it awaits the storm.

"Dejection" was written in 1802 but was originally drafted in the form of a letter to Sara Hutchinson, the woman Coleridge loved. The much longer original version of the poem contained many of the same elements as "The Nightingale" and "Frost at Midnight," including the same meditation on his children and their natural education. This version also referred explicitly to "Sara" (replaced in the later version by "Lady") and "William" (a clear reference to Wordsworth). Coleridge's strict revision process shortened and tightened the poem, depersonalizing it, but the earlier draft hints at just how important the poem's themes were to Coleridge personally and indicates that the feelings expressed were the poet's true beliefs about his own place in the world.

A side note: The story of Sir Patrick Spence, to which the poet alludes in the first stanza, is an ancient Scottish ballad about a sailor who drowns with a boatload of Scottish noblemen, sailing on orders from the king but against his own better judgment. It contains lines that refer to the moon as a predictor of storms, which Coleridge quotes as an epigraph for his ode:

"Late, late yestreen I saw the new Moon
With the old Moon in her arms;
And I fear, I fear, my Master dear!
We shall have a deadly storm."

"Dejection an Ode" : Poetic Creative Process

The diverse features of Coleridge's verse discriminate him as the most inclusive representative of the English Romantic Movement of the early nineteenth century. His best poetry is very small in its bulk and is the product of a brief but amazing period of creative activity but it ranges among the rarest treasures of English Literature. We can segregate the major works of Coleridge into personal, political and romantic poems. "Dejection: An Ode" behaves as one of the personal poems. In this poem the poet expresses his sense of failure and sterility. "Dejection: An Ode", the last great poem is written by Coleridge, bewails the loss of creative powers.

"Dejection: An Ode" is written in a meditative mood. In fact, in this ode, he deplores the metaphysical strain in his thinking as responsible for the death of the poet in him. He has taken recourse to abstract philosophy, he says, in order to escape his grief, but metaphysical musing gradually becomes a habit with him and it slowly contaminates his poetic faculties. The motto of this poem is taken from the Ballad of Sir Patrick Spence printed by Thomas Percy. Percy's collection has already made a great impression on all the romantic poets.

In the first stanza, Coleridge through a clever use of images has suggested the chilling up of his poetic imagination. This has driven him to dejection and he feels a very dull pain in his heart. He longs for a violent storm that could invigorate his mind and at least, get him out of this pitiable condition. The poet would not like to indulge in self-pity in his poems. He would be happier if the lute were not to produce any sounds at all. The moon has a peculiar place in the poetic activity of Coleridge. According to Bowra, "Coleridge took the moon as 'a symbol of the poets' power to transform the material world into a world of imagination"

Here the moon overspread with a phantom light points to his dejection, a certain chilling of his springs of poetry. But we find there is a certain silver thread rimming and circling it. This should salvage the situation slightly. We might say that the creative powers instead of having been dried up permanently have been temporarily suspended. The poet wishes that the wind has already gained strength and changed into a fierce storm. The poet does not expect the storm to bring any relief from the pain. But at least it could give some sort of life to it, as it is the sluggish monotony of this pain, which is almost unbearable to the poet.

In the second stanza, the poet is not able to provide any natural outlet to his stifled, unimpassioned anguish. Throughout the peaceful evening, he has been gazing at the beautiful sights of nature but he thinks he has lost the capacity of feeling that beauty.

"A grief without a pang, void, dark and drear,
A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief."

In these two lines the poet describes the nature of his heartache. It is a suppressed, sleepy, unaroused, passive kind of grief. It does not cause any piercing sensation in his heart, which appears to be just blank. His soreness is related to the "dull pain "mentioned in the last line of the first stanza.

"Might startle this dull pain and make it move and live!"

The sparkle or the dimness of the stars obviously corresponds to the fluctuations in the poet's soul. Even though bedimmed, the stars are "always seen". This corroborates our earlier understanding of the poem that the poet has not fully lost his poetic creativity. In the original version after taking about the "lake of blue", the poet speaks of "a boat becalmed". The becalming of the boat has a symbolic reference to the creative activity in Coleridge. The "fixed moon" also suggests the same thing.

In the third stanza, the natural cheerfulness of the poet has forsaken him. The real sources of passion and life are within and when they have dried up, merely eternal forms of beauty cannot raise his spirits. The poet's failure to respond to the 'yellow green light of the evening' has particularly disturbed him. He is shocked to realise that the outward forms are no longer capable of evoking his zest for life. Instead of helping him to recover his vitality, the external Nature makes him aware of his loss of feeling. Coleridge also feels that thinking and feeling are closely bound with each other. Lack of sensation makes his thinking also unproductive. Feeling beauty is a creative process; its real fountains lie within. But once the inward sources are desiccated, a certain loss of sensibility with regard to the physical objects appears quite inevitable.

In the fourth stanza, the moods that we see in nature are actually our own moods. Nature does not have any life of its own. It appears to be joyous or mournful in accord to the mood and feelings of an onlooker. This denotes that the outward forms of Nature are created by man with the assistance of his own imagination. The outward forms present a gloomy spectacle if we are caught in a web of sorrows, then even a tranquil scene of colourful evening portends a mighty storm, as happens in the case of Coleridge. Seeing is thus coloured with feeling. What Coleridge is lamenting in this poem is the fact that his seeing is not charged with his feeling. He notices beauty but he does not feel it. It should be observed that in these lines, Coleridge is contending against the Wordsworthian doctrine of the influence of Nature. Earlier he has shared Wordsworth's belief in a beneficent power of Nature, healing and spiritualizing all those who care for her. However, with his own shaping spirit of imagination gone, he finds it impossible to derive strength from nature. We have already seen how the poet believes that the mystic colouring of one's inner life animates every object of nature. This type of intuition that can shape nature is denied to the "poor loveless ever anxious crowed". Though the crowed is devoid of love and joy yet nature gets its life from the beholder's own amorous feelings. The loveliness of Nature as well as the sweetness of its sounds is torn by a convulsion; it can create only an equally disastrous seizure in the external nature. This is the mood in which the poem begins.

In the fifth stanza, the source of light and glory that can invest the earth with loveliness and sweetness is joy. This delight can be experienced only by the pure in their purest hour. This joy enables one to see a new earth and new heaven which the proud and the sensual can never witness. In the previous stanza, the poet has talked of 'a fair, luminous cloud' and 'a sweet and potent voice' that must emanate from one's soul and envelop the whole earth if one is to see something "of higher worth" in Nature, that would otherwise remain an "inanimate cold world". Continuing the same theme, the poet says that this "fair, luminous mist" and this "strong music in soul" are not only beautiful themselves but they also have a beauty making power. They can make the external objects of Nature look beautiful. Then addressing Sara, he says that it is not necessary for her to enquire what exactly the source of this glory and this music is. Coleridge has not explained the nature of this joy but it is clear that it is a creative principle having moral implications. Nature is just cold and inanimate the beauty we see in it actually exists within our soul. The source of this beauty is joy. So joy is a kind of creative principle. Only the pure hearted and virtuous people like Sara can experience it. The artist cannot create anything in its absence.

In the sixth stanza, there was a time when the poet was capable of experiencing this joy; then he was full of hope. He could weave dreams of happiness even out of his misfortunes. But now his joy is gone and his shaping spirit of imagination has greatly declined. He takes to abstract philosophy and metaphysics as an escape from his grief but this has stifled the poet in him. The poet recalls the time when he can experience joy in spite of the fact that his life is full of sorrows and impediments. So indomitable is his

joy within that he cares little for his sufferings. Coleridge says that his only resource against his increasing melancholy is deliberately to divert his mind from his feelings to cultivate a quiet mode of life and to immerse himself in deep metaphysical studies, in the hope of changing his nature and conquering his excessive sensitiveness.

In the seventh stanza the poet dismisses his depressing thoughts and turns his attention to the various sounds being made by the wind. To begin with, the wind appears to be screaming with agony. Next, these sounds appear to be similar to the one produced by a retreating army. Finally, he feels that the wind is producing a moaning sound like the one made by a little girl who has lost her way. The wind appears to the poet as an actor adept in producing all kinds of tragic sounds. Humphrey House believes that Dejection: An Ode is not a whole poem. His argument is that 'the opening of stanza VII especially, and its placing and relevance are serious obstacles to accepting the poem as a whole.

Humphrey House thinks that this stanza opens with a sudden twist of thoughts, in a very awkward language. The poet addresses the wind as a reckless musician and says that in this mouth of showers, of dark brown gardens, of peeping flowers, of blossoms, buds and tremulous leaves, it is producing sounds worse than the ones heard during the bleak months of winter, as if it is celebrating a devil's Christmas. The sounds produced by wind remind the poet of the devils howling and shrinking in malicious joy. As the poet thinks of this tale about a lost girl, we feel that there is a slight awakening of his genial spirits, which he says, has failed him:

> *"My genial spirits fail;*
> *And what can these avail,"*

His imagination is activated and his feelings are awake. Now his imagination has created for him a complex unity of grief, fear and delight.

In the eighth stanza, the poet concludes with a prayer for Sara. May gentle sleep visit her! Then next morning, may she get up with a light and cheerful heart! May she experience joy! Addressing the 'Lady', the poet says that we recline from Nature only what we give it. The poem concludes with the prayer that joy may raise her spirits and sweeten her voice, that all things may be the manifestation of her life and may exist for her sake, and that she may be blessed with enduring happiness.

Coleridge's attitude to Nature as depicted in the Ode to Dejection is radically different from the attitude he held earlier under the persuasive influence of Wordsworth. Wordsworth, with his affect and encouragement, stimulated Coleridge's creative imagination. He feels his inner vitality being fructified and life assumes some meaning for him. This fills his heart with joy, which makes him perceive joy all around and in the company of Wordsworth. Nature ceases to be the physical manifestation of a divine spirit capable of exerting a moral and educative influence. It is reduced into just a lifeless mass.

Themes of Coleridge's Poetry

The Transformative Power of the Imagination: Coleridge believed that a strong, active imagination could become a vehicle for transcending unpleasant circumstances. Many of his poems are powered exclusively by imaginative flights, wherein the speaker temporarily abandons his immediate surroundings, exchanging them for an entirely new and completely fabricated experience. Using the imagination in this way is both empowering and surprising because it encourages a total and complete disrespect for the confines of time and place. These mental and emotional jumps are often well rewarded. Perhaps Coleridge's most famous use of imagination occurs in "This

Lime-Tree Bower My Prison" (1797), in which the speaker employs a keen poetic mind that allows him to take part in a journey that he cannot physically make. When he "returns" to the bower, after having imagined himself on a fantastic stroll through the countryside, the speaker discovers, as a reward, plenty of things to enjoy from inside the bower itself, including the leaves, the trees, and the shadows. The power of imagination transforms the prison into a perfectly pleasant spot.

The Interplay of Philosophy, Piety, and Poetry: Coleridge used his poetry to explore conflicting issues in philosophy and religious piety. Some critics argue that Coleridge's interest in philosophy was simply his attempt to understand the imaginative and intellectual impulses that fueled his poetry. To support the claim that his imaginative and intellectual forces were, in fact, organic and derived from the natural world, Coleridge linked them to God, spirituality, and worship. In his work, however, poetry, philosophy, and piety clashed, creating friction and disorder for Coleridge, both on and off the page. In "The Eolian Harp" (1795), Coleridge struggles to reconcile the three forces. Here, the speaker's philosophical tendencies, particularly the belief that an "intellectual breeze" (47) brushes by and inhabits all living things with consciousness, collide with those of his orthodox wife, who disapproves of his unconventional ideas and urges him to Christ. While his wife lies untroubled, the speaker agonizes over his spiritual conflict, caught between Christianity and a unique, individual spirituality that equates nature with God. The poem ends by discounting the pantheist spirit, and the speaker concludes by privileging God and Christ over nature and praising them for having healed him from the spiritual wounds inflicted by these unorthodox views.

Nature and the Development of the Individual: Coleridge, Wordsworth, and other romantic poets praised the unencumbered, imaginative soul of youth, finding images in nature with which to describe it. According to their formulation, experiencing nature was an integral part of the development of a complete soul and sense of personhood. The death of his father forced Coleridge to attend school in London, far away from the rural idylls of his youth, and he lamented the missed opportunities of his sheltered, city-bound adolescence in many poems, including "Frost at Midnight" (1798). Here, the speaker sits quietly by a fire, musing on his life, while his infant son sleeps nearby. He recalls his boarding school days, during which he would both daydream and lull himself to sleep by remembering his home far away from the city, and he tells his son that he shall never be removed from nature, the way the speaker once was. Unlike the speaker, the son shall experience the seasons and shall learn about God by discovering the beauty and bounty of the natural world. The son shall be given the opportunity to develop a relationship with God and with nature, an opportunity denied to both the speaker and Coleridge himself. For Coleridge, nature had the capacity to teach joy, love, freedom, and piety, crucial characteristics for a worthy, developed individual.

Motifs of Coleridge's Poems

Conversation Poems: Coleridge wanted to mimic the patterns and cadences of everyday speech in his poetry. Many of his poems openly address a single figure—the speaker's wife, son, friend, and so on—who listens silently to the simple, straightforward language of the speaker. Unlike the descriptive, long, digressive poems of Coleridge's classicist predecessors, Coleridge's so-called conversation poems are short, self-contained, and often without a discernable poetic form. Colloquial, spontaneous, and friendly, Coleridge's conversation poetry is also highly personal, frequently incorporating events and details of his domestic life in an effort to widen the scope of possible poetic content. Although he sometimes wrote in blank verse, unrhymed iambic pentameter, he adapted this metrical form to suit a more colloquial rhythm. Both Wordsworth and Coleridge believed that everyday language and speech rhythms would help broaden

poetry's audience to include the middle and lower classes, who might have felt excluded or put off by the form and content of neoclassicists, such as Alexander Pope, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and John Dryden.

Delight in the Natural World: Like the other romantics, Coleridge worshiped nature and recognized poetry's capacity to describe the beauty of the natural world. Nearly all of Coleridge's poems express a respect for and delight in natural beauty. Close observation, great attention to detail, and precise descriptions of color aptly demonstrate Coleridge's respect and delight. Some poems, such as "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison," "Youth and Age" (1834), and "Frost at Midnight," mourn the speakers' physical isolation from the outside world. Others, including "The Eolian Harp," use images of nature to explore philosophical and analytical ideas. Still other poems, including "The Nightingale" (ca. 1798), simply praise nature's beauty. Even poems that don't directly deal with nature, including "Kubla Khan" and "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," derive some symbols and images from nature. Nevertheless, Coleridge guarded against the pathetic fallacy, or the attribution of human feeling to the natural world. To Coleridge, nature contained an innate, constant joyousness wholly separate from the ups and downs of human experience.

Prayer: Although Coleridge's prose reveals more of his religious philosophizing than his poetry, God, Christianity, and the act of prayer appear in some form in nearly all of his poems. The son of an Anglican vicar, Coleridge vacillated from supporting to criticizing Christian tenets and the Church of England. Despite his criticisms, Coleridge remained defiantly supportive of prayer, praising it in his notebooks and repeatedly referencing it in his poems. He once told the novelist Thomas de Quincey that prayer demanded such close attention that it was the one of the hardest actions of which human hearts were capable. The conclusion to Part 1 of Christabel portrays Christabel in prayer, "a lovely sight to see" (279). In "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," the mariner is stripped of his ability to speak as part of his extreme punishment and, consequently, left incapable of praying. "The Pains of Sleep" (1803) contrasts the speaker at restful prayer, in which he prays silently, with the speaker at passionate prayer, in which he battles imaginary demons to pray aloud. In the sad poem, "Epitaph" (1833), Coleridge composes an epitaph for himself, which urges people to pray for him after he dies. Rather than recommend a manner or method of prayer, Coleridge's poems reflect a wide variety, which emphasizes his belief in the importance of individuality.

Symbols of Coleridge's Poems

The Sun: Coleridge believed that symbolic language was the only acceptable way of expressing deep religious truths and consistently employed the sun as a symbol of God. In "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," Coleridge compares the sun to "God's own head" (97) and, later, attributes the first phase of the mariner's punishment to the sun, as it dehydrates the crew. All told, this poem contains eleven references to the sun, many of which signify the Christian conception of a wrathful, vengeful God. Bad, troubling things happen to the crew during the day, while smooth sailing and calm weather occur at night, by the light of the moon. Frequently, the sun stands in for God's influence and power, as well as a symbol of his authority. The setting sun spurs philosophical musings, as in "The Eolian Harp," and the dancing rays of sunlight represent a pinnacle of nature's beauty, as in "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison."

The Moon: Like the sun, the moon often symbolizes God, but the moon has more positive connotations than the sun. In "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," the sun and the moon represent two sides of the Christian God: the sun represents the angry, wrathful God, whereas the moon represents the benevolent, repentant God. All told, the moon appears fourteen times in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," and generall

things occur during night, in contrast to the horrors that occur during the day. For example, the mariner's curse lifts and he returns home by moonlight. "Dejection: An Ode" (1802) begins with an epitaph about the new moon and goes on to describe the beauty of a moonlit night, contrasting its beauty with the speaker's sorrowful soul. Similarly, "Frost at Midnight" also praises the moon as it illuminates icicles on a winter evening and spurs the speaker to great thought.

Dreams and Dreaming: Coleridge explores dreams and dreaming in his poetry to communicate the power of the imagination, as well as the inaccessible clarity of vision. "Kubla Khan" is subtitled "A Vision in a Dream." According to Coleridge, he fell asleep while reading and dreamed of a marvelous pleasure palace for the next few hours. Upon awakening, he began transcribing the dream-vision but was soon called away; when he returned, he wrote out the fragments that now comprise "Kubla Khan." Some critics doubt Coleridge's story, attributing it to an attempt at increasing the poem's dramatic effect. Nevertheless, the poem speaks to the imaginative possibilities of the subconscious. Dreams usually have a pleasurable connotation, as in "Frost at Midnight." There, the speaker, lonely and insomniac as a child at boarding school, comforts himself by imagining and then dreaming of his rural home. In his real life, however, Coleridge suffered from nightmares so terrible that sometimes his own screams would wake him, a phenomenon he details in "The Pains of Sleep." Opium probably gave Coleridge a sense of well-being that allowed him to sleep without the threat of nightmares.

Chief Characteristics of Coleridge as a Romantic Poet

Romanticism, in art, is European and American movement extending from about 1800 to 1850. Romanticism cannot be identified with a single style, technique, or attitude, but romantic painting is generally characterized by a highly imaginative and subjective approach, emotional intensity, and a dreamlike or visionary quality.

S. T Coleridge is one of the most prominent writers of Romantic Movement. The chief characteristics in his poetry are; supernaturalism, element of mystery, fertile imagination, dream quality, medievalism, love of Nature, meditative note, humanitarianism, music and narrative skill which distinguish Coleridge's poetry as the most complete representative of the English Romantic poetry of the early nineteenth century. We can take these characteristics of his poetry one by one:

Supernaturalism: Supernaturalism is something that is above and beyond what is natural; events which cannot be directly explained by known laws and observations. Exploration of the occult (supposedly supernatural or magic) and of infinity, mysticism, and numerology (study of the supposed influence of number) are some other manifestation of the intense desire of man to know what exists or lies beyond the finite mind. Imaginative and inventive fiction and poetry have been created upon this appeal. This element of supernaturalism is found in the three major works of Coleridge, 'The Ancient Mariner', 'Kubla Khan' and 'Christabel". The outstanding quality of Coleridge's supernaturalism, however, is that his writings do not excite one's senses to a feverish pitch and do not remain remote from human reality. He is capable of creating the still, sad music of humanity. In his supernaturalism we do not find any kind of crudeness as is found in other poets Horace and Monk Lewis. He replaced the crudeness with suggestiveness. He did not portray horror, he suggested it. Both in the cases of the Night-mare Life-in-Death and the serpent woman Geraldine, he resists the temptation of depicting their hideous monstrosity. He conveys the gruesomeness (horrification) of Life-in-Death in a few suggestive lines.

Her lips were red, her looks were free
Her locks were yellow as gold

Her skin was white as leprosy
The Night-mare Life-in-Death was she
Who thicks Man's blood with cold.

Or through the Mariner's response to her

Fear at my heart, as at a cup
My life-blood seemed to sip.

In the same manner the repulsiveness (unpleasantness) of Geraldine's ugly bosom is conveyed through a clever suggestion,

A sight to dream of, not to tell!
O shield her! Shield sweet Christabel!

Coleridge has successfully kept the reality of supernatural phenomena by avoiding the descriptions of details. He deepens his effect by mystery surrounding it. Along with this Coleridge's supernaturalism has essentially psychological truth in it. The supernatural touches in 'Kubla Khan' or 'The Ancient Mariner' are so managed that they are in perfect harmony with the mental and emotional moulds of the characters as well as the readers. The ancestral voices heard by Kubla Khan prophesy war. The poet in his poetic frenzy is capable of building supernatural awe in the minds of the readers when the people coming see his castle see his flashing eyes and waving hair and draw a circle around him thrice to keep them safe from this man who has been fed on honey and dew and drank the milk of paradise. The supernatural drama of the 'The Ancient Mariner' catches hold of the readers' sub-conscious mind. This is, however, noteworthy that Coleridge like Homer and Shakespeare makes the element of supernaturalism the part of a wider scheme which is intimately related to living human experience. The central idea of the need of human love and compassion with man, bird and beast and the entire creation of God and the painful experience caused by their absence is so intensely human that even the supernatural character of the events cannot becloud its truthfulness.

Element of Mystery or Mysteriousness; Mysteriousness is that condition in which some character, event or situation remains hidden and is not revealed to the usual vision or common understanding. It is not completely known but makes its presence feel to the people. Coleridge possesses an unusual gift of evoking the mystery of things. The Ancient Mariner is made a mysterious character just by the mention of the glittering eyes long grey beard and skinny hands. Geraldine's sudden appearance in an unexpected circumstance makes her mysterious. Her being beautiful exceedingly also makes her mysterious. But Coleridge uses this faculty most effectively by keeping alive the ordinary natural phenomena intact. The blowing of the winds and the twinkling of stars assume a mysterious character. Mast-high ice sending a dismal sheen and making cracking and growling sound is bound to appear mysterious. Similarly mysterious is found in the death fires dancing in red and rout and water burning green, blue and white like a witch's oils. The romantic chasm in 'Kubla Khan' is given a touch of mystery by the mention of the 'woman wailing for her demon love.'

Fertile and Rich imagination: Imagination is a mental faculty of framing images of external objects which are not present to the five senses. It is a process of using all the faculties so as to realize with intensity what is not perceived, and to do this in a way that integrates and orders everything present to the mind so that reality is enhanced thereby. Coleridge in his 'Biographia Literaria' writes of imagination thus; 'The power reveals itself in the balance or reconcilement of opposite and discordant qualities of sameness, with the differences of the general; with the concrete; the idea with the image; the individual with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness with old familiar objects; a

more than usual state of emotion with more than usual order. We see that Coleridge's imagination has all these qualities to a superb order.

Coleridge is gifted with the most fertile and vigorous imagination among all the Romantic Poets. It is by this rich and fertile imagination that he is able to create his perplexing mystery. In this respect he goes ahead of Wordsworth who was too conscientious to describe or present those things that were not seen personally by him. Coleridge, on the other hand, was able to describe and present those things which he came across during his vast study through his faculty of imagination. He had the faculty of presenting such unseen and inexperienced things so vividly as if those had been literally present before his eyes. He presents the place of Kubla Khan's palace as he was practically present there, 'here Kubla Khan commanded a palace to be built and a stately garden there unto. And thus ten miles of fertile ground was enclosed with a wall,' set imagination on fire and we can have vivid picture of Kubla Khan's stately pleasure dome. According to the great Greek critic Longinus, a great writer is that one who has the capability of transporting the reader to his own imaginative world. Coleridge, no doubt, was bestowed with this quality. Not only this, he had the rare skill to create an imaginary world, changed it into imaginative and then transformed it to a make-belief condition. The world created by Coleridge in his whole poem of 'The Ancient Mariner' is the best example of this faculty of Coleridge. J.L. Lowes' book 'The Road to Xanadu' amply illustrates how Coleridge's imagination could transform simple facts collected during his reading into something mysterious and wonderful.

Dream Quality: Dream quality is a quality of imagining while asleep. It is a process of or a sequence of images that appear involuntarily to the mind of a sleeping person, often a mixture of real and imaginary characters, places and events. The major poems of Coleridge have a strange dream like atmosphere about them. Dreams with him are no shadows. They are the very substance of his life. He fed on his dreams and vitalized him in his poems. 'Kubla Khan' is essentially a dream poem recounting in a poetic form what he saw in a vision. 'The Ancient Mariner' displays a dream- like movement. C.M Bowra in the 'Romantic Imagination' illustrates the affinity of 'The ancient Mariner' with a dream. 'On the surface it shows many qualities of a dream,' he says. 'It moves in abrupt stages each of which has its own single dominating character. Its visual impressions are remarkably brilliant and absorbing. Its emotional impacts change rapidly but always come with unusual force as if the poet were hunted and obsessed by them. When it is all over, to cling to the memory with a peculiar tenacity (tending to stick firmly)just as on waking it is difficult at first to disentangle (get freed) ordinary experience from influences which still survive from sleep.' The dramatic texture (structure) of Coleridge's poems gives them a kind of twilight vagueness intensifying their mystery.

Medievalism: Medievalism means devotion to the Middle Ages, a devotion to the spirit of beliefs of the Middle Ages. Coleridge's love for supernatural led him to the exploration of Middle Ages. He was fascinated by the romance and legends associated with them. 'The Ancient Mariner' 'Christable' and 'Kubla Khan' are all wrought with the glamours of Middle Ages. But it should be kept in mind that Medievalism does not form the substance of his poems. It gives them the much needed sense of remoteness and offers a fit setting for the marvelous which is Coleridge's purpose to hint at or openly display.

Love of Nature: Nature means a physical world including all natural phenomena and living things. It also means a force that is represented before man in the form of beautiful scenes. Wordsworth is stated to be communicating new order of experience for which Nature serves us a point of departure and there was not such an experience in English poetry before his time. Coleridge shows for Nature the same loving devotion as we find in Wordsworth. But Bowra rightly points out that his eye for Nature is for its

more charms and less obvious appeals and he takes richer and more luxurious pleasure in those aspects of Nature that can present a dramatic and mysterious look. Whether his descriptions are based on his personal experiences or on what he has read, he never fails to give them a semblance of truth. The bergs around the skiff or the single sudden stride of a tropical night are scenes that he could not have seen, but they look a lively and realistic as the fire wild torrents actually seen by him rushing down the sides of the hoary, majestic sky. He can evoke the richness of colour as well as the magical associations of sound much better than any other poet. And he is equally successful both in giving graphic descriptions and in achieving broad generalized effects. In his earlier attitude towards Nature, he had a pantheistic view and also accepts it as a moral teacher, but later he comes to believe that it is we who invest Nature with life and it simply reflects our own moods. This later stage of his attitude towards Nature is the stage when he says in 'Dejection: An Ode.'

O Lady! We receive but what we give,
And in our life alone doth Nature live
Ours is her wedding garment, ours her shroud!

Meditative Note: Meditative thinking is the result of reflective and speculative temper. It is a philosophic bent of mind. Coleridge was amply gifted with this quality. This tendency of mind was present even in his early age which made him to do serious reading. He was especially impressed by the German philosophers Kant and Schiller. 'Dejection: An Ode' is also written in a meditative mood in which he deplores the loss of imaginative power because of the metaphysical strain in his thinking. The verses in 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' (which also hint at the theme of the poem) clearly reflects his meditative mind when he says;

'*He prayth well, who loveth well*
Both man and bird and beast.'

He prayth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small
For the dear God who loveth us
He made and loveth all.;

Humanitarianism: Humanitarianism means the love of humanity and a commitment to improving the lives of others. We find humanitarianism in Coleridge's poetry. Both he and Wordsworth strongly supported the French Revolution in the hope that it would free the masses from the tyranny of the dictators. But they were miserably disappointed in their hope. When Coleridge discovered that the revolutionists were perverting or violating the very principles they had stood for, he did not hesitate to denounce them in his,; French : An Ode'. His love of humanity is expressed in different poems and also in the moral of 'The Ancient Mariner' when he says

'He prayth well who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast'

Music: Music is the art of arranging sounds, the art of arranging or making sound, usually those of musical instruments or voices, in groups and patterns that create a pleasing or stimulating effect. It can be presented in the written form indicating pitch, duration, rhythm, and tone of notes to be played. 'Coleridge is always a singer', says H.D. Traill. Court Hope also agrees that there is a tendency to approximate the art of poetry to the art of music. Coleridge's musical genius can best be seen in such poems as 'The Ancient Mariner', 'Christable', 'Kubla Khan' and 'Youth and Age'. 'The Ancient

Mariner' has woven cunning sound patterns with the help of internal rhyme or of clever use of alliteration

The ice was here, the ice was there
The ice was all around
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled
Like noises in the swound!

The internal rhyme and the alliterative effect in the following lines is note worthy

'The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew
The furrow followed free
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.'

The musical quality in 'Christable' and 'Kubla Khan' puts the reader into a hypnotic spell.

Narrative skill: Narrative skill is the art of telling a story or giving an account of a sequence of events in the order in which they happened. Coleridge is superb in the art of storytelling. He knows how to create suspense or to evoke interest in the narrative. In 'The Ancient Mariner' he invests the Mariner with a hypnotic power in order to raise our curiosity in his story. And he introduces his events very dramatically. By bringing the specter –ship gradually closer to view, a hush of expectancy is created before death and Life-in-Death are dramatically brought on the scene to determine the fate of the Mariner. The dropping down of his two hundred sailor companions one by one after the killing of Albatross and their souls going out making a whiz sound of the cross bow produces a very dramatic effect. The wedding guest's interruptions are used to high light the climatic moments. All these devices give the poem an incomparable narrative beauty.

The above are the characteristics that distinguish Coleridge from other romantic poets and make him the most complete representative of the English Romantic poetry of the early nineteenth century.

Medievalism in S.T Coleridge

Introduction: - Medievalism means devotion to the Middle Ages, a devotion to the spirit of beliefs of the Middle Ages. Coleridge's love for supernatural led him to the exploration of Middle Ages. He was fascinated by the romance and legends associated with them. 'The Ancient Mariner' 'Christabel' and 'Kubla Khan' are all wrought with the glamours of Middle Ages. But it should be kept in mind that Medievalism does not form the substance of his poems. It gives them the much needed sense of remoteness and offers a fit setting for the marvellous which is Coleridge's purpose to hint at or openly display.

Medievalism in Coleridge's Poetry: - The scene set in distant times and remote places. The three important poems in which Coleridge has made use of the supernatural are 'The Ancient Mariner, Christabel and Kubla Khan. It is significant that in all the three poems, Coleridge takes us to distant times and remote places. The remoteness of scene in all the three poems is quite deliberate. Medieval times are associated with magic and witchcraft. The appearance of an evil spirit in Sir Leoline's castle does not strike us as improbable nor do we feel any inappropriateness in Kubla Khan's hearing ancestral voices prophesying war amidst the tumultuous noises heard from the fountain as well as the cavers measureless to man. The moment the poet effects temporal and spatial remoteness, the rigorous logic governing the familiar world of reality is suspended and the poet feels free to create a new logic in a comparatively new world.

There is much of medievalism in the works of almost all the romantic poets, with the exception of Wordsworth. The romantics inclined towards the distant and the remote in preference to the homely and familiar. Coleridge who mainly dealt with supernatural subjects was all the more attracted by the legends and romances of the Medieval times. The people were superstitious and they had a real faith in the supernatural. The Middle Ages, thus, provided Coleridge not only with his themes but also offered appropriate setting and atmosphere for the enactment of those themes. All the important poems of his, 'The Ancient Mariner' 'Christabel,' 'Kubla Khan' and 'Love' are wrought with the glamour of the Middle Ages.

'The Ancient Mariner' does not employ the medieval atmosphere as completely as 'Christabel,' where we have moat-castles, (castles having ditches around it) feudal lords, serpent6 women, and bards and pages. Still whosoever will read 'The ancient Mariner' a little careful reader will not fail to notice the medieval touches generously given to it. The very opening line, 'It is an Ancient Mariner' strikes the key-not of the poem. The word 'ancient' not only refer to the old age of the Mariner but immediately distinguishes him as belonging to the olden times. The reader is thus warned at the outset to be ready to be wafted to distant times. The reader is thus warned at the outset to be ready to be wafted (floated gently) to distant times. The ceremonials and rituals hinted at in the beginning are connected with the medieval church. The 'loud bassoon', the 'merry minstrelsy' and 'the blushing bride, suggest a medieval wedding, when measures were danced and wine flowed in rounds, and songs and ballads were sung with great enthusiasm and joy. Moreover, the ship, the masts, the oars, the sails, the Pilot and the Pilot's boy, and the lighthouse – all point to the past. The sailors, like people in the Middle Ages, are a superstitious set. They believe in portent (omen) and omens. They take the Albatross to be a bird of good omen, and condemn the Mariner for having killed it. The moral theme of the poem consisting in the catholic idea of redemption through penance or expiation is also medieval in spirit. The cross-bow with which the Mariner shoots the Albatross was also used in the Middle Ages.

Coleridge Medievalism also includes the following elements which are closed connected to one another. Those are Supernaturalism, Dream-like Quality, Love of Nature, Fertile and rich Imagination the element of Mystery and Mysteriousness and a very effective and impressive Narrative Skill.

Supernaturalism: - Coleridge's romanticism in the sense of his artistic rendering of the supernatural phenomena. Although it has not the same level of supernaturalism as is found in 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner', or 'Christabel; yet the supernatural in the poem stand out quite conspicuously, (easily availably). The woman waiting for her demon lover and the ancestral voices prophesying war; are obviously supernatural occurrences. The poetic frenzy of an inspired poet borders on the supernatural. The tumultuous rise of the river Alph from a deep romantic chasm is also given an unmistakable supernatural touch. But what is remarkable about 'Kubla Khan' is the convincing presentation of the supernatural elements. The description of the landscape is so vivid and precise; the similes used for the mighty fountain so homely (plain) and familiar that it does not occur to the reader that anything incredible is being described. The psychological truth hidden behind Kubla Khan's hearing ancestral voices prophesying war or the representation of the poet as a super human being make these facts acceptable.

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Fertile and Rich imagination: - Imagination is a mental faculty of framing images of external objects which are not present to the five senses. It is a process of using all the faculties so as to realize with intensity what is not perceived, and to do this in a way that integrates and orders everything present to the mind so that reality is enhanced thereby. Coleridge in his 'Biographia Literaria' writes of imagination thus; 'The power reveals itself in the balance or reconcilement of opposite and discordant qualities of sameness, with the differences of the general; with the concrete; the idea with the image; the individual with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness with old familiar objects; a more than usual state of emotion with more than usual order. We see that Coleridge's imagination has all these qualities to a superb order.

Coleridge is gifted with the most fertile and vigorous imagination among all the Romantic Poets. It is by this rich and fertile imagination that he is able to create his perplexing mystery. In this respect he goes ahead of Wordsworth who was too conscientious to describe or present those things that were not seen personally by him. Coleridge, on the other hand, was able to describe and present those things which he came across during his vast study through his faculty of imagination. He had the faculty of presenting such unseen and inexperienced things so vividly as if those had been literally present before his eyes. He presents the place of Kubla Khan's palace as he was practically present there, 'here Kubla Khan commanded a palace to be built and a stately garden there unto. And thus ten miles of fertile ground was enclosed with a wall,' set imagination on fire and we can have vivid picture of Kubla Khan's stately pleasure dome. According to the great Greek critic Longinus, a great writer is that one who has the capability of transporting the reader to his own imaginative world. Coleridge, no doubt, was bestowed with this quality. Not only this, he had the rare skill to create an imaginary world, changed it into imaginative and then transformed it to a make-belief condition. The world created by Coleridge in his whole poem of 'The Ancient Mariner' is the best example of this faculty of Coleridge. J.L. Lowes' book 'The Road to Xanadu' amply illustrates how Coleridge's imagination could transform simple facts collected during his reading into something mysterious and wonderful.

Humanitarianism: - Humanitarianism means the love of humanity and a commitment to improving the lives of others. We find humanitarianism in Coleridge's poetry. Both he and Wordsworth strongly supported the French Revolution in the hope that it would free the masses from the tyranny of the dictators. But they were miserably disappointed in their hope. When Coleridge discovered that the revolutionists were perverting or violating the very principles they had stood for, he did not hesitate to denounce them in his "Dejection :An Ode". His love of humanity is expressed in different poems and also in the moral of 'The Ancient Mariner' when he says

'He prayth well who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast'

Music: - Music is the art of arranging sounds, the art of arranging or making sound, usually those of musical instruments or voices, in groups and patterns that create a pleasing or stimulating effect. It can be presented in the written form indicating pitch, duration, rhythm, and tone of notes to be played. 'Coleridge is always a singer', says H.D. Traill. Court Hope also agrees that there is a tendency to approximate the art of poetry to the art of music. Coleridge's musical genius can best be seen in such poems as 'The Ancient Mariner', 'Christabel', 'Kubla Khan' and 'Youth and Age'. 'The Ancient Mariner' has woven cunning sound patterns with the help of internal rhyme or of clever use of alliteration

The ice was here, the ice was there
The ice was all around
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled

Narrative skill: - Narrative skill is the art of telling a story or giving an account of a sequence of events in the order in which they happened. Coleridge is superb in the art of storytelling. He knows how to create suspense or to evoke interest in the narrative. In 'The Ancient Mariner' he invests the Mariner with a hypnotic power in order to raise our curiosity in his story. And he introduces his events very dramatically. By bringing the spectre –ship gradually closer to view, a hush of expectancy is created before death and Life-in-Death are dramatically brought on the scene to determine the fate of the Mariner. The dropping down of his two hundred sailor companions one by one after the killing of

Albatross and their souls going out making a whiz sound of the cross bow produces a very dramatic effect. The wedding guest's interruptions are used to high light the climatic moments. All these devices give the poem an incomparable narrative beauty.

We can say that Coleridge's Medievalism does not take us only to remote and distant places and men but has within it the other qualities of the poet's art like supernatural, fertile imagination, dream-quality, an effective and impressive narrative skill and his love of Nature.

Supernaturalism in S.T. Coleridge

Samuel Taylor Coleridge is one of the fabulous poets of Romantic Movement in English literature. His thoughts are philosophical. But his style is simple and clear. Supernaturalism is his special field. He writes about supernatural elements and events and describes what is unseen and beyond nature. But he describes them in such a way that they appear nature and life like. He differs from his contemporaries, Lewis, Mrs. Radcliff and poet, who create horror by showing reshaped and horrible paces. He on the other hand, creates horror by creating horrible atmosphere. He is a great artist.

It is true that what is best in Coleridge's poetry is very small in amount but that little is of great value. He seems to have more interest in describing supernatural element. But his greatness lies in the fact that he describes them in such a way that looks to be natural and life like.

What is the supernatural? Though the ages phenomena which could not be explained by the know laws of nature have been attributed to supernatural powers and influences. If these happenings led to the benevolent powers; if or the contrary they resulted in suffering and misery, they were ascribed to evil spirits literature has continuously been enriched by stories in which the supernatural plays an important part. The desire of hearing about the miraculous is as strong in the civilized man as it was in his primitive ancestors, as it is in the native child. The folklores of all ages and countries abound in tales of magic, fairies, spirits ghosts and demons however be explained by the laws of science and that seem to involve gods or music.

The interest in the supernatural was an important aspect of the romantic spirit that appeared in the eighteenth century. The fashionable cult of the strangeness turned inevitably to this alluring world of the unknown and exploited it with a reckless carelessness. To Coleridge the supernatural appealed with a special power.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poems "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", 'Kubla Khan' and "Christable" are the precious assets of the English literature for supernatural elements. These are the poems that made him immortal in the world of literature.

"The Rime of The Ancient Mariner" is a poem in the romantic tradition with high imagination and supernatural elements. But at the same time Coleridge has put a moral lesson for his readers in the poem. He shows that any crime, big or small cannot go unpunished. Again, with true love the suffering soul may be purified and regenerated.

As a poet of the romantic tradition, Coleridge has put the supernatural in his poem "The Rime of The Ancient Mariner", He put it perhaps to satisfy the taste of ordinary people of his day, we find every details of a sea voyage, the condition, the climate of the sea and the mariners on board. But at the same time there are so much incidents and scenes in the poem that cannot be believed with reason. Coleridge has created a willing suspension of disbelief here.

The Ancient Mariner is a tale of a curse which the narrator, the Mariner himself, brings upon himself and his companions by killing an Albatross without reason. Coleridge's power of handling the supernatural is like the pure music of his verse. The moral of the poem is one of all-embracing love. This poem is full of moral teachings for human beings. Humphry House expresses his agreement with three great critics, Dr. Tillyard, Dr. Bowra, and Robert Penn Warren, that the poem has a very serious moral and spiritual effect on human life. The moral of the ancient Mariner's story is that one should love all God's creatures.

Coleridge is regarded as the greatest poet of the supernatural in English literature and The Ancient Mariner is regarded as a masterpiece of supernatural poetry. His supernatural is controlled by thought and study. Cazamian says, "The very center of Coleridge art lies in his faculty of evoking the mystery of things, and making it actual, widespread, and obsessing. Even better than Wordsworth, he knows how to handle that species of the supernatural whose essence (spirit) is entirely psychological. The supernatural element in The Ancient Mariner is a hallucination, the outcome of remorse; by the most sober of method." His skill in dealing with the supernatural in this poem is two-fold: first, he has fully achieved his aim of making the supernatural appear to be natural; and, second, he has employed suggestive, psychological, and refined (sophisticated) methods of producing the feelings of mystery and horror in the poem, not crude and sensational like that of the writers before him, i.e. Horace, Walpole, Mrs. Radcliffe, and Monk Lewis. The greatness of The Ancient Mariner lies chiefly in the technique by which the supernatural has been made believable and convincing. There are, no doubt, a number of impossible, incredible, and fantastic situation in the poem, such as: the mesmeric (magnetic) power in the mariner's gaze, the sudden appearance of the mysterious skeleton ship, the spectre woman and her mate, the coming back to life of the dead crew, the seraph-band making signals to the land, the sudden sinking of the ship, and the polar spirit commenting on or influencing the course of events. But these supernatural phenomena are so skillfully blended with the perfectly believable and natural phenomena that the whole looks real. The sun shinning brightly at the outset, the mist and snow, the freezing cold of the polar regions, the floating ice bergs floating in the water, the torrid (very hot) fierceness of stagnant water, the slimy things crawling on the sea, the moon going up the sky, the roaring wind, the rainfall—such are the natural phenomena in the poem. The realistic effect is enhanced by a description of the state of mind of the ancient mariner; that is how he tried to pray but he could not, how lonely he felt on a wide, wide sea, how he wanted to die but in vain (useless), how he suffered mental and spiritual anguish (torture). This psychological study of the mariner adds to the realistic effect because we are made to feel that any man would suffer in the same way under similar circumstances.. Again, the details of the ship's voyage have such a diary-like air that we accept them as a faithful recording of facts. There is, too, the logic of cause and effect in the poem. The punishment and torture have a convincing cause behind them.

The realistic effect achieved by Coleridge in The Ancient Mariner is one his great achievements which make the poem not only convincing and exciting but also in some sense a criticism of life. There are a large number of situations and episodes in The Ancient Mariner, which fill us either with a sense of mystery or a feeling of horror or with both. The first situation that strikes terror in the heart of the Mariner (and also the reader) is the appearance of the skeleton-ship. When this skeleton-ship is sighted in the distance, the sailors feel happy to think that they will now get water to quench their burning thirst. But in a few moment they discover the reality of this ship. The description of the ship with its "ribs" and its "gossamere-like sails" fill us with terror. It is a strange mystery that this ship should sail on the sea without wind and without a tide, while the Mariner's ship stands still "like a painted shop upon a painted ocean". Obvi

supernatural force, which drives the ship, and the crew also consists of supernatural characters. The feeling of terror is heightened when a reference is made to the crew of this ship. The crew consists of Death and Life-in-Death. But Coleridge creates the sense of horror in this poem not by describing a direct and crude description but by employing suggestive and psychological methods. For instance, he does not describe the physical features of the spectre woman and her death mate or other external phenomena at length, but he simply portrays the effect of those external things on the mariner's mind. The appearance of Life-in-Death is described in the following three lines: Her lips were red, her looks were free, Her locks were yellow as gold: Her skin was as white as leprosy. (Lines 190-92) These three lines are followed by these two: The night-mare Life-in-Death was she, Who thicks man's blood with cold. (lines 193-94) Coleridge, after giving us only three lines of description, conveys the horror by saying that the sight of her would have the effect of freezing a man's blood. In other words, he leaves it to us to imagine for ourselves the horrible appearance of Life-in-Death that personifies the unspeakable torture of a man who cannot die.

Coleridge merely offers a few suggestions to be developed by the reader himself. The effect of the skeleton-ship with Death and Life-in-Death on board again conveyed to as by the following two lines:

"Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip!"

That is, instead of giving us a detailed description of the whole horrible sight, Coleridge refers to the effect of that horrible sight upon the mind of the Mariner and says that fear sipped his life-blood. Another situation that produces horror in the poem is the death of the two hundred sailors who dropped down one by one, and each of them looked at the ancient Mariner with a curse in his eyes:

"One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye."

The ancient Mariner heard a whiz-like sound every time a soul left its body:

"The souls did from their bodies fly,—
They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whiz of my cross-bow!"

What a horrible experience it must have been for the ancient Mariner and how horrible for the reader too. The agony and spiritual torture of the lonely ancient Mariner on a wide wide sea when he could not pray or die are, perhaps, the most terrifying and horrifying elements in the poem. The following stanzas convey some of the horror of the Mariner's state:

"I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away;
I looked upon the rooting deck,
And there the dead men lay.
I looked to heaven, and tried to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust."

What makes the situation still more horrifying is that the curse in dead men's eyes had never passed away: "The look with which they looked on me Had never passed away." "Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse, And yet I could not die." Here, again, no ugly details are provided. We are to imagine the horror of the situation ourselves. We shudder (tremble) with fear to think of the Mariner who is left alone after seeing "four times fifty living men" dropping down one by one, "with heavy thump, a lifeless lump." It is at this stage that the Weeding-Guest begins to experience a sensation of fear because he thinks that the Marines himself must also have dropped down dead and that it is the Mariner's ghost who is now speaking to him and so he says:

'I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
....
I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand, so brown.'

Next, the groaning, stirring, and coming back to life of the dead crew must have been a terrifying experience for the ancient mariner till he discovered that the bodies were inspired not by their original souls but by a troop of angelic spirit. We are certainly terrified when we read:

"The dead men gave groan,
They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;"

"They raised their limbs like lifeless tools
We were a ghastly crew."

In real life, if a dead man happens to open his eyes (because he has not really died), all the mourners get terribly frightened and run away helter-skelter. In this case two hundred dead men got up on their feet and started working at the oars.

The horror of the situation can well be imagined. Again, towards the close of the poem, the poet wishes to tell us how horrifying the Mariner's face appeared after he had undergone his strange adventures. The poet does not describe the features the face; he simply describes the effect of the face upon the Pilot's mind:

"I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked
And fell down in a fit;"

In other words, the Mariner's face was ghastly like the face of a dead man, and it struck so much terror in the Pilot's heart that the Pilot fainted. The Pilot must have thought that the Mariner was not a human being but some horrible spectre. The effect on the Pilot's boy was that he went crazy with fear:

"I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro."

As for the Hermit, he too was terrified but, being a holy man, he sought courage from God:

"The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit."

The Hermit is, indeed, badly shaken and, on stepping forth from the boat, could scarcely stand because of fear:

"The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand."

In a nervous state of mind, the Hermit asks the Mariner to tell him immediately what manner of man he is. In short, the horror of the Mariner's face is conveyed to us through the reactions of the Pilot, the Pilot's boy, and the Hermit. Coleridge's treatment of the supernatural is quite different from that of such writers as Horace, Walpole, Mrs. Radcliffe, and Monk Lewis. The difference between Coleridge and the others is the difference between the maker of horror and the maker of horrors. Coleridge creates the atmosphere of mystery and fear by indefiniteness and by subtle suggestion, while the others employ crude description and they pile horrors in order to send a cold shiver down the reader's spine and to curdle the reader's blood. The theme of this poem is crime, punishment and reconciliation. In this poem the Mariner did not act but was only acted upon and he was the recipient rather than the doer. He is the recipient of the odd and of the fate. There is a tragic flaw for the Mariner as the killing of the bird starts his suffering. The suffering endured by the Mariner is due to killing the bird that represents imagination, and by killing the bird the Mariner kills the imagination and the loss of the imagination is a kind of death. The Mariner suffers mentally and spiritually, and he is isolated. Then in his suffering, he sees water snakes and blesses them, which eventually releases his suffering.

The ancient mariner is the story of a real life sea voyage pervaded by a supernatural atmosphere. There is an strangeness in the hypnotic eyes of the mariner, the spectral ship with death and nightmare life in death as its crew dicing or the deck, the winds that sound but never come near, the polar spirits entering the corpses of the mariners and activating them, and the mariners ship sinking mysteriously with a thundering sound coming from under the water. Terror is produced by Coleridge's ability to provide visual descriptions of striking vividness. The story with its supernatural accounts is obviously incredible, but within this frame work there is the human reality.

"God save thee, ancient mariner
From the fiends, that plague you thus!"

Here Coleridge vividly presents the supernatural issues by dwelling upon the hideous relations on the face of the mariner. This is the indirect way of treatment of the supernatural, Coleridge was perhaps aware of the fact that such supernatural scenes would not be accepted or believed by his readers. Hence he has dealt with the reactions of the persons that we experience.

'And some is dreams assured were
Of the spirit that plagued us so
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.'

Then comes the appearance from nowhere of the skeleton ship with gossamer-like sails, carrying death and life in death engaged in a gambling contest. This ship sails on the sea without wind or tide and it disappears as suddenly as it had appeared. The stanza where this incident is described as horrifying in their effect upon us and sends a cold shiver down our spine. The manner of the death of all the sailors except the ancient mariner is supernatural. There is something supernatural about the way in which the dead body of the albatross automatically falls down from the ancient mariner's neck into the sea. The moving of the ship upon the sea without a wind is supernatural

'A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it neared and neared;
Asif it dodged a water-sprite,
If plunged and tacked and veered.'

In these lines the ancient mariner describes the gradual approach of the skeleton ship. He and his companions had passed a long and weary time, in thirst and loneliness. One day, looking towards the western sky, where the sun was setting, the ancient mariner saw a strange sight. At first the thing appeared like a den in the moving piece of mist; it was still to indistinct to be clearly distinguished.

Then as it came still nearer, the mariner found it had a definite shape-it was a ship, it was moving so fast that it appeared to be escaping from the pursuit of a water spirit. Besides, its course was very unsteady. The strange behavior of the ship made the ancient mariner think that the ship was trying to escape from a water spirit that was pursuing it to take revenge.

The poet skillfully suggests the supernatural nature of the ship. The ship of the ancient mariner was becalmed for there was no wind and tide, but in the same sea there was another ship which was moving fast and very fast. How could the second ship move thus, without wind or tide, unless there was something supernatural about it.

"Kubla khan" by Samuel Taylor Coleridge is one of the most mysterious and ambiguous piece of literature ever written. Allegedly written after a laudanum induced dream, the author claims to have been planning a two hundred to three hundred line poem before he got interrupted by a man. This is partly true, as the language seems often in genial Christianity.

Coleridge's philosophy in life was very romantic and so nearly all of his poems exemplify the romantic idea, especially "Kubla Khan". This romantic poem uses brilliant imagery and metaphors to contrast the ideals of romantic paganism with often in genial Christianity. The vision of paganism is the first idea introduced in the poem. The supernatural reference to "Alph" or Alpheus as it is historically known.

"The sacred river ran
Though caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea"

The river Alph is directly related to the Greek god Alpheus, who the river god. According to Greek mythology, a pagan belief, the god Alpheus had fallen in love with Arethusa the daughter of Nereus and a Hesperides. This again adds to the supernatural quality of the poem.

Suggestiveness is the basic feature of Coleridge's supernaturalism. It is true that a very vivid and graphic description of the surrounding of the pleasure-dome is given in the poem but the supernatural element is suggestive. Coleridge is a superb artist for intermingling the natural and supernatural so that the probable and the improbable interfuse. Here are lines which for sheer suggestiveness and mystery are perhaps unsurpassed.

"A savage place: as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waiting moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover"

A complete story of love's tragedy is hidden in these three lines. And then the following two lines:

"And mid this tumult Kubla heard from for
Ancestral voices prophesying war!"

The poet in these lines, describes the visionary landscape of the palace of Kubla Khan. Kubla Khan, the mighty emperor ordered to build a pleasure dome. The poet says that the place is a wild one which may be awe-inspiring. Again this is holy and magic land. The influence of magic seems to be there. This place says Coleridge is visited repeatedly by a woman to find out her lover who is a demon. Under the fading light of the waning moon she looks for her lover and wails. These lines are full of dream elements that run through the whole poem. Coleridge's supernaturalism is at its height as he describes a mysterious and terrible landscape.

In lines, 37-46, Coleridge here presents a visionary scene where a maiden is playing her musical instrument and singing. The poet says in these lines, describes the visionary landscape of the palace of Kubla Khan. The poet says that once he saw in a vision or dream that an Abyssinian girl was playing on a musical instrument called dulcimer. The maid was also singing a wonderful song that charmed the poet. If he could remember that music he could build a pleasure-dome in the air, with his inspired poetry. The poem here gets a supernatural touch with the maid and her musical instrument. The maid is Abyssinian and her instrument is a dulcimer which is from faraway place and time.

'For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of paradise.'

The poem here gets a supernatural touch with boney dew and milk of paradise. These are the foods of magicians and by taking them he could get the supernatural quality himself.

However Coleridge never forgets that his real purpose was to make the supernatural natural and to bring about the "willing suspension of disbelief which constitutes poetics faith." Whether Kubla Khan is seen as a poem about poetic creativity or about life, it is a convincing work.

Coleridge made the supernatural as the region and haunt of his genius and shows the way to its most artistic use. There are two ways of treating the supernatural, one external and decorative and the other suggestive and psychological. In the first the supernatural horrors may be multiplied through a number of direct and vivid descriptions, in the second they may be subtly suggested and intensified through the depiction of their effect on the human victim. Coleridge knew how to handle that type of the supernatural whose essence is entirely psychological. He creates an atmosphere of mystery and horror by using supernatural elements. The influence of the supernatural has been brought to bear not only on human nature but or phenomenal nature also. Coleridge makes the natural seem supernatural by attributing to nature something of the special power and proficiency of the supernatural. Coleridge is best known for his haunting ballad, Rime of the Ancient Mariner, the dream like Kubla Khan and the unfinished Christabel. He used supernatural elements vastly in his three best known poems and supernaturalism gives him a new identity.

S.T Coleridge's Willing Suspension of Disbelief

No phrase in the language has acquired such wide and universe popularity, and has had such a profound impact on subsequent literary theory as Coleridge's phrase, "Willing suspension of disbelief", which he used to indicate the nature of poetic dramatic illusion. All through the Neo-classics era the question of dramatic illusion and credibility had exercised the mind of critics, and the observance of the unities was considered essential

for, their violation puts too severe a strain on the credibility of the audience and thus dramatic illusion is violated. The topic was hotly debated and both Dryden and Dr. Johnson have expressed their views on it, views which are in advance of those of their contemporaries. However, it was Coleridge who said the last word on the subject, and finally put the controversy at rest.

Coleridge uses the phrase in connection with his account in Chapter XIV of the Biographia Literaria of the origin and genesis of the Lyrical Ballads. He writes,

"In this idea originated the plan of the Lyrical ballads; in which it was agreed that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith".

Thus he was to treat of characters supernatural, which are incredible and improbable and which under normal circumstances we would not believe in but the treatment was to be such that as long as we were reading his poems, there would be, "a willing suspension of disbelief", and we would believe for the moment in what is essentially incredible and improbable. In other words, the treatment should be such as would send the judgment of readers to sleep, so that they would pursue the poem with delight.

In Chapter XXIII of the Biographia Literaria he explains himself further and writes:

"The poet does not require us to be awake and believe; he solicits us only to yield ourselves to a dream; and this, too, with our eyes open, and with our judgment pursue behind the curtain, really to awaken us at the first motion of our will, and meantime, only, not to disbelieve".

The poet sends our judgment to sleep, for as long as we are reading his word or seeing his play. He does not ask us to believe in what is presented to our mind; he only requires that we should not disbelieve. Only a momentary suspension of disbelief is required for an enjoyment of imaginative literature. We are not under any illusion that it is reality; only, for the moment, there is a voluntary remission of judgment, we enjoy what we dream of. Similarly, the poet, if he is sufficiently skilful, sends our judgments to sleep so that we neither believe nor disbelieve, it to be reality, but merely enjoy what is presented to the mind's eye. Our reason, or rational judgment, our consciousness, is in voluntarily suspension and this suspension of judgment enables us to enjoy what is in our waking moments when the spell is broken, we would condemn as incredible. Distancing in time and place, humanizing of the marvelous and the supernatural, etc., are some of the devices used to procure such, "willing suspension of disbelief".

Further light on Coleridge's views in this connection is thrown through a comparison with the view of Dr. Johnson. Dr. Johnson was of the view that the reader or the spectator deludes himself into believing a play to be a reality, as long as he is witnessing it. The spectator knows, "from the first to the last that the stage is only a stage and that the players are only players". But knowingly he deludes himself and regards it as the reality. Not unlike Johnson, Coleridge is of the view that it is not in this state that a tale or play is enjoyed, or that the reader or the spectator allows himself to be deluded even temporarily, to be able to enjoy it. On the contrary, he just takes leave of his judgment for the time being. 'The true stage-illusion consists not in the mind's judging it to be a forest, but in its remission of the judgment that it is not a forest'. While Dr. Johnson believed that the spectator is in full exercise of his judgment and knows that what is being presented to him is not reality, Coleridge believes that the spectator does not voluntarily exercise his judgment for the time being. His critical faculty is asleep so to say. Thus Coleridge's position is a middle one: the spectator or the reader c

actively believe nor disbelieve. His judgment is in a state of suspension for the time being. Voluntarily he is persuaded not to exercise it as long as he is reading a poem or witnessing a play. Imaginative literature owes its appeal to such suspension of disbelief.

What is Apocalypse and how it is manipulated in the Rime of Ancient Mariner

Apocalypse is a situation in which a lot of people die or suffer and a lot of damage is done. Apocalyptic is warning people about terrible events that will happen in future. The Rime of Ancient Mariner contains apocalyptic and natural symbolism that dominates the core of the poem. The Biblical symbolism found in this poem mainly reflects the apocalypse as it deals with the Mariner's revelation that good will triumph over evil, and his acceptance of all nature as God's creation.

William Blake

William Blake—Life and Works

The Family: William Blake, mystic, poet, and artist, was born in London on November 28, 1757. His father was a hosier, living at 28, Broad Street, Golden Square. The family consisted of four sons and a daughter, William being the second son, and the only one to achieve distinction. The eldest, James, succeeded his father in the hosiery business. The third, John, died young after leading a dissolute life. The youngest, Robert, who showed considerable capabilities as an artist, was greatly loved by William, and was nursed by him through the illness of which he died at the age of 21. Another boy, Richard, died in infancy.

Early Training and Poetical Attempts: William showed his artistic tastes at an early age. At the age of ten he was sent to a drawing school in the Strand. At fifteen he was apprenticed to an engraver. He also made drawings of the monuments in Westminster Abbey. He was greatly influenced by the Gothic style. His creative faculty found an outlet in the early years in poetry, some of which has survived in the thin volume of Poetical Sketches, printed for him by his friends in 1783. These pieces were composed between his 12th and 20th years.

As a Professional Engraver: In 1779 Blake set out to earn his living as a professional engraver. He did a lot of work in this line for the booksellers and publishers. During the next twenty years or so he supported himself largely by this means.

Marriage: In 1781 Blake met Catherine Boucher, the illiterate daughter of a market-gardener, and married her in August, 1782. She made a perfect wife for him. She learned to draw and paint well enough to be able to help him in his work. She remained childless, and survived him by four years, dying in 1831.

A New Method of Printing: During the years 1783-87 Blake met a number of distinguished persons, but this society soon disgusted him, and he ridiculed it in a satire known as An Island in the Moon written in 1785. In 1788 he began to experiment with a new method of printing from etched copper-plates. It is related that the secret of this process was revealed to him in a vision by the spirit of his brother Robert. The first results of this process were the small dogmatic works: There is No Natural Religion and All Religions are One. It developed further with the production of Songs of Innocence, which consisted of simple lyrical poems etched on copper with decorations coloured by hand.

The volume was finished in 1789 and was sold for a few shillings. This was the prelude to the remarkable series of books in "illuminated printing" which occupied Blake in some degree for the rest of his life.

Mysticism and Philosophy: Blake was now living in Hercules Road, Lambeth. Here he completed the works entitled The Book of Thel (1789); The Marriage of Heaven and Hell (1793); America (1793); Visions of the Daughters of Albion (1793); Songs of Experience (1794); Europe (1794); Urizen (1794); The Book of Los (1795); The Book of Ahania (1795); and The Song of Los (1795).

During this period Blake was deeply under the influence of his visionary powers, and mysticism and philosophy emerged as his dominant interests.

Colour-prints: Blake's output as an artist was considerable. In 1795 he produced his stupendous series of large colour prints which can scarcely be matched in the whole history of art for imaginative content and magnificence of colouring. These include "Nebuchadnezzar", "The Elohim Creating Adam", and "Newton". By 1797 he had completed his series of 537 water-colour designs for Young's Night Thoughts.

The Problem of Earning a Livelihood: Blake's circle of friends had become a little wider now, and included Thomas Butts. It was chiefly Butts's patronage which enabled Blake to earn a livelihood while devoting much time and energy to his symbolical works which never produced any adequate return by their sales. He even laboured over a long poem, The Four Zoas. It is a poem of the greatest significance for the understanding of Blake.

Life and Work at Felpham: During the seven years from 1793 to 1800, Blake's creative output was enormous. In 1800, Blake moved with his wife and sister, from London to Felpham in Sussex in order to work at some engravings for William Hayley. But three years later he returned to London with a great sense of relief. At first he had been able to work happily enough at Felpham, but soon he became more and more irritated by Hayley's patronizing airs and lack of understanding. He also experienced much spiritual discomfort at Felpham because of the visions that he incessantly saw. He was forced to lead a double life, submitting on the surface to Hayley's vanities and developing in secret his own imaginative faculties. The Felpham period was, therefore; a strangely mixed output of second-rate engravings for Hayley, of fine paintings, and of mystical poetry of great power, which was mostly embodied in the poem Milton. In January,1804 Blake was tried on a false charge of having used treasonable words against the King, and was acquitted.

Association with Cromek: In 1805 Blake joined the engraver Cromek in a scheme for the production of a series of engravings for Robert Blair's The Grave. But here he was again deceived; Cromek paid him a small sum for the designs, and then employed another man to engrave them. Blake, already embittered by neglect, felt still more embittered and suffered from fits of depression.

The Failure of His Exhibition: In 1809 Blake held an exhibition of his works at the house of his brother James in Broad Street, Golden Square. Sixteen pictures were exhibited, including his large painting of Chaucer's Canterbury pilgrims, and each visitor to the house received for his entrance to the house a copy of the now celebrated "Descriptive Catalogue". The exhibition attracted very little notice, the only criticism of it, which appeared in Leigh Hunt's The Examiner being malicious and unfair.

Years of Obscurity: During the years that followed, Blake fell into complete obscurity. It is not known for certain how he earned his living during 1810-17. It has even been suggested that for part of this period he was confined to a mental hospital. Some of his acquaintances, such as Robert Southey, who visited him in 1811, did regard him as insane. But his intimate friends were convinced that he was not at all mad. Throughout this period he was occasionally selling copies of his illuminated books. He also executed engravings for various employers. He was occupied, too, with the 100 etched plates of his greatest symbolical poem, Jerusalem.

"Illustrations of the Book of Job": In 1818, Blake entered upon the last phase of his life, and until his death in 1827 was probably happier with his friends and in his work than he had been at any other period. He was now able to obtain more work, and became the centre of a circle of young artists who regarded him with affection and reverence. In 1821, Blake moved from South Molton Street to 3, Fountain Court, Strand, and here he executed his most widely known work in creative art, the "Illustrations of the Book of Job". Though superficially illustrations of the Bible story, the engravings form

one of the most important of Blake's symbolical works. Their mystical content has not prevented the designs from being the most widely known and generally appreciated of his works.

Illustrations of the "Divine Comedy", and Death: Blake was to make one more great effort in his art. In October, 1825, he was asked to make illustrations of Dante's Divine Comedy and to engrave them. He completed a hundred water-colour designs, of which seven were engraved, and he was still at work upon these when he died on the 12th August, 1827. He was buried in an unmarked grave in Bunhill Fields Cemetery, the approximate place being now indicated by a tablet placed there.

Blake's Character: Blake suffered from the defects of his qualities. His mind was never systematically cultivated. His qualities isolated him from his contemporaries and drove his mind upon itself, so that the interpretation of his message to mankind cannot be made with accuracy. But through all his mental turmoil and difficulties in dealings with his fellow men he preserved his intellectual integrity, and he never prostituted his art. Throughout his life he tried to exalt the things of the mind, and for him the imagination was man's highest faculty. Ceaselessly he fought against materialism. He was deeply religious, though in no conventional sense. In his later years Christ became identified in his mind with Art, and this fact provides many clues for the understanding of his doctrines. But perhaps the most illuminating revelation of his mind for most readers are the aphorisms and didactic statements which he engraved about the year 1820 around a representation of the Laocoon group.

Conclusion: Blake was not much understood by his contemporaries. He influenced them as little as he was influenced by them, and for many years after his death his name was unknown. His first full biography, written by Alexander Gilchrist, was published in 1863, and was reprinted under the supervision of D.G. Kossetti in 1880. Since that time his power and originality have gained fuller recognition, and he now holds a position as one of the greatest figures in English poetry and art. A bronze bust of him was placed in the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey in November, 1957 to mark the bicentenary of his birth. Many of his pictures are to be seen in the Tate Gallery, London, and collections of his illuminated books in the British Museum.

A Brief Survey of William Blake's Poetry

Saw Spiritual Presences: William Blake, though a poet and a mystic of the most extraordinary genius, had little or no influence on his generation. The greater part of his message was so obscure, so wild, so incoherently delivered, that even now, after much study, his commentators have succeeded in making clear only a portion of what he wrote. He belonged to that type of mind which in superstitious ages is described as being '"possessed". When a very young child he one day screamed with fear because, he said, he had seen God put His face to the window. In boyhood he saw several angels, very bright, standing in a tree by the roadside. In his manhood, the earth and the air were for him full of spiritual presences, all concerned with his fate or with that of his friends.

His Visual Imagination: With a metaphysical gift which made it natural for Blake to move in an ideal world, he combined a visual imagination of abnormal, almost miraculous power, which enabled him to give bodily form to abstractions, and to summon at any moment before him "armies of angels that soar, legions of demons that lurk.'' Outwardly he led a regular, quiet, laborious life, all the while pouring out poems, drawings, and vast "prophetical books" full of shadowy mythologies and mystical thought-systems which show that his inward life was one of perhaps unparalleled excitement and adventure.

His Fame as a Poet: Aside from the prophetical works, such as The Book of Thel and The French Revolution, his fame as a poet rests chiefly on his Poetical Sketches (1783) and on his Songs of Innocence (1789) and Songs of Experience (1794). These little volumes contain some of the simplest and sweetest as well as some of the most powerful short poems in the language. At his best, Blake has a simplicity as great as Wordsworth's, and a magic which reminds us of Coleridge, combined with a depth and pregnancy of meaning peculiar to himself. In him the whole transcendental side of the Romantic Movement was expressed by hint and implication, if not by accomplishment.

Poetical Sketches": The most admirable of Blake's poems are to be found in his earlier volumes—Poetical Sketches (1783), Songs of Innocence (1789), and Songs of Experience (1794). These contain matchless lyrics, which show him as almost entirely apart from the 18th century influence and conventions. His models—as far as he has any—are the Elizabethans, though, in Poetical Sketches, there are some pieces of rhythmical, poetic prose, whose inspiration is Macpherson. In four lyrics on the seasons in this volume he describes Nature symbolically; others of the poems are ballads; others are dainty little poems which might almost have come from an Elizabethan; while others, again, with their talk of the "more than mortal fire (that) burns in (his) soul", sound the note of the visionary, a note to grow deeper and deeper later on.

"Songs of Innocence" and "Songs of Experience": Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience are companion collections of lyrics, in which there are many pairs of poems, each in a different mood. In Blake's words they were meant to show "the two contrary states of the human soul". The tone of the first series is admirably sounded by the introductory "Piping down the valleys wild". The volume contains such lovely lyrics as The Lamb, Infant Joy, Cradle Song, and Holy Thursday, recording the happy procession of charity children to St. Paul's Cathedral, and the picture of The Chimney Sweeper in which little "Tom was happy and warm". But, in the companion series, the happy-songs are changed. The symbol is no more the Lamb, "woolly bright", image of Christ, but the Tiger, "burning bright in the forests of the night"; and Blake asks: "Did he who made the Lamb make thee?" Holy Thursday is now viewed in the light of experience, and the procession of the children no longer gives the poet joy; but he is miserable to see so many poor babes "fed with cold and usurous hand". The Chimneysweeper, too, is nowseen "clothed in the clothes of death"; and Blake is bitter against those who go "up to the Church to pray" while the misery of the innocent is around them.

"Auguries of Innocence": The rest of Blake's poetic work does not have the same appeal. Auguries of Innocence, found in manuscript, is not great poetry, but it is the expression of his love of all creatures which makes him hate those who put "a robin redbreast in a cage" or hunt the hare, and of his intense mysticism in which he sees all the world as symbolical of spiritual verities:

> To see a world in a grain of sand,
> And a Heaven in a wild flower,
> Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand,
> And Eternity in an hour.

"Thel": Thel, in unrhymed rhythmical lines, has much lyrical beauty. Thel, "youngest daughter of the Seraphim", laments until comforted by the Lily of the Valley, the Cloud, and the Worm.

Prophetic Books: The prophetic books were "dictated" to Blake by spirits. Some have seen a coherent symbolism in them, but to the ordinary reader they are a non- sensical chaos, broken by flashes of fine lyric or prose sentences enshrining in condensed expression deeply philosophical thoughts. There is the well-known lyric in Milton in which concludes thus:

Bring me my bow of burning gold!
Bring me my arrows of desire!
Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold!
Bring me my chariot of fire.
I will not cease from mental strife,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.
Marriage of Heaven and Hell

In the prose work called Marriage of Heaven and Hell we have among the Proverbs of Hell the following: "He whose face gives no light, shall never become a star." "The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom". "Exuberance is beauty." Though his oracular sayings are generally hard to interpret, intense spiritual thinking lies behind them.

Blake's World-View

Platonism: Blake was influenced in part by the views of Plato for whom the physical world is an imperfect reflection of a perfect spiritual world beyond this (what Plato calls the world of Ideal Forms or Essences). From this point of view, every physical object (e.g. a horse) is a reflection or imitation of a perfect or ideal form or essence ('horseness').

Christianity: Another important influence upon Blake is the Bible. He was very taken by the view of classic Christian thinkers like St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, among others, that this world is the handiwork of God. If we are to know God, we need to study his physical handiwork which allows us, albeit most often only fleetingly, to intuit the spiritual world beyond this and, by extension, the Creator himself. Blake was of the view that this world is less the imperfect physical reflection or mirror of a perfect spiritual world beyond this (Plato's view) than the multifarious 'expression' or manifestation of God/Spirit. Like a lamp, everyone and everything physical manifests the presence / light of the divine. Tragically, however, mankind has forgotten this. (It should be noted that, although influenced by Christianity, Blake invents his own personal mythology designed to counter lapse and rescue mankind from this fall from grace.)

Blake sought to emphasise in this regard what some critics have taken to calling a 'multi-fold vision.' He drew a distinction between, on the one hand, seeing 'with the eye' (the realist / materialist reliance solely on the senses inspired by John Locke the Empiricist) which allows one to perceive only the material surface or appearance of things, utilising that part of the mind which deals only with sense impressions, and, on the other hand, seeing 'through the eye' (the use, inspired by Immanuel Kant, of one's 'imagination' to see the wonder latent within the material world, to discern the spiritual in and through the physical). Later, Coleridge would distinguish similarly between the Understanding (which registers the impressions empirically gathered by the senses) and the Imagination (the capacity of Reason to grasp the true nature of reality, to read, as it were, God's presence suffusing all things).

Hegelianism: Blake was also influenced, directly or indirectly, by the dialectical theory of history advanced by the German Idealist philosopher G. W. F. Hegel. According to Hegel, the history of human civilisation is synonymous with the growth towards perfection of Spirit (the German word Geist when translated means 'Spirit' which serves, roughly speaking, as Hegel's synonym for God). History is, as such, viewable in terms of a progression culminating in the perfection of, in Hegel's view, Enlightenment Germany. The history of humankind up to this time is divisible into three broad stages, each of which is dominated by a particular Zeitgeist (or 'spirit of the age'). That is, each stage is the expression of one particular aspect of Spirit to the exclusion of other aspe

progresses dialectically: each stage (thesis) gives way to its antithesis in which opposing qualities of Spirit are manifested. These are both subsumed, however, in a third stage (synthesis) in which the best qualities of both the preceding stages are assimilated before the dialectical process is repeated all over again. In Hegel's scheme of things, the ancient Asian world (China, India, Persia) gave way to its antithesis, classical European civilisation (Greece and Rome) the best parts of which were synthesised by modern European civilisation (or, more exactly, Enlightenment Germany). European history itself advanced dialectically: the long, dark night of Feudalism during which the Catholic church held sway was succeeded by the Protestant Reformation. The best features of the two were combined to produce the Enlightenment which reached its zenith in the French Revolution (notwithstanding its bloody excesses) and the democratic legacy it bequeathed to Western Europe. It is in this way that humankind (and, by extension, Spirit) draws ever nearer to perfection. (For a fuller but clear explication of Hegel, see Peter Singer's Hegel.)

Blake views the world as structured dialectically. At first glance, when one sees reality merely 'with the eye,' the world appears to consist solely of irreconcilable but fundamental binary opposites (good versus evil, black versus white, love versus hate, etc.). However, when rightly viewed, that is, when one sees through the eye, these seeming opposites are each revealed to play a part in the greater scheme of things. In Blake's The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, he expressed the view that

Without contraries is no progression. Attraction and repulsion, reason and energy, love and hate, are necessary to human existence. . . . From these contraries spring what the religious call good and evil. . . . Good is the passive that obey reason; Evil is the active springing from energy.

In other words, the world is a fusion of binary opposites caught up in a dialectical relationship with each other, each inexplicable without reference to and inseparable from the other. In the dialectical scheme of things which Hegel inherited from Plato, the opposites (thesis and antithesis) come together to form a synthesis which combines the best features of the opposites. Some of the opposites which are dealt with in Blake's poetry include: innocence versus experience, ignorance versus knowledge, youth versus maturity; naiveté versus cynicism, good versus evil; etc. At first glance, Blake would seem to extoll the virtues of innocence, etc. but it quickly becomes apparent on closer inspection that there is an insufficiency that inheres in the heart of innocence (it lacks, for example, the knowledge that comes with experience); paradoxically, too, Blake links goodness with reason, passivity, self-control and discipline [the biblical 'Thou Shalt Not . . .'], that is, the repression of emotion, activity [what he calls 'energy'] and all that is vital and alive. The shortcomings of the opposing side ought to be more evident.

Blake's Radical Politics: From Blake's point of view, the world was mad with its anxiety, bloodshed, oppression, cruelty, selfishness, lovelessness, and repressive morality. Many of the ills afflicting society, he felt, were rooted in sacrifice which formed the basis of a repressive social organisation that turned children into chimney sweeps, for example. The major cause of our warped civilisation was a failure of imagination, the failure to conceive reality and our part in it other than as they appear to our senses. Precisely because he believed himself able to perceive the manifestation of the divine in and through the imperfect material world, Blake was an idealistic visionary. He viewed himself as something of a seer, a visionary, and considered the poet's vocation to be one of social amelioration, hence, the necessity of communicating his visions to as wide a public as possible. His work, he wrote, was an "Endeavour to Restore what the Ancients call'd the Golden Age." However, he came increasingly to feel frustrated in his personal life because he felt that he was rarely or insufficiently heeded.

Blake was a political radical influenced by such contemporaries as William Godwin and Thomas Paine. He supported both the American rebels in their quest for freedom from British rule and the desire of the French middle class to liberate themselves from the oppressive yoke of the aristocracy which culminated in the French Revolution. He also supported the struggles against economic and social injustice in England in the wake of the Industrial Revolution. He lamented the widening gap between the rising class of Capitalists and the working classes who laboured for them. Hence, the frequent albeit subtle presence of socio-political concerns in so many of his poems, especially in Songs of Experience. He also critiqued imperialist expansion by the European powers, colonialism, slavery, and racism in poems like "Little Black Boy" and Visions of the Daughters of Albion.

Social /political context of Songs of Innocence and Experience

(a) The Spirit of Rebellion - Society

Rural poverty and change: - The second half of the eighteenth century was a time of great change. It was the first phase of the Industrial Revolution. Mills and foundries were beginning to be established, changing long-established patterns of work and residence. The seeds for the growth of the great industrial cities like Manchester were being sown. The beginnings of mechanization were beginning to hit the weaver working from home. In the countryside, landlords were changing the enclosure system, leaving many peasant farmers without land and work.

Anti-Catholic unrest – the Gordon Riots: - There were also other causes of unrest such as the Gordon Riots in June 1780 which Blake witnessed in London. Unrest was whipped-up by Lord George Gordon against Catholics and the supporters of the Catholic Relief Act. This Act made it possible for Catholics to join the army without compromising their religion.

The riots caused great havoc and raised fears for the safety of the State. Troops were brought in to quell the riots and 25 ringleaders were hanged for treason. Lord Gordon, however, remained unscathed.

Child-labour and prostitution: - One of the great causes of social reformers in this period was the plight of the child chimney sweeps. From the age of four, children who were orphans in the workhouse or from very poor families would be sold as apprentice sweeps. They had to crawl naked up chimneys, often spurred on by prods from their masters or by having a fire lit under them. They would work in the mornings and then be abandoned onto the streets, unfed, in rags or naked, left to fend for themselves. Physically, these children would be deformed and sick because of their work; they had no education.

Apprentices in other trades were equally poorly served. An apprentice was a source of cheap labour. Nobody had responsibility for their welfare, so many died while still very young as a result of cruelty or neglect.

Prostitution and venereal disease were rampant in late 18th century England. The 'double standard' of different moral codes for men and women applied. Many prostitutes ended up in prison. The plight of such women, as well as women prisoners in general, was a cause espoused by reformers such as the Quaker Elizabeth Fry.

(b) The Spirit of Rebellion - Politics

Blake's was a time of turmoil arising out of challenges to established ideas about monarchy, hierarchy, human nature and human rights.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau: - In 1762, Jean-Jacques Rousseau published his work The Social Contract, about human society and human rights. This championed republicanism and democracy. It was centred upon the idea of freedom as active participation in political life and legislation. Rousseau was the first philosopher of Romanticism, valuing feeling and innocence highly whilst downplaying the role of intellect. He said that 'Man was born free but everywhere is found in chains.' Rousseau also held that children were born good and had an in-built capacity to learn through experience. Formal education distorted the child's creativity, imagination and freedom to develop.

The American War of Independence and the French Revolution: - The spirit of rebellion took political form very clearly in America and France. In 1775, the American War of Independence began, ending in 1783. This was seen as a blow to monarchy and a victory for Republicanism. In 1789, the French Revolution began. This led to the execution of King Louis XVI of France in 1793 and the beginning of the Reign of Terror. Many French aristocrats took refuge in Britain. However, 1794 saw the execution of Danton, Robespierre and other leaders of the French Revolution. Many who had originally supported the Revolution were alienated by the cruelties it involved and by the way in which one tyranny was replaced by another. In 1795, Napoleon Bonaparte began his rise to power. This led to more war and to fear of a new tyrant emerging.

Tom Paine's The Rights of Man: - The French Revolution spurred the publication of Thomas Paine's The Rights of Man, part 1 in 1791 and part 2 in 1792. In this work, Paine attacked hereditary government and the monarchy. He argued for the abolition of the monarchy and the House of Lords. He advocated equal political rights and proposed that all men over twenty-one in Britain should have the vote. He believed this would create a House of Commons willing to pass laws favourable to working people.

The book was immediately banned. Paine was charged with seditious libel but he escaped to France before he could be arrested. Paine gave anyone the right to reprint his book. It was produced in cheap editions so that it could achieve a working class readership. In just over two years, more than 200,000 people in Britain managed to buy a copy. This led to the founding in 1792 of the London Corresponding Society by a shoemaker, Thomas Hardy (not to be confused with the 19th century novelist and poet). The society's aim was to win the vote for all adult males.

Paine also produced The Age of Reason, attacking the claims of Christianity. He criticised the Old Testament as being untrue and immoral and claimed that the Gospels were contradictory. This caused further outrage and lost him popularity with many of his earlier supporters, including Blake.

Religious and Political Dissent: - Paine's main themes in The Rights of Man chimed in with the beliefs of many of the Christian sects which abounded in England at the end of the 18th century. These sects were called Dissenters because they did not agree with the establishment of a state church with the monarch at its head. Most of them would have been seen as politically revolutionary, since they rejected monarchy, hierarchy in state and church and espoused equal rights for all people. They were the descendants of the sects which had flourished after the English Civil War in the previous century, such as the Levellers. The basic approach of the dissenters was summed up in a saying from a much earlier period:

'When Adam delved and Eve span
Who was then the gentleman?'

They believed that government by royalty and with a system of hereditary power was wrong. It divided people into classes, giving civil rights only to the few while keeping the majority unnaturally poor. This was seen as a perversion. God did not intend this enslavement when he created human beings. 'It was not so in the beginning' was the core belief.

Blake's Response to Politics: - Blake moved among politically radical people but rarely entered wholeheartedly into any political movement, largely because most radicals were Deists or freethinkers. For example, he admired Thomas Paine for his support of equality and belief in the ideals of a non-hierarchical democracy. However, he disagreed strongly with Paine's Deist, anti-Christian beliefs.

Blake's initial support of the French Revolution was later tempered by his abhorrence (strong disapproval) of the violence it involved. He was also shocked to see that the revolutionaries quickly became tyrannical oppressors in their turn.

(c) Blake's Religious Outlook

Blake and formal religion: - As a consequence of his philosophical views, Blake rejected formalised religion. He saw the Christianity of his day as being a distortion of true spiritual life. It changed spirituality into a system of moral laws which bound people in shame or in fear of punishment. This made them obedient to society's laws and rules. Organised religion was, therefore, an agent of social control, instead of a source of life and liberation. It bound its adherents (supporter) to the will of those in control. Blake felt that what should have been a message of love and brotherhood had become one of cruelty.

Blake's perspective on God: - Blake had some interesting perspectives on God, which sometimes varied from biblical and church teaching about the Creator. Like other Dissenters, Blake rejected the concept of a transcendent God 'out there'. Instead, he is focussed on the presence of Christ's Holy Spirit as a principle of each person's inner life, and the reality of divine inspiration / imagination.

He rejected the Old Testament stereotype of God as being vengeful and punitive. He felt people used this idea to justify their own revenge, bloodthirstiness and desire for land and power. Blake went further in rejecting completely the accepted view of God as a transcendent ruler, who takes offence and requires appeasement through sacrifice. Traditional Christianity taught that God's justice required the sinfulness of human behaviour to be 'paid for'. This was achieved when the sinless Son of God, Jesus was crucified on a cross as a sacrificial substitute for humanity.

This approach to the sacrifice of Christ was abhorrent to Blake. He believed it was a 'mind-forged fetter' made when people 'fell' into their separate selfhood (see Blake's view of the 'Fall' of Adam and Eve) and began to interpret the world solely from the point of view of experience. That is, they developed a view of God that was actually an image of themselves – jealous, possessive and tyrannical.

In the last three lines, Blake is referring to how he saw the account of the Fall of humankind in Genesis (Genesis 2:4-18 Genesis 3:1-13, where God forbade the eating of fruit from the Tree of knowledge of good and evil in Eden. A serpent tempted Eve to eat it in defiance of God's ban). Blake rejected this view of a God whose will is law and who binds people with prohibitions.

Blake's view of the 'Fall' of Adam and Eve: - According to Blake, the Fall of Adam and Eve was not a fall into sin. It was a fall into a distorted way of seeing God, the world and the self. This distorted perspective resulted in the development of the image of a God in humankind's image, who was thus perceived as being vengeful, punitive and bloodthirsty. It caused people to see themselves as being separate, isolated selves who needed to be protected, rather than as part of a unified creation. This self must also 'fight its own corner' and put itself first, rather than live in harmony with others.

Fallen sexuality: - Blake also believed that the 'fall from grace' brought about a separation between the sexes - interior division where there should be unity (as he stated in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell (1793)). The effects of this are to distort human sexuality, make it possessive, jealous and devouring. Sex, therefore, has to be surrounded by prohibitions and inhibitions. These deny the potential for true joy in sexual experience.

Blake held that fallen sexuality was 'set right' by Christ, who repudiated a religion based on obeying laws (this is Blake's interpretation, rather than being entirely consistent with the Gospel accounts). Blake believed that the repression of sexuality caused personal unhappiness and social ills, such as prostitution, which in turn led to poverty and venereal disease. Instead, he believed in 'free love', although there is no sign that he put his beliefs into practice in his life.

(d) Philosophical Influences on Blake

New philosophies: - In the later eighteenth century, Dissenters like Blake became very interested in the works of earlier Christians, who had moved away from orthodox, biblical Christianity and combined Christian ideas with beliefs drawn from magic, astrology and alchemy. Works by thinkers like Paracelsus and Jacob Boehme were readily available and highly popular among the Christians among whom Blake moved. As a result of this interest many became followers of the Swedish thinker Emanuel Swedenborg. A Swedenborgian chapel was established in London and Blake and his wife were members of this church for some time.

The influence of Swedenborg: - Like other Dissenters, Blake was initially an admirer of Swedenborg. Some of the beliefs taught by Swedenborg which can be found in Blake's work include the ideas that Heaven and hell are products of a person's state of mind, self-created by every individual during his or her life on earth. All angels were once human. Man was so created by God as to be able to speak with spirits and angels while living in the body. A human being is essentially a spirit clothed with a body. The spiritual person is the only true reality. What we call 'nature' and the 'natural' is actually a distortion of the truth - a lie. People need to be transformed from the 'false' natural state into their 'true' spiritual state. The Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, a doctrine known as the Holy Trinity, is wrong. The Trinity exists in one person only, Jesus Christ, just as a trinity of soul, body and spirit exists in each person.

Many of these ideas would be considered as heresy by mainstream Christians. Blake himself rejected Swedenborgianism when the Swedenborgian chapel in London began to organise itself hierarchically and to teach along more traditional lines. Like other Dissenters, Blake rejected all monarchy and hierarchy within society and the Church

Blake and Jacob Boehme: - Following his disaffection with Swedenborg, Blake became influenced by the writings of the German, Jacob Boehme. Some of Boehme's key themes, found in Blake's work, are everything exists, but can be understood only through its opposite, evil is a necessary element in goodness

would become inert and progress would be impossible, evil is a result of the striving of single elements of Deity to become the whole, God himself contains conflicting elements and antithetical principles within his nature. As with the theories of Swedenborg, these ideas do not tally with the teaching of the Bible about such issues.

(e) Attitudes to man and God in the Age of Reason

A new perspective on 'truth': - Described as the 'Age of Reason' the eighteenth century saw a movement away from an understanding of truth as something which was revealed by God and, therefore, independent of human reason. Instead, truth could be found through observation of the world and by the use of human reason. Accordingly, laws were to be judged valid because they met human requirements of reasonableness, rather than because they were based on divine commands encountered in the Bible.

John Locke: - In his Essay Concerning Human Understanding, John Locke (1632 - 1704) argued that the human mind is a blank slate at birth. Therefore, there are no innate (inborn) ideas. Everything humans think or know comes to them through the experience of their senses, an experience upon which they reflect. This means that knowledge of the world issues from observation and analysis. Locke's thought was seen as laying foundations for the scientific thinking of such men as Robert Boyle and Isaac Newton.

Blake's opposition to Locke: - Blake reacted violently against the philosophy of John Locke, seeing him as an 'agent of the devil'. According to Blake, Locke's emphasis on rationality at the centre of human life was a distortion of humanity. Instead, Blake believed that the imagination was central, since it allows humans to perceive, relate to, and express, divine reality.

According to Blake, people cannot understand anything fundamental about the natural world by observing, measuring or analysing it. Understanding can only be achieved by employing the creative power of the imagination, since this enables people to see, as it were, through the eyes of the creative imagination responsible for the world (i.e. God).

For this reason, Blake also vehemently opposed the scientific method he saw as being embodied in Isaac Newton's work, which he believed, produced a model of the world as a mechanism to be analysed, measured and regulated. Blake's views put him in alignment with the European Romantics, as well as with the views of other Dissenters.

Changing attitudes to God: - Locke and Newton remained convinced theists and still upheld some kind of belief in revealed religion. Revealed religion refers to the idea that God makes himself known to human beings who could not know him in any other way. However, in the eighteenth century many Christian thinkers believed in natural religion. Natural religion is the belief that people can arrive at knowledge of God by using their reason and drawing inferences from their experience and observation of the world.

Deism: - Influenced by the dominance of reason and science, many key thinkers of the period started to regard God in a way described as Deism. Deists believed that reason required the existence of a creator but did not require his continued involvement with his creation. A popular Deist description of God was as a clockmaker. He was responsible for creating the complex mechanism, or clock, of the universe. Once in existence, however, it has no further need of its creator's involvement. A clock runs according to its mechanical nature and does not need interference from the clockmaker. So, too, the universe runs according to its own laws and has no further need of its creator. The outworking of this view is that God is purely a philosophical necessity, as

'first cause'. There is no need for a God who engages with human beings and intervenes in his creation.

Blake's reaction to Deism: - Although thinkers such as Tom Paine espoused Deism, Blake was very antagonistic towards the mechanistic view of the world which it implied. He rejected the Deism represented by writers such as Voltaire. He rejected Christian writers such as William Paley, who attempted to establish the existence of God from rational arguments which considered the natural world as a complex mechanism. For Blake, the deist approach rendered the world dead, barren and devoid of the active presence of creative divine power (in which creative power human beings participated when they employed their own imagination).

Blake further rejected a mechanical vision of the world because it implied that laws or rules govern the world. People could therefore fulfil themselves by following laws. These laws, however, are man-made and imprison the human spirit. For Blake, true fulfilment comes from being transformed through the development of the imagination and thus participating in divine life.

Literary context of Songs of Innocence and Experience

(a) Reactions to Rationality

There was a reaction against the dominance of reason which was expressed through two literary genres.

Sentimental and gothic literature: - 'Sentimentalism' developed as a reaction to rationalism in philosophy and to Calvinism in religion. The Enlightenment encouraged distrust of feelings, whilst Calvinism taught that the human heart was intrinsically evil. 'Sentimentalism' emphasised the central importance of feelings and the essential goodness of the human heart.

A sentimental approach can be found in novels like Sir Charles Grandison by Samuel Richardson. It is also highlighted in the debate between reason and sentiment in Jane Austen's Sense and Sensibility.

The genre of the gothic-horror novel such as The Castle of Otranto by Horace Walpole is also related to this reaction against the emphasis on reason. The gothic novel represents a world that is not totally controlled by, and accessible to, human reason. It is aware of deeper psychological and sexual impulses beyond the realm of reason.

European Romanticism: - Reaction to rationality was also expressed by the rise of European romanticism. This was associated with the work of people such as Goethe, Schiller and Klinger in Germany and Wordsworth and Coleridge in England.

Klinger's play Sturm und Drang (Storm and Stress) gave its name to a movement in which the struggle for self-realization of the artistic 'genius' was central. The power of creative imagination was given priority over the power of reason. The poet was perceived as a seer or prophet. His/her genius (guiding spirit) enabled him/her to enter into the realities of existence. This higher 'truth' was closed to those who relied on reason and on surface observation.

For the Romantics, imagination was not an ability to conjure up a world which wasn't 'real' or didn't exist. Instead it referred to a capacity to penetrate reality, to have vision or insight into the inner reality of the world.

Blake's Romanticism: - Other early European Romantics such as Novalis were Christians. They believed that dreaming and imagining were ways of participating

in the life of God. They understood that the 'real' world is not the world of surface material reality, but a world infused with the divine. This could be perceived by using imagination.

Blake is often seen as the first English Romantic poet because of his insistence on imagination as the means of apprehending the reality of the universe and his opposition to rationalism.

(b) The Age of Reason

The Elevation of Rationality: - The eighteenth century is frequently referred to as 'The Age of Reason'. It was marked by confidence in the powers of the human mind to discover the secrets of the universe. Human beings felt capable of discovering the workings of the world, from the human body to the solar system, by the application of science and rationality. The world was open to scientific enquiry. It could be measured, analysed and exploited.

Earlier ages had been marked by a belief that, since God was the creator of all things and could not be fully comprehensible to human minds, human understanding and reason could not reliably grasp the whole 'truth'. People would expect the world to involve an element of mystery. However, this perception shifted in the Age of Reason to a belief that human reason could be the ultimate judge of truth.

Confidence in Human Analysis: - The eighteenth century saw an increasing confidence that human beings could gather together all information about the world and put it into an organised form. This meant that this was the century when the first dictionaries and encyclopaedias were compiled. It was believed that dictionaries could tie down the origin and meaning of words, whilst language could be standardised by establishing the rules of grammar. Consequently, Samuel Johnson is perhaps better known for his dictionary than for his other literary

(c) Enlightenment Literature

Rational poetry: - Poetry generated in the Age of Reason characteristically appealed to the head and to appreciation of form, rather than to the 'heart' or imagination. Consequently, wit was highly valued. The standard form was the closed heroic couplet, such as this from Alexander Pope's An Essay on Criticism (1711):

In Wit, as Nature, what affects our hearts
Is not th' exactness of peculiar parts;
'Tis not a lip, or eye, we beauty call,
But the joint force and full result of all.

The above poem is constructed from a sequence of rhyming pairs of iambic pentameter lines with masculine rhymes. The heroic couplet tends to give the effect of neatness and finality, with an implication that life can be similarly neat and controllable. Used by less gifted poets, it could be a very mechanical form.

Songs of Innocence and Experience (SoIE) [1793]

The Meaning of the Collection: Although conceived and written independently, Songs of Innocence (SoI) (1789) should be read in conjunction with Songs of Experience (SoE) which he published in 1793 with a new edition of SoI. The two collections of lyrics represent, as Blake said in 1794, "the two contrary states of the human soul" and often

develop opposing points of view on the same subject matter. Some critics argue that there is an unresolved tension between the two collections that are not reconciled until the much more comprehensive vision contained in his later, more prophetic poems. However, others contend that there is a dialectical relation between the two collections (evidently, Blake's dialectical world-view shaped his conceptualisation of the two volumes) as a result of which many of poems ought to be paired for dual consideration. When read dialectically (i.e. in conjunction with each other), the upshot is that 'innocence' (and its ideals) cannot be apprehended without an understanding of 'experience' (life in a fallen world) while, on the other hand, experience uninformed by innocence degenerates into wickedness and exploitativeness. What is indispensable, Blake seems to aver, is a dialectical fusion or synthesis of the opposing qualities symbolised by innocence and experience, respectively, in order to adequately grasp the full complexity of human existence. (Note, to this end, the metamorphosis in SoE of specific motifs [e.g. the chimney sweeper] first found in SoI.)

Blake's Intention: Harold Bloom avers in studies like The Anxiety of Influence that Blake is the first of the English Romantic poets to 'write back' to Milton whose legacy, he argues, casts an enormous shadow over all succeeding poets, each of whom respond to and attempt to rewrite their precursor in various ways. Milton regurgitates in Paradise Lost the Christian narrative that attempts to explain the human predicament by depicting mankind has having fallen from grace (man is literally kicked out of paradise) due to original sin. Milton contends that mankind may, however, redeem itself through the sacrifice of Christ. In SoIE, Blake seems to aver that the vicissitudes of the human condition are not explicable by reference to some primordial fall from grace. Rather, it is the nature of human existence to be in a world seemingly pulled simultaneously in two opposing directions. Humans are caught on the cusp between innocence and experience, good and evil, etc., torn in both directions. They key things is to 'see through' or beyond this apparent contradiction and to realise that to understand the human condition involves assimilating or synthesising these two contrasting poles of human experience. In short, Blake's theme is the possibility of salvation which he locates in the Imagination.

Particular Themes:

SoI: Innocence here implies several aspects-the new-born innocence of children and lambs; the exploited innocence of neglected and enslaved children; the mature vision of a world of love in which the divine is glimpsed in the merciful and peaceful actions of men and women. Although seemingly naive, innocence is in fact a powerful scalpel to dissect and denounce a stale and unjust human society.

The adult persona is led and 'dictated' to by the child-what he hears is the wisdom of the child, a voice not corrupted by the complexities and pretensions of adult life. **The Lamb** is celebration of an earthly paradise in which animals and humans live in complete love and harmony under the protection of a benevolent God--a delight in the divine glories inherent in nature. **The Little Black Boy** is naive conception of a world without racial prejudice. **The Chimney Sweeper** is innocence exploited without being aware of the exploitation. **Holy Thursday** is the innocence of orphans left to the care of 'beadles' and charitable institutions and **The Divine Image** is celebration of the divine inherent in the human

SoE: 'Experience' is the opposite of everything for which 'innocence' stands. The adult's view predominates over that of the child—the persona claims omniscience (in the guise of prophecy) for himself. **The Tyger** is an interrogation of the purpose of (an) evil (creature) in a world made by an allegedly good God. **London** is a terrifying, almost surrealistic vision of contemporary English society. **Holy Thursday (II)** is the children's song becomes weeping. **The Human Abstract** is the virtues of Mercy, Pity, Peace and

Love are not seen as divine qualities so much as they are the consequences (rather than the redemption) of a fallen world.

Persona: the speaking voice in these poems varies. In SoI, Blake adopts the voice of the 'piper of innocence' whose muse is a child. The speakers in particular poems here are often children or child-like, and the songs express their emotions and their vision. To them, the cosmos is one of 'Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love' received by all creatures from the Creator who himself became a child and is often symbolised as a lamb. In SoE, Blake adopts the prophetic point of view of the Bard of Experience.

Tone: In SoI, the speaker's tone is most often simplistic and even naive; In SoE, an almost omniscient, even cynical point of view is adopted.

Poet: neither the piper nor the Bard is meant to be completely identified with Blake. Each expresses a point of view that is, from its own standpoint, both accurate and limited. Innocence unfortified by experience deteriorates into naiveté, whereas experience by itself depicts the world to which we are confined when our knowledge is merely sensory, not imaginative.

Impact: this is didactic poetry with an important difference from that of Blake's predecessors. Like Pope's, SoIE is designed to ameliorate humanity. However, unlike a poem like The Rape of the Lock, it is designed to appeal more to the emotions than the intellect or reason, that is, Blake's goal is to make you feel the truth of what he is saying and thereby to enact changes in your life..

Aspects of Form / Poetic Technique: Although born in the middle of the eighteenth century, generally speaking, Blake writes in a radically new style very different from the Neo-classical dictates of eighteenth century poetry. His simple, down to earth style is opposed to the artificial, pretentious, grandiose and ornate style of writers synonymous with Neo-Classicism such as Alexander Pope.

Some of the characteristic features of his poetic style in SoI and SoE include:

Poetic Kind: the collection consists mostly of brief lyric poems expressed in the first person

Poetic Genre: there are no identifiable genres (e.g. sonnet) even though many, not all, of the poems are divided into stanzas many, not all, follow a particular rhyme scheme many, not all, have a definable metre.

Blake's **style** is very idiosyncratic in these respects. Perhaps the best term to describe the genre of these poems is the one chosen by Blake himself: 'song.'

Diction: Blake's diction is most often down-to-earth and simple. Note his imagery in specific poems by discussing his choice of particular metaphors, etc. and say how these contribute to the meaning of the poem in question.

Rhetorical Devices: note particular examples of litotes, etc. and show how these contribute to the meaning of the poem in question. One device to note the use of is:

Irony: for example, although the speakers in SoI are innocent and even naive in their outlook, the poems themselves are often anything but. In the "the Chimney Sweeper," the child is optimistic and full of faith in outlook even though he does not realise that he has been wronged by his own father.

Naiveté: by the opposite token, as Blake put it elsewhere, the "innocence of a child" can often reproach the "errors of acquired folly." One of these errors is to trust in the reality of the world presented to us by our senses and to ignore the world of imagination and vision.

Sound note particular examples of alliteration, etc. and show how these contribute to the meaning of the poem in question.

"The Songs of Innocence and Experience": Critical Analysis

The Songs of Innocence and Experience is probably Blake's most famous work. The Songs of Innocence were originally published in 1789, and the two sets of poems together appeared in 1794. But when we say "published" we have to be, as always with Blake, aware that they were not published in any conventional sense; rather Blake himself prepared a number of copies, each consisting of Plates on which words and visual images mingle and intertwine. No two copies are identical; furthermore, there are variations in the arrangement of the poems and even occasional differences as to which sequence a poem belongs to.

Songs of Innocence have often been described as exemplary poems of childhood, and this was very much how nineteenth-century anthologists saw them of poems like "A Cradle Song" and "The Lamb" this may well be true, in that they (and others) are written in a voice with the limpidity of childhood perception; here the "innocence" of the title is portrayed as an unequivocal and valued property of the child. With other poems, though, the situation is more complex. "The Chimney Sweeper" in Innocence, for example, seems to offer a perspective of innocence that nevertheless ends up by appearing to validate a proverb ("If all do their duty, they need not fear harm") of which Blake could surely never have approved.

Innocence, then, is shown to us as a state to be valued, but also as one to be superseded in the gradual development of consciousness. The Songs of Experience represent a further stage of this evolution, and again the positions of the narrators are often more uncertain and equivocal than they may appear at first glance. "The Tyger", for example, has often been seen as paired with "The Lamb", although there is no specific evidence for this; certainly we may see the two poems as offering visions of two different sides of the divine (and human) creative process, but here the tiger stands for a force that can be seen - and should be seen by the artist - as positive, creative even, in the "awe" of its destructive potential.

On the other hand, if we look at the two "Nurse's Songs" from Innocence and Experience, what we see is a movement from innocence, from a nurse-figure who understands her charges' desires and is willing to indulge their freedom, to corruption, a nurse-figure whose only concern is for a kind of repression that arises from her own psychopathology and her memories of her own distorted childhood ("The days of my youth rise fresh in my mind,/My face turns green and pale"). Similarly the second "Chimney Sweeper" poem mounts a direct challenge to the perspective of its "innocent" counterpart by attacking "God and his priest and king, /who make up a Heaven of our misery".

Apart from "The Lamb" and "The Tyger", perhaps the best known of all Blake's lyrics, "London", appears in the Songs of Experience, and in its first stanza it summarises Blake's view of the pathos and tragedy of a city oppressed by laws and regulations that reduce its inhabitants to mere cogs in a machine:

I wander through each chartered street

Near where the chartered Thames does flow,
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

The poem builds up to an astonishing crescendo of indictment, in which Blake hears the sound of the “mind-forged manacles” that bind us not only through direct repression but also through our own complicity in the ideologies of power:

How the chimney-sweeper's cry
Every blackening church appalls
And the hapless soldier's sigh
Runs in blood down palace walls;
But most through midnight streets I hear
How the youthful harlot's curse
Blasts the new-born infant's tear
And blights with plagues the marriage hearse.

Here we have an example of the full density and complexity of Blake's language, with almost every word (“blackening”, “appalls”, “marriage hearse”, to take but three examples) loaded with multiple meanings: meanings that serve to underline the duplicities of power, while nevertheless acknowledging that the voice of experience maybe necessary if we are to work through to a fuller understanding of contemporary social conditions and their place in the wider scheme of things.

What in general, then, are the Songs of Innocence and of Experience about? The most obvious answer is that they are about what they say they are about, the two “contrary states” of “innocence” and “experience”, and that the individual poems in the two books are still essentially exemplars of these states. Innocence, then, would be the condition allied to childhood: a condition in which we can view the natural and human world without fear, and can feel confident that we have a home in that world. Behind this, of course, lies a whole realm of biblical myth, in particular that of the Garden of Eden, although there are significant differences between the biblical Garden and Blake innocence.

Perhaps the most obvious difference concerns sexuality. Adam and Eve, after all, were ejected from the Garden because of their accession to carnal knowledge, and throughout Christianity there is a connection between sex and the fall of man. To Blake things were quite otherwise: the world of innocence is one of natural, unforced pleasure in sexuality, as in all other matters of the body, and it is interesting that this significant alteration of emphasis constitutes one of Blake's many prefigurations of the much later discoveries of Freud, who first demonstrated the sexual interests of the infant systematically.

Innocence, however, cannot last forever unchallenged, although it is always possible to prolong or regain it temporarily through love, through poetry and through beauty. It is, however, inevitably under threat of being superseded as we move into adulthood and encounter cares, duties, responsibilities. But - and this is a very important point for Blake - although this “progression” (which is also a fall from grace) is inevitable, it is also true that we make it much worse than it needs to be. We make it worse through all kinds of tyranny and harshness at the political level, through the rule of the moral law and an ethic of punishment rather than forgiveness at the religious level, and through selfishness, possessiveness and jealousy at the personal and psychological level.

In Blake, though - and this is what makes some of the Songs, as well as most of his other works, so complex - these levels cannot be separated out. We hear again in the famous phrase about “mind-forg'd manacles” in “London” a double meaning. On the one hand, we could say that the “minds” that forge these manacles are the mir

people; when we observe the inhumanity of urban life we are seeing the imposition of some people's will upon others, or, to put it another way, we are witnessing the suppression of healthy individual life by an ideology comprised of work, power and repression. It is at the same time true, however, that the mind that places these shackles upon us is, in an important sense, our own. Again, to use a more modern terminology, we could say that what Blake shows us is not only the forces of violence at war in society and the economy; he also shows us a process of internalisation by means of which we absorb these forces inside ourselves and accept them without question, an acceptance which kills off the all-important development of the imagination inside us.

In most of these respects the Songs encourage us to see Blake as a “romantic” poet. Most of the other major romantics - Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats – share Blake's mistrust of the forces abroad in contemporary society: they too detect an increasing mechanisation in the world around them, and they too recommend are consideration of a more “innocent” state as part of the solution to the problem. Yet in none of these other writers, with the possible exception of Wordsworth, do we find quite the level of detail in the description of everyday city life. This is, of course, partly because Blake knew everyday life and its pressure better than they; the “escape to the country” was not for him remotely financially viable. It could also be argued that the Songs show him to be the most politically radical of them, with the possible exception of Shelley.

It is also fair to say that the Songs are quite different poetically from anything the other romantics wrote. It is true that the form of the ballad was popular with all of them, trying as they were to find a kind of poetry which was freed from the formal constraints of classical eighteenth-century poetry; but nowhere in the balladic forms of the other romantics do we find quite the terseness of form, the extreme compression of the best of the Songs, and nowhere, not even in Wordsworth - who shared with Blake an intense respect for childhood and its perceptions - do we find the strange courage that enabled him to write and, in his own unique way, publish poems like the simpler of the Songs of Innocence.

Yet it seems clear that Blake is not “putting on voices” in these poems; rather, he was one of those rare artists who still had inside him the voice of childhood and was able, from time to time, to bring it forth in an unforced fashion, and this is again one of the elements that makes the Songs so powerful. For the questions we are induced to ask, about man's inhumanity to man, while reading the Songs of Experience are rendered vastly more poignant by the way that Blake has introduced us to the voices of the children who exist as the subjects of, and subject to, the world of suffering depicted as the - perhaps inevitable, but perhaps supremely avoidable - fate of experience.

A Poison Tree : Critical Analysis

Human beings, along with the ability to reason and question, possess the capacity to hate, and yet also to forgive. Unfortunately, forgiving someone is not always as easy as holding a grudge against them and this lack of control over one’s actions is inherent to human nature. In “A poison tree”, William Blake critically discusses these two opposing forces, uncovering the inherent weakness in humans, and the effects of these innate flaws.

Through the use of extended metaphors and vivid imagery, Blake symbolically portrays this fundamental flaw through the poem. The central theme in the poem is hatred and anger, dominating much of the author’s thoughts. Blake expresses this through the introduction of a clever parallelism – the treatment of anger between a friend and a foe. Through this, Blake emphasizes the nature of anger – while expressing and letting go of wrath ends it, suppression nurtures it. Blake startles the rea

poem, and with metaphors that can apply to many instances of life. A Poison Tree is an allegory. The tree here represents repressed wrath; the water represents fear; the apple is symbolic of the fruit of the deceit which results from repression. This deceit gives rise to the speaker’s action in laying a death-trap for his enemy. The deeper meaning of the poem is that aggressive feelings, if suppressed, almost certainly destroy personal relationships.

> “And it grew both day and night
> Till it bore an apple bright”

Blake further symbolizes this in the next two stanzas. He appears to metaphor the repression of anger and hatred to ‘a poison tree’, thus giving it an identity. The personification in “A Poison Tree” exists both as a means by which the poem’s metaphors are revealed, supported, and as a way for Blake to forecast the greater illustration of the wrath. The wrath the speaker feels is not directly personified as a tree, but as something that grows slowly and bears fruit. In the opening stanza the speaker states, “My wrath did grow.” The speaker later describes the living nature of the wrath as one which, “grew both day and night,” and, “bore an apple bright.” This comparison by personification of wrath to a tree illustrates the speaker’s idea that, like the slow and steady growth of a tree, anger and wrath gradually accumulate and form just as mighty and deadly as a poisoned tree.

> “And I water’ d it in fears,
> Night and morning with my tears;
> And I sunned it with smiles,
> And with soft deceitful wiles”

To understand the metaphorical sense of the poem, one must first examine the title, “A Poison Tree,” which alerts the reader that some type of metaphor will stand to dominate the poem. In the second stanza, Blake employs several metaphors that reflect the growing and nurturing of a tree which compare to the feeding of hate and vanity explored by the speaker. The verses, “And I watered it …with my tears” show how the tears life lead an object of destruction. The speaker goes further to say, “And I sunned it with smiles” describing not only false intentions, but the processing of “sunning”, giving nutrients to a plant so that it may not only grow and live, but flourish. In both of these metaphors, the basic elements for a tree to survive, water and sunlight are shown in human despair and sadness.

Blake called the original draft of “A Poison Tree” “Christian Forbearance,” suggesting that what is meant to appear as a gentle attitude is often a mask for disdain and anger. Furthermore, Blake believed that the attitudes of piety that adherents of conventional Christianity were taught to maintain actually led to hypocrisy, causing people to pretend to be friendly and accepting when they were not. The righteousness that the conventional religion prescribed, Blake believed, allowed people to hide evil intent and to perform evil deeds, such as stifling the healthy growth of children, under the cover of appearing virtuous.

> “And into my garden stole
> When the night had veiled the pole
> In the morning glad I see
> My foe outstretched beneath the tree”

The religious context of the poem is also evident in two metaphorical allusions made by the speaker towards the end of the poem. Blake, being a religious visionary, has also criticized the views and actions of Christianity. This is evident in the symbol of the ‘poison tree’, which can be seen to make direct biblical reference to t

knowledge, representing the evil existing within man. Thus, as the garden is symbolic of the Garden of Eden, the apple is symbolic of apple which brought Adam and eve to their demise. It is the evil and poison that is bared from anger, the fruit of the poison tree. As in the biblical story, the apple here is beautiful on the outside, while poisonous and deadly underneath. By presenting the apple, Black is symbolic of the Serpent, maliciously deceiving his foe and bringing his demise. The serpent in Black is his weakness, and just like he, all humans have this inherent flaw inside of them. Black uses this to criticize Christian forgiveness, expressing that while Christians believe in 'turning the other cheek', by forgiving and repressing anger, they are ignoring the basic flaw existing in our human nature. Symbolically, the speaker represents God, the foe and garden represent Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, and the tree represents the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil in Genesis. If this analogy is true, it shows God rejoicing in killing his enemies, which most people think the God they know would never do.

Conclusively, "A Poison Tree" teaches a lesson and asserts a moral proposition rather than offering a critique of a theological system, the lesson is less concerned with anger than with demonstrating that suppressing the expression of feelings leads to a corruption of those feelings, to a decay of innocence, and to the growth of cunning and guile. Repeatedly in Songs of Experience, not just in "A Poison Tree," Blake argues that the religious doctrines intended to train people, especially children, in virtue are cruel and cause harm. In addition, Blake depicts those who implement religious discipline as sadistic. Blake's poetry, while easy to understand and simplistic, usually implies a moral motif on an almost basic level. The powerful figurative language in "A Poison Tree" is so apparent that it brings forth an apparent message as well. The poem is not a celebration of wrath; rather it is Blake's cry against it. Through this, Blake warns the reader of the dangers of repression and of rejoicing in the sorrow of our foes.

Tyger : Critical Analysis

"The Tyger" represents an intense, visionary style with which William Blake confronts a timeless question through the creation of a still-life reverie. To examine "The Tyger's" world, a reader must inspect Blake's word choice, images, allusions, rhyme scheme, meter, and theme. "The Tyger" seems like a simple poem, yet this simple poem contains all the complexities of the human mystery. The first impression that William Blake gives is that he sees a terrible tiger in the night, and, as a result of his state of panic, the poet exaggerates the description of the animal when he writes:

> 'Tyger! Tyger! Burning bright
> In the forests of the night…'

The opening question enacts what will be the single dramatic gesture of the poem, and each subsequent stanza elaborates on this conception. Blake is building on the conventional idea that nature, like a work of art, must in some way contain a reflection of its creator. The tiger is strikingly beautiful yet also horrific in its capacity for violence. What kind of a God, then, could or would design such a terrifying beast as the tiger? In more general terms, what does the undeniable existence of evil and violence in the world tell us about the nature of God, and what does it mean to live in a world where a being can at once contain both beauty and horror? Immediately after seeing the 'Tyger' in the forests, the poet asks it what deity could have created it:

> 'What immortal hand and eye,
> Could frame thy fearful symmetry?'

The word 'immortal' gives the reader a clue that the poet refers to God. Then, in the second stanza, the author wonders in what far-away places the tiger was made, maybe, referring that these places cannot be reached by any mortal.

poet asks again, once the tiger's heart began to beat, who could make such a frightening and evil animal. Next, in the forth stanza, William Blake asks questions about the tools used by God. And he names the hammer, the chain, the furnace, and anvil. All these elements are used by an ironsmith. The tiger initially appears as a strikingly sensuous image. However, as the poem progresses, it takes on a symbolic character, and comes to embody the spiritual and moral problem the poem explores: perfectly beautiful and yet perfectly destructive, Blake's tiger becomes the symbolic center for an investigation into the presence of evil in the world. Since the tiger's remarkable nature exists both in physical and moral terms, the speaker's questions about its origin must also encompass both physical and moral dimensions. The poem's series of questions repeatedly ask what sort of physical creative capacity the "fearful symmetry" of the tiger bespeaks; assumedly only a very strong and powerful being could be capable of such a creation.

> "What the hammer? what the chain?
> In what furnace was thy brain?"

The smithy represents a traditional image of artistic creation; here Blake applies it to the divine creation of the natural world. The "forging" of the tiger suggests a very physical, laborious, and deliberate kind of making; it emphasizes the awesome physical presence of the tiger and precludes the idea that such a creation could have been in any way accidentally or haphazardly produced. It also continues from the first description of the tiger the imagery of fire with its simultaneous connotations of creation, purification, and destruction. The speaker stands in awe of the tiger as a sheer physical and aesthetic achievement, even as he recoils in horror from the moral implications of such a creation; for the poem addresses not only the question of who could make such a creature as the tiger, but who would perform this act. This is a question of creative responsibility and of will, and the poet carefully includes this moral question with the consideration of physical power. Note, in the third stanza, the parallelism of "shoulder" and "art," as well as the fact that it is not just the body but also the "heart" of the tiger that is being forged. The repeated use of word the "dare" to replace the "could" of the first stanza introduces a dimension of aspiration and willfulness into the sheer might of the creative act.

> "Did he smile his work to see?
> Did he who made the Lamb make thee?"

The reference to the lamb in the penultimate stanza reminds the reader that a tiger and a lamb have been created by the same God, and raises questions about the implications of this. It also invites a contrast between the perspectives of "experience" and "innocence" represented here and in the poem "The Lamb." "The Tyger" consists entirely of unanswered questions, and the poet leaves us to awe at the complexity of creation, the sheer magnitude of God's power, and the inscrutability of divine will. The perspective of experience in this poem involves a sophisticated acknowledgment of what is unexplainable in the universe, presenting evil as the prime example of something that cannot be denied, but will not withstand facile explanation, either. The open awe of "The Tyger" contrasts with the easy confidence, in "The Lamb," of a child's innocent faith in a benevolent universe. The meekness of Blake's lamb makes his "fearful" and "deadly" tiger appear all the more horrific, but to conclude that one is decidedly good and the other evil would be incorrect. The innocent portrayal of childhood in "The Lamb," though attractive, lacks imagination. The tiger, conversely, is repeatedly associated with fire or brightness, providing a sharp contrast against the dark forests from which it emerges — "Tyger! Tyger! burning bright / In the forests of the night." While such brightness might symbolize violence, it can also imply insight, energy, and vitality. The tiger's domain is one of unrestrained self-assertion. Far from evil, Blake's poem celebrates the tiger and the sublime excessiveness he represents. "Jesus was all virtue," wrote Blake "and acted from impulse, not from rules."

William Blake never answers his question about the unknown nature of god. He leaves it up to the reader to decide. By beginning and ending his poem with the same quatrain he asks the question about god creating evil as well as good, again. In conclusion, a reading of "The Tyger" offers different thematic possibilities. The poem seems to change as the reader changes, but the beauty of the words and meter make this poem an astonishing, enjoyable excursion into the humanity of theology. Moreover, the poem is quotable in various situations, and it leaves a permanent impression on the reader. Therefore, "The Tyger" by William Blake emerges from creation's cold, clear stream as a perpetual inspiration – a classic. In my opinion, William Blake wrote the poem with a simple structure and a perfect rhyme to help the reader see the images he wanted to transmit. Above all, the description of the tiger is glaringly graphic due to essentially the contrast between fire and night.

London : Critical Analysis

The poem, 'London' is a devastating and concise political analysis, delivered with passionate anger, revealing the complex connections between patterns of ownership and the ruling ideology, the way all human relations are inescapably bound together within a single destructive society. The poem's opening shows the narrator wandering the "charter'd" streets of London down to the "charter'd Thames".

The loaded word "charter'd" – changed from the first draft's politically empty "dirty" – is used in a critical sense, and Blake's contemporary readers would no doubt have picked up on it. The use of this loaded word – repeated to sharpen the ironic point that the streets, the very river itself, are privately owned – suggests the oppressive nature of early capitalism, in which the Whig alliance of merchants, rising finance capitalists and some of the most powerful landed aristocrats who did not need to lean on the crown for power, were busy accumulating capital via taxation and the establishment of a national debt, thus transferring wealth from the majority to the minority. As the narrator wanders, he marks, notices, the suffering population:

> "And mark in every face I meet
> Marks of weakness, marks of woe"

The repetition of "marks" is emphatic; the Londoners are branded with visible signs of sickness and misery. The subtle shift from "mark" used as a verb in line 3 to a noun in line 4 binds the narrator to those he sees, showing he is not a disinterested observer but one of the sufferers himself. No-one is immune. This is a picture of a whole society in chains, and the tightness of the poem's structure – especially in the formal second verse – emphasizes this feeling of entrapment. The move from visual to aural description makes turning away, escape, impossible – ears cannot be shut. In the second verse, this commonality of suffering is hammered home by the pounding rhythm, stressing the word "every", five times:

> "In every voice, in every ban,
> The mind-forg'd manacles I hear"

The cumulative effect of this verse enacts the narrator's helplessness. The "I" figure doesn't appear till the very end of the verse, as if he has been overwhelmed by the sounds of human torment. The sense of imprisonment is made absolutely plain in the phrase "mind-forg'd manacles" – literally, metal restraining cuffs, devised by the mind of man to subjugate people by physical force, such as the prisoners languishing in Newgate; but also, metaphorically, mental chains imprisoning through ideological acceptance of the status quo. After the dirge of passivity in: "In every cry of every Man / In every Infant's cry of fear", we are jolted by the phrase into a sudden moment of analysis, of understanding. The tone of anger and condemnat

verse, the long list of accusatory examples has an unstoppable momentum. The verse begins, as if in mid-sentence:

> "How the Chimney-sweeper's cry
> Every black'ning Church appalls;
> And the hapless Soldier's sigh
> Runs in blood down Palace walls"

From now on in this cinematic poem, we lose sight of the narrator altogether as he becomes subsumed within his furious indictment, leaving the general misery on scene to zoom in on three specific social types – the chimney sweep, the soldier and the harlot – all emblematic figures, a point made clear by the use of capitals, used also for the representative institutions. The boy sweep blackens the church by literally making the churches sooty but also in the sense that the church's reputation is increasingly tarnished by its whitewashing of the brutal, smoke-belching commercial system which exploits child-labour. The word "appalls" here means 'indicts' rather than the modern usage of 'disgusts'. The church is not appalled in a compassionate way, but is fearful of the menace the sweeps represent. The soldier whose sigh "Runs in blood down Palace walls" is a "hapless" victim, in spite of the fact that he is part of the armed state. The soldier, sighing in death or fear, metaphorically stains the palace walls with his blood just as the sweep's cry blackens the churches. Perhaps the soldier's discontented "sigh" takes the tangible form of red-painted protest slogans on palace walls. The final verse, which Blake only added in a later revision, reveals how the system, constructed on the savage institutions of power – the law, church, monarchy and army – poisons personal relationships at the deepest level. This is the culmination of the narrator's apocalyptic description:

> "But most thro' midnight streets I hear
> How the youthful Harlot's curse
> Blasts the new-born Infant's tear
> And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse."

It is no longer daytime, but midnight. The harlot is a young victim, like the boy sweep. She has been robbed of the chance to love her baby, because it is the result of commerce, not love, and because its existence only brings her increased poverty. She passes her own misery onto her child, and that child, like her, will pass its misery onto further generations. Her curse, like the sweep's cry and the soldier's sigh, has actual effects. Like "mind-forg'd manacles", "Marriage hearse" is a fantastically potent phrase, reverberating with meanings: the two words are linked oxymoronically, with the notion of joyous, fruitful marriage undermined by its grim apotheosis, death by venereal disease. The phrase also fillets bourgeois marriage in all its hypocrisy, the husband routinely unfaithful to his wife, and suggests the sterile death-in-life of the wedded state. Marriage has become the funeral of love, the death of freedom. By striking at the family, the poem attacks the reproductive system of society itself. The harlot's curse does more than make the baby cry; it destroys bourgeois complacency. It's a fitting end; the poem's final line has the incantatory power of a curse itself, with the rhyme shutting the lid on the poem once the build-up of hard alliterative sounds (black'ning, blood, Blasts, blights and plagues) has reached its crescendo.

London begins with the economic system, couched in that abstract, legalistic word "charter'd", protected by its "bans" (laws), and moves to its consequences – the selling of bodies and souls within a sealed system of commercial exploitation. Yet, though the poem describes claustrophobic trappedness, paradoxically it does not feel defeatist. This is an anti-vision poem, but it implies that a vision is needed, and this lifts it out of despair. Its rising anger, reaching its height in the Shakespearean last line, is like a battle cry, or at least the precursor to one. It doesn't just catalogue the woes, but by

ordering the encounters, reveals their cause and their inter-connection. It shows the power of articulation both in the victims' utterances – the sweep, soldier and harlot marking the city, by black'ning, splashing their blood, infecting it – and in the poem's own rhetorical eloquence.

Finally, we can conclude that London is a devastating portrait of a society in which all souls and bodies were trapped, exploited and infected.

Holy Thursday (I) of SoI and Holy Thursday (II) of SoE : Comparison and Contrast

The two poems: Holy Thursday I, II reflect Blake's theory of contrariness. The tile of the poems refers to the Thursday before Easter Sunday, observed by Christians in commemoration of Christ's Last Supper in which the ceremony of the washing of the feet is performed: the celebrant washes the feet of 12 people to commemorate Christ's washing of his disciples' feet. In England a custom survives of giving alms to the poor.

So the title has religious significance. Both poems deal with the same theme; but their approach to the theme is different; the first being light and ironic and the second being more savage and direct. I first analyse Holy Thursday (I) and then Holy Thursday (II) and finally, I will compare and contrast both the poems.

> "Till into the high dome of Paul's they
> like Thames' waters flow."

The poem's (Holy Thursday I) dramatic setting refers to a traditional Charity School service at St. Paul's Cathedral. The first stanza captures the movement of the children from the schools to the church, likening the lines of children to the Thames River, which flows through the heart of London: the children are carried along by the current of their innocent faith. In the second stanza, the metaphor for the children changes. First they become "flowers of London town." This comparison emphasizes their beauty and fragility; it undercuts the assumption that these destitute children are the city's refuse and burden, rendering them instead as London's fairest and finest. Thus Blake emphasizes their innocence and beauty in Holy Thursday I. Next the children are described as resembling lambs in their innocence and meekness, as well as in the sound of their little voices. The image transforms the character of humming "multitudes," into something heavenly and sublime. The lamb metaphor links the children to Christ and reminds the reader of Jesus's special tenderness and care for children. As the children begin to sing in the third stanza, they are no longer just weak and mild; the strength of their combined voices raised toward God evokes something more powerful and puts them in direct contact with heaven. The simile for their song is first given as "a mighty wind" and then as "harmonious thunderings." The beadles, under whose authority the children live, are eclipsed in their aged pallor by the internal radiance of the children. Thus the 'guardians' are beneath the children. The final line advises compassion for the poor. Blake's basic aim in this poem is to emphasize the heavenliness and innocent or the children. The beginning of Holy Thursday (I) is transformed into Holy Thursday II as:

> "Is that trembling cry a song?
> Can it be a song of joy?

Holy Thursday II in contrast begins with a series of questions: how holy is the sight of children living in misery in a prosperous country? Might the children's "cry," as they sit assembled in St. Paul's Cathedral on Holy Thursday, really be a song? "Can it be a song of joy?" In the first stanza, we learn that whatever care these children receive is minimal and grudgingly bestowed. The "cold and usurous hand" that feeds them is motivated

more by self-interest than by love and pity. Moreover, this "hand" metonymically represents not just the daily guardians of the orphans, but the city of London as a whole: the entire city has a civic responsibility to these most helpless members of their society, yet it delegates or denies this obligation. Here the children must participate in a public display of joy that poorly reflects their actual circumstances, but serves rather to reinforce the self-righteous complacency of those who are supposed to care for them. The song that had sounded so majestic in the Songs of Innocence shrivels, here, to a "trembling cry." In the first poem, the parade of children found natural symbolization in London�much mighty river. Here, however, the children and the natural world conceptually connect via a strikingly different set of images: the failing crops and sunless fields symbolize the wasting of a nation's resources and the public's neglect of the future. The thorns, which line their paths, link their suffering to that of Christ. They live in an 'eternal winter', where they experience neither physical comfort nor the warmth of love.

Holy Thursday I is meek and lenient in tone; but the poem calls upon the reader to be more critical than the speaker is: we are asked to contemplate the true meaning of Christian pity, and to contrast the institutionalized charity of the schools with the love of which God–and innocent children–are capable. Moreover, the visual picture given in the first two stanzas contains a number of unsettling aspects: the mention of the children's clean faces suggests that they have been tidied up for this public occasion; that their usual state is quite different. The public display of love and charity conceals the cruelty to which impoverished children were often subjected. Moreover, the orderliness of the children's march and the ominous "wands" (or rods) of the beadles suggest rigidity, regimentation, and violent authority rather than charity and love. Lastly, the tempestuousness of the children's song, as the poem transitions from visual to aural imagery, carries a suggestion of divine vengeance as in these lines:

> "Then cherish pity, lest you drive
> an angel from your door."

In the Innocence version, Blake described the public appearance of charity school children in St. Paul's Cathedral In "experienced" version, however, he critiques rather than praises the charity of the institutions responsible for hapless children. The speaker entertains questions about the children as victims of cruelty and injustice, some of which the earlier poem implied. The rhetorical technique of the poem is to pose a number of suspicious questions that receive indirect, yet quite censoriously toned answers as in:

> "Is this a holy thing to see
> In a rich and fruitful land"

The question may be asked which of the two "Holy Thursday" poems states the right attitude. According to John Beer, a famous critic the innocent poem displays greater insight, in spite of the greater worldly wisdom, and in spite of the superior moral interest, shown in the experienced poem. The innocent speaker, says this critic, sees more of the scene than the experienced one. The speaker in the experienced poem is so anxious to assert his moral ideas that the scene in St. Paul's becomes an excuse for a moral sermon rather than a situation he can give attention to. And John Beer concludes: "The innocent song ends on a positive note without preaching a sermon, while the experienced speaker preaches a sermon that is negative in tone, being full of moral anxiety but destructive of moral obligation." With his "Holy Thursday" of Experience", Blake clarifies his view of the hypocrisy of formalized religion and its claimed acts of charity. He exposes the established church's self-congratulatory hymns as a sham that the sound of the children is only a trembling cry.

"From Milton: And Did Those Feet" : Critical Appraisal

Of all the poets of eighteenth century, Blake is the most original and the most spontaneous. He is the poet of inspiration. He follows no man's lead and obeys no voice except that which he hears in his own mystic soul, he is always looking behind the visible frame of things, for the glories and terrors of the world of spirit. Blake's mysticism is based on the theology and philosophy of Swedenborg, Boehme, Kabbala and Christianity. Kathleen Raine regards him as; ***"perhaps the greatest Christian prophet of the modern world".***

Blake's Song "And Did Those Feet" shows Blake's eternal relation between the eternal soul and eternal God, along with this, Blake seems deeply drunk in the passion of patriotism. He expresses his intense desire to purge England from all the evils. According to him, once England was a holy place where angles tread upon, where Jesus traversed through. Once it was the chosen land. But at the time of Blake this land turned into an evil den.

The scenario of society has been completely changed. England lived with an outward appearance of prosperity. England was winning her wards, trade and winning respect in foreign capitals. A wave of self-satisfied nationalism was sweeping the country. In Blake's time, religion itself was chipping in and the general tendencies of contemporary society had been formal, utilitarian and material. Blake drew his religious wisdom from the same sources as he drew his poetry and painting. This perennial source was human imagination, which he called, the Bosom of God, the Saviour, the Divine Humanity and Jesus.

England was, to Blake, a dreamland. He had a vision of the England that would have been the chestiest land. The poet is of the opinion that he has zeal and zest to change England.

"Bring me my bow of burning gold,
Bring me my arrows of desires,
Bring me my spear — O clouds, unfold!
Bring me my chariot of fire!"

He has burning golden bow and sheaf full of arrows. He would throw the arrows and destroy the evil everywhere from the society. He wants to equip himself with spear to fight against the forces of evil. His chariot of fire has potential to carry away all dross that has infected the body politic of England. The poet is ready on intellectual level to root out evil from England means to give new orientation to English society.

Blake is a mystic and throughout his poetry he dwells upon the innocent passion of being noble, chaste and loving. He wants England a place where only benevolence, kindness and goodness can prevail. He feels great sorrow when he feels, that England miserably failed to play its role. This crest-fallen England with evils, injustices and miseries taxed upon Blake's mind and forced by the circumstances, he decided to launch a ceaseless fight against the agents to evil. His fight is like gods of classical mythology. He desires from Almighty to assist him against evil.

His fight will be fought ceaselessly until Jerusalem is built upon the pastures of England.

"I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem,
In England's green and pleasant land"

This is a small poem but each and every line has fathomless depth. The poem is divided into three stanzas. The first stanza has picturesque beauty

different situations and the ancient times England. The second is his desire to fight and in third stanza he wants to reconstruct England on solid foundations.

The lyrics of poem have splendour and beauty. Every lyric is a window of imaginative world; symbols are used for multiple meanings. Its vocabulary is simple and symbols are universal. We can't find the most complete exposition of Blake's philosophy in this poem.

Auguries of Innocence : An Analysis

William Blake's "Auguries of Innocence" is a poem that was written with the mind-set of a Romantic. Before we delve into the poem, first a quick explanation of what romanticism is. Romanticism was a movement which was particularly popular from the late 1700s to about the mid-1800s. It was most commonly considered an intellectual movement of art, music, and literature; beyond that the idea of romanticism is a little unclear, as many people have different views on it. Suffice to say that expression was a prevalent theme in romanticism, and the intellectual aspect of it provided a lot of room for commenting on the perceived inadequacies of the time period.

Nowhere is the idea of complaining about the ills of society more observant than in "Auguries of Innocence." The poem is mainly William Blake listing an abundance of reasons as to why he is unhappy with the world around him (the early 1800s). A series of paradoxes make up the meat of the poem. The very first stanza reads, "To see the world in a grain of sand, and heaven in a wild flower, hold infinity in the palm of your hand, and eternity in an hour." Obviously no human being can literally see the kingdom of God in the petals of a rose, nor can they capture time in a bottle. But what exactly is William Blake's purpose by including all these paradoxes? Let's read on and find out.

The next major paradox of Blake's poem starts at about line 50. He claims that "the prince's robes and beggar's rags are toadstools on the miser's rags." This is an obvious paradox, as a prince is a far cry from a beggar. But he then goes on to say "a truth that's told with bad intent beats all the lies you can invent." This statement implies that it is much better to lie to someone (as long as you are doing it for a good reason) than to be honest to someone with malicious intent. For example, when your significant other asks you if they look big in a new outfit, you damn well know the answer to give.

Blake describes a bunch more paradoxes, like "man was made for joy and woe" and "the poor man's farthing is worth more, than all the gold on Affric's shore." I believe that Blake is using all of these paradoxical statements in order to make a statement about the intelligence of humanity. The statements that he made regarding holding infinity in your hand are clearly impossible, and we as humans cannot understand how this concept could make any sense. But then if it is impossible than how can we even create the thought of it in the first place? Surely our minds could not be able to create an impossible thought; if we can conceive of something, than surely in some way or another it must be possible. But we cannot understand how. Blake is saying that just because we think we know something that does not automatically make it true or false.

Blake exemplifies this thinking in another series of lines, wherein he states, "The questioner who sits so sly, shall never know how to reply". He makes it clear here that just when you believe that you know everything, is the exact point at which you know nothing. However, in the very next line Blake claims that "he, who replies to words of doubt, doth put the light of knowledge out." This line seems to be saying that once you begin to discuss doubt about preconceived notions, you are hurting the pursuit of knowledge. So just what the heck is Blake trying to really say? Perhaps these two lines themselves make up a great paradox. If we can conceive of these two statements, can they both be true? Or do they contradict one another?

Ultimately we feel that Blake is doing a great job at making people think when they read this poem. It completely exemplifies the Romantic Movement, in that it is an expression of many different statements, a lot of which are very contradictory. His paradoxes are not only made to make us think, but I feel that they can also represent human nature. Think about, how many possible thoughts we have going on in our head at one time or another. Look at the liar's paradox. If I were to say that I always lie, how would you know if I am lying or telling the truth? It is the nature of human beings to be paradoxical, because we are so complex a species that it is impossible to simplify us down into one category. We are at the same time good and evil, pretty and ugly, smart and dumb. We can fully support Blake's goals in getting people to think, and believe that the paradoxes in the poem only help people to think for themselves even more.

Songs of Innocence & Songs of Experience : Major Themes

The Destruction of Innocence: Throughout both Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience, Blake repeatedly addresses the destruction of childlike innocence, and in many cases of children's lives, by a society designed to use people for its own selfish ends. Blake romanticizes the children of his poems, only to place them in situations common to his day, in which they find their simple faith in parents or God challenged by harsh conditions. Songs of Experience is an attempt to denounce the cruel society that harms the human soul in such terrible ways, but it also calls the reader back to innocence, through Imagination, in an effort to redeem a fallen world.

Redemption: Throughout his works, Blake frequently refers to the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. While he alludes to the atoning act of Christ Crucified, more often Blake focuses on the Incarnation, the taking on of human form by the divine Creator, as the source of redemption for both human beings and nature. He emphasizes that Christ "became a little child" just as men and women need to return to a state of childlike grace in order to restore the innocence lost to the social machinery of a cruel world.

Religious Hypocrisy: In such poems as "Holy Thursday" and "The Little Vagabond," Blake critiques the religious leaders of his day for their abuse of spiritual authority. The men who should be shepherds to their flocks are in fact reinforcing a political and economic system that turns children into short-lived chimney sweepers and that represses love and creative expression in adults. Blake has no patience with clergy who would assuage their own or their earthly patrons' guilt by parading poor children through a church on Ascension Day, as in "Holy Thursday" from both sections, and he reserves most of his sharpest verse for these men.

Imagination over Reason: Blake is a strong proponent of the value of human creativity, or Imagination, over materialistic rationalism, or Reason. As a poet and artist, Blake sees the power of art in its various forms to raise the human spirit above its earth-bound mire. He also sees the soul-killing materialism of his day, which uses rational thought as an excuse to perpetuate crimes against the innocent via societal and religious norms. Songs of Experience in particular decries Reason's hold over Imagination, and it uses several ironic poems to undermine the alleged superiority of rationalism.

Blake was not opposed to intelligent inquiry, however. In "A Little Boy Lost" from Songs of Experience, Blake admires the boy's inquiries into the nature of God and his own thought, even as he sharply criticizes the religious leaders of his day for demanding mindless obedience to dogma.

Nature as the Purest State of Man: Like many of his contemporary Romantic poets, Blake sees in the natural world an idyllic universe that can influence human beings in a positive manner. Many of his poems, such as "Spring," celebrate the beauty and fecundity of nature, while others, such as "London," deride

urban society. Blake's characters are happiest when they are surrounded by natural beauty and following their natural instincts; they are most oppressed when they are trapped in social or religious institutions or are subject to the horrors of urban living.

The Flaws of Earthly Parents: One recurring motif in both Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience is the failure of human parents to properly nurture their children. The "Little Boy Lost" is abandoned by his earthly father, yet rescued by his Heavenly Father. The parents of "The Little Vagabond" weep in vain as their son is burned alive for heresy. Both mother and father seem frustrated by their child's temperament in "Infant Sorrow." This recurring motif allows Blake to emphasize the frailty of human communities, in which the roles of mother and father are defined by society rather than by natural instincts, and to emphasize the supremacy of Nature and of divine care in the form of God the Father.

Social Reform: While much of Blake's poetry focuses on leaving behind the material world in favour of a more perfect spiritual nature, his poetry nonetheless offers realistic and socially conscious critiques of existing situations. Both of his "Chimney Sweeper" poems highlight the abuse of children by parents and employers as they are forced into hazardous, and potentially fatal, situations for the sake of earning money. Both "Holy Thursday" poems decry the overt display of the poor as a spectacle of absolution for the wealthy and affluent. "The Human Abstract" points out that our virtues are predicated on the existence of human suffering. Although Blake is certainly more spiritually than practically minded, the seeds of social reform can be seen in the philosophy underlying his verses: innocence is a state of man that must be preserved, not destroyed, and the social systems that seek to destroy innocence must be changed or eliminated.

William Blake’s Theory of Contrariness

Songs of Innocence and of Experience is a collection of short lyric poems accompanied by Blake’s original illustrations. The two sections juxtapose the state of innocence and that of experience. Many of the poems in Blake’s words they were meant to show “the two contrary states of the human soul”; the illustration of innocence and experience. The tone of the first series is admirably sounded by the introductory “Piping down the valleys wild” and that of second the dark picture of poor babes “fed with cold and usurous hand”.

Blake is bitter against those who go “up to the Church to pray” while the misery of the innocent is around them. His theory of Contraries is summarized in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell: “Without Contraries is no progression. Attraction and repulsion, reason and energy, love and hate, are necessary to human existence.” The essence of Blake’s theory is that, in some paradoxical way, it is possible for the contraries of innocence and experience to co-exist within a human being. The crime of “religion” was its attempt “to destroy existence” by ignoring or minimizing the essential oppositions in human nature. The word ‘contrary’ had a very specific and important meaning for Blake. Like almost all great poets, he was an enemy of dualism. Western thought has been intensely dualistic, seeing everything as composed of warring opposites, head and heart, body and spirit, male and female as though the split between the hemispheres of the human brain were projecting itself on everything perceived. A study of the poems in the two groups shows the emotional tensions between the two Contrary States.

“Piping down the valleys wild”

In the “Songs of Innocence”, Blake expresses the happiness of a child’s first thoughts about life. To the child, the world is one of happiness, beauty, and love. At that stage of life, the sunshine of love is so radiant that human suffering appears only temporary and fleeting. In the Introduction to the first series, Blake represents a laughing

inspiration for his poems. And in the poems that follow in this series, Blake gives us his vision of the world as it appears to the child or as it affects the child. And this world is one of purity, joy, and security. The children are themselves pure, whether their skin is black or white. They are compared to lambs "whose innocent call" they hear. Both "child" and "lamb" serve as symbols for Christ. Joy is everywhere—in the "Joy but two days old"; in the leaping and shouting of the little ones; in the sun, in the bells, in the voices of the birds; in the Laughing Song all Nature rejoices. But, above all, there is security. There is hardly a poem in which a symbol of protection, a guardian figure of some kind, does not occur. In The Echoing Green, the old folk are close by, while the children play. Elsewhere there is the shepherd watching over his sheep; there are the mother, the nurse, the lion', the angels, and, most important of all, God Himself. There is spontaneous happiness and delight in these groups of poems as "The Infant Boy" illustrates, ''I happy am/ Joy is my name'.

"These flowers of London town!
Seated in companies they sit
with radiance all their own"

In the first Holy Thursday, poor children sit "with radiance of their own"; while in the second Holy Thursday, the poet deplores the fact that there should be so many poor and hungry children depending on charity in a country which is otherwise rich and fruitful. The second poem is very moving, as it was intended to be. We thus have pictures of contrary states. In the "Songs of Innocence", the prevailing symbol is the Iamb, which is an innocent creature of God and which also symbolizes the child Christ. In the "Songs of Experience" the chief symbol is the tiger as expressed by the first stanza:

"Tiger! Tiger! burning bright
In the forests of the night"

Where 'forests of the night' symbolize experience. The tiger burns metaphorically with rage and quickly becomes for some a symbol of anger and passion. The poet asks a crucial question here. Did God Who made the lamb also make the tiger? The lamb, innocent and pretty, seems the work of a kindly, comprehensible Creator. The splendid but terrifying tiger makes us realize that God's purposes are not so easily understood. The tiger represents the created universe in its violent and terrifying aspects. It also symbolizes violent and terrifying forces within the individual man, and these terrifying forces have to be faced and fully recognized. The two poems called The Lamb and The Tiger do, indeed, represent two contrary states of the human soul. No contrast could have been more vivid and more striking. Blake sees exploitation in the songs of experience as exemplified by the following lines from, 'London'.

"And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe"

The poems in the second group record the wounds and cruelties of the civilized world. Some of them are bitter comments on the restraints forged by custom and law. Here Blake deplores the dominance of reason, religion, law, and morality, and he deplores the suppression of natural impulses, and more especially the suppression of the sexual impulse. Instead of innocence, joy, and security, Blake finds guilt, misery, and tyranny in the world. The protective guardians have disappeared and in their place are the tyrants. The rigors of sexual morality are depicted in A Little Girl Lost, The Sick Rose, The Angel, and Ah, Sunflower. The Sick Rose shows the destructive effects of sexual repression. In The Angel, the maiden realizes too late what she has missed. Ah, Sunflower shows the youth "pining away with desire", and the "pale virgin shrouded in snow", because both of them were denied sexual fulfillment.

The contrasts Blake sets forth in the Songs are echoes of English society's approach to the social and political issues of his era—a time characterized, on the one hand, by increasing desire for personal, political, and economic freedom, and on the other, by anxiety regarding the potential consequences of that freedom for social institutions. Several of the poems directly address contemporary social problems, for example, "The Chimney-Sweeper" deals with child labor and "Holy Thursday" describes the grim lives of charity children. The most fully-realized social protest poem in the Songs is "London," a critique of urban poverty and misery. Thus contrariness are a must. The language and vision not just of Blake but of poetry itself insists that the contraries are equally important and inseparable. 'Without contraries is no progression', wrote Blake. He sought to transform the energies generated by conflict into creative energies, moving towards mutual acceptance and harmony. Thus, by describing innocence and experience as 'contrary states of the human soul', Blake is warning us that we are not being invited to choose between them, that no such choice is possible. He is not going to assert that innocent joy is preferable to the sorrows of experience.

William Blake's Romanticism

William Blake is a romantic poet. The sparks of romanticism are vividly marked on his poetry. The question arises what is Romanticism? The answer is that it is a phenomenon characterized by reliance on the imagination and subjectivity of approach, freedom of thought and expression, and an idealization of nature.

It was Schelling who first defined romanticism as 'liberalism in literature'. Though romanticism officially started by the Lyrical Ballads jointly penned by Wordsworth and Coleridge in 1830, poets like William Blake made cracks to classicism towards the end of the18th century. In Romanticism, a piece of work could become, as Blake described, "an embodiment of the poet's imagination and vision." Many of the writers of the Romantic period were highly influenced by the war between England and France and the French Revolution. In the midst of all these changes, Blake too was inspired to write against these ancient ideas. 'All Religions Are One', and 'There is No Natural Religion' were composed in hopes of bringing change to the public's spiritual life. Blake felt that, unlike most people, his spiritual life was varied, free and dramatic. Blake's poetry features many characteristics of the romantic spirit. The romanticism of Blake consists in the importance he attached to imagination, in his mysticism and symbolism, in his love of liberty, in his humanitarian sympathies, in his idealization of childhood, in the pastoral setting of many of his poems, and in his lyricism.

"Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold!
Bring me my chariot of fire"

The above lines from, 'Jerusalem' amply justifies the point. "Poetry fettered", said Blake, "fetters the human race". In theory as well as practice, the Romantic Movement began with the smashing of fetters. In his enthusiastic rage, Blake condemned the verse-forms which had become traditional. He poured scorn upon all that he associated with classicism in art and in criticism. "We do not want either Greek or Roman models if we are but just and true to our own imaginations", he said. The whole critical vocabulary of neo-classical criticism had evidently disgusted him. He could not endure it. The visions that Blake started seeing in his childhood and which he kept seeing throughout his life were doubtless a product of his ardent imagination. His visions profoundly controlled both his poetry and his painting. Of many of his poems he said that they were dictated to him by spirits. In this most literal sense he held that, inspiration could come to the aid of a poet. In a state of inspiration, the poet made use of his imagination. "Human imagination is the Divine Vision and Fruition", he said. Energy and delight accompany this expression of the Divine Vision. All these views on the subject of poetry spring from the intensely romantic nature of Blake. It is not merely the revolutionary spirit that

permeates his poetry. The subject of child is more crucial to his art. We see in Holy Thursday I:

"These flowers of London town!
Seated in companies they sit
with radiance all their own"

The child is here the symbol of the most delicate and courageous intuitions in the human mind. The elements of Romanticism are present in these poems, some of them in the highest degree, such as the sense of wonder, the contemplation of Nature through fresh eyes, an intimate sympathy with the varieties of existence. Other elements of Romanticism are found in a much less degree, such as the obsession with the past, or the absorbing sense of self. Everything that the eyes of the child see is bathed in a halo of mystery and beauty. The words in these poems are perfectly adapted to the thought because they are as simple as possible, and the thought itself is simple. Blake's first style is in a way a juvenile form of Romanticism. The "Songs of Innocence" most completely fulfil the definition of Romanticism as "the renascence of wonder". The world of Nature and man is the world of love and beauty and innocence enjoyed by a happy child, or rather by a poet who miraculously retains an unspoiled and inspired vision. Despite his strong emotions and his unfamiliar ideas, Blake keeps his form wonderfully limpid and melodious. Besides love for children, imagination plays a key role in his poetry as Tyger embodies:

"When the stars threw down their spears,
And watered heaven with their tears;
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he Who made the Lamb make thee?"

Symbolically, this poem is an impassioned defense of energy and imagination which occupy a commanding position in Blake's thinking. The tiger is Blake's symbol for the "abundant life", and for regeneration. The poem effectively conveys to us the splendid though terrifying qualities of the tiger. The climax of the poem's lyricism is reached in the lines which, though somewhat cryptic, effectively produce and effect of wonder and amazement. Blake was a great champion of liberty and had strong humanitarian sympathies. This is another aspect of his Romanticism. Blake's humanitarian sympathies are seen in such poems of Experience as Holy Thursday, A Little Boy Lost, The Chimney Sweeper, and above all London as in the following lines:

"In every voice, in every ban.
The mind-forg'd manacles I hear"

In London, Blake attacks social injustice in its various forms, as it shows itself in the chimney sweeper's cry, the hapless soldier's sigh, and the youthful harlot's curse. He appears here as an enemy of what he calls "the-mind-forged manacles". Nor does, Blake show any mercy to the Church. The boy in Blake's poetry finds the church an inhospitable place, while the ale-house is warm and friendly because the church imposes religious discipline like fasting and prayer. Pastoralism, too is feature of poetry. The little pastoral poem 'The Shepherd' has a delicate simplicity. It celebrates the happiness of rural responsibility and trust. Noteworthy also is 'The Echoing Green' with its picturesqueness in a warmer hue, its delightful domesticity, and its expressive melody.

Finally, it is established that Blake is a romantic poet. Blake is one of the major Romantic poets, whose verse and artwork became part of the wider movement of Romanticism in late Eighteenth and early Nineteenth century European Culture. His writing combines a variety of styles: he is at once an artist, a lyric poet, a mystic and a visionary, and his work has fascinated, intrigued and sometimes bewildered rea

nineteenth century reader Blake's work posed a single question: was he sane or mad? The poet Wordsworth, for example, commented that there "is no doubt that this poor man was mad, but there is something in his madness which interests me more than the sanity of Lord Byron and Walter Scott". Blake's use of images, symbols, metaphors and revolutionary spirit combined with simple diction and spontaneous expression of thoughts and emotions make him a typical romantic poet.

William Blake's Symbolism

Blake is a highly symbolic poet and his poetry is rich in symbols and allusions. Almost each and every other word in his poems is symbolic. A symbol is an object which stands for something else as dove symbolizes peace. Similarly, Blake's tiger symbolizes creative energy; Shelley's wind symbolizes inspiration; Ted Hughes's Hawk symbolizes terrible destructiveness at the heart of nature. Blake's symbols usually have a wide range of meaning and more obvious. Few critics would now wish to call Blake a symbolist poet, since his handling of symbols is markedly different from that of the French symbolistes', but the world inhabited by his mythical figures is defined through quasi-allegorical images of complex significance, and such images are no less important in his lyrical poetry. The use of symbols is one of the most striking features of Blake's poetry.

There is hardly any poem in the "Songs of Innocence and of Experience" which does not possess a symbolic or allegorical meaning, besides its apparent or surface meaning. If these poems are written in the simplest possible language, that fact does not deprive them of a depth of meaning. The language of these poems is like that of the Bible—at once simple and profound as the following lines read:

"O Rose, thou art sick!"

When Blake talks of the sick rose, he is really telling us how mysterious evil attacks the soul. Flower-symbolism is of particular importance in Songs of Innocence and Experience, being connected with the Fall by the motif of the garden; and its traditional links with sexuality inform the text of 'The Blossom' and the design for 'Infant Joy', which are taken up in Experience by the plate for 'The Sick Rose'. 'Ah! Sun-Flower' is a more symbolic text, and has evoked a greater variety of responses. Declaring this to be one of 'Blake's supreme poems', we can interpret the flower as a man who 'is bound to the flesh' but 'yearns after the liberty of Eternity". Harper claims that it describes the aspiration of all 'natural things' to 'the sun's eternality'. Identifying the speaker as 'Blake himself. Blake travels from flower-symbolism to animal symbols as in the 'Tyger':

"Did he smile his work to see
Did he who made the Lamb make thee!"

If the lamb symbolizes innocence and gentleness, the tiger is to Blake a symbol of the violent and terrifying forces within the individual man. The lamb, innocent and pretty, seems the work of a kindly Creator. The splendid but terrifying tiger makes us realize that God's purposes are not so easily understood, and that is why the question arises "Did he who made the Lamb make thee?" At the same time, the tiger is symbolic of the Creator's masterly skill which enabled Him to frame the "fearful symmetry" of the tiger. But the lion described in the poem Night (in the "Songs of Innocence") offers an interesting contrary to the tiger of the "Songs of Experience". Both the beasts seem dreadful, but the lion, like the beast of the fairy tale, can be magically transformed into a good and gentle creature: the tiger cannot. In the world of Experience the violent and destructive elements in Creation must be faced and accepted, and even admired. The tiger is also symbolic of the Energy and the Imagination of man, as opposed to the Reason. Blake was a great believer in natural impulses and hated all restraints.

Consequently he condemns all those who exercise restraints upon others. He states in Holy Thursday II:

"And their ways are fill'd with thorns
It is eternal winter there"

The eternal winter are symbolic of total destruction of the country and the perpetual devastation and 'Grey-headed beadles' in 'Holy Thursday I' are symbolic of authority and it is they exploit children for their own material interests. In the poem London, oppression and tyranny are symbolised by the king (who is responsible for the soldier's blood being shed), social institutions like (loveless) marriage, and '"he mind-forged manacles". Even further, personal and social relationships have been symbolised as:

"In the morning glad I see
My foe outstretched beneath the tree"

A Poison Tree is another allegory. The tree here represents repressed wrath; the water represents fear; the apple is symbolic of the fruit of the deceit which results from repression. This deceit gives rise to the speaker's action in laying a death-trap for his enemy. The deeper meaning of the poem is that aggressive feelings, if suppressed, almost certainly destroy personal relationships. On the surface, however, the poem is a simple, ordinary story. Thus symbolism is crucial to understanding Blake as poet of earlier romanticism. What can be more symbolic than the following lines from, 'Auguries of Innocence'?

"To see a world in a grain of sand,
And a heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
And eternity in an hour"

Thus, Blake's poetry is charged with symbols. He has depicted nature and human nature; animals and plants as simple but profound symbols of powerful forces; "contrary states of the human soul" – for example, good and evil, or innocence and experience throughout his poetry. What is different in Blake is that he is not modeling after any symbols but his own. The symbols always have an inner relatedness that leads us from the outer world to the inner man. The symbols live in the ordered existence of his vision; the vision itself is entirely personal, in theme and in the logic that sustains it. Blake is difficult not because he invented symbols of his own; he created his symbols to show that the existence of any natural object and the value man's mind places on it were one and the same. He was fighting the acceptance of reality in the light of science as much as he was fighting the suppression of human nature by ethical dogmas. He fought on two fronts, and shifted his arms from one to the other without letting us know—more exactly, he did not let himself know. He created for himself a personality, in life and in art, that was the image of the thing he sought.

In short, it is established that William Blake is a highly symbolic and even allegorical poet. His use of symbolism is unique and cinematic. It paints a lively and pulsating picture of dynamic life before us. Especially, the symbolic use of

'Sun-flower' gets so much stamped on the mind of the reader that it is difficult to forget it. He mentions a tiger it becomes a symbol of God's power in creation, his lamb turns out to be a symbol of suffering innocence and Jesus Christ and his tree is symbolic of anger and desire to triumph over enemies; the dark side of human nature. Symbolism is the main trait of William Blake as a dramatist as a poet and this has been well-crystallized in his legendary work, 'The Songs of Innocence and Experience'.

Blake's Concept of God

William Blake formed most of his works in the fashion of Romanticism. Much like William Wordsworth, Blake wrote from the heart, letting natural expression take over. Many of the writers of the Romantic period felt they had entered an imaginative climate, which some of them called "the Spirit Age." During this "Spirit Age," many authors felt that freedom and spontaneity were the key elements in poetry. Before this creative revolution, a poem was considered a classical work of art, assimilated to please an audience. In Romanticism, the "rules" hanging over poetry were dropped and a piece of work could become, as Blake described, "an embodiment of the poet's imagine vision. "Blake used these free-formed ideas and concepts in his later works.

Blake's essays, All Religions Are One, There is No Natural Religion, and There is No Natural Religion, all show Blake's views against Christian Orthodox, religion based on ancient scripture and against "Natural Religion," the belief that God is as natural organism, much like man. Blake was opposed to the idea that God is only what the church believes him to be but he was also opposed to the notion that God was here before we were.

Blake believed that man's "Poetic Genius," or imagination helped create the God of today. Many of the writers of the Romantic period were highly influenced by the war between England and France and the French Revolution. During the war, Blake was faced with charges of "speaking against his King and country." People of this era felt his works tested the boundaries of good art. Many of the other writers of this time also challenged previously accepted ideas. Mary Wollstonecroft wrote "A Vindication of the Rights of Women." Her work stood up against the female stereotypes and preconceived notions about women.

In the midst of all these changes, Blake too was inspired to write against these ancient ideas. All Religions Are One, There is No Natural Religion, and There is No Natural Religion were composed in hopes of bringing change to the public's spiritual life. Blake felt that, unlike most people, his spiritual life was varied, free and dramatic. Growing up he had no formal education. At the age of ten he joined a drawing school and later studied for a short time at a prestigious art school, the Royal Academy of the Arts. From this point in his life, art had the strongest influence. Later on, his work diminished and he went to a friend who was an artist, William Haley, for help. Haley attempted to change Blake's free art into conventional and breadwinning art. Blake soon rebelled, calling Haley the enemy of his spiritual life. After all of this, he began to write poetry, hoping to revive his free expression and flow. He wrote three works around 1788, to illustrate his views on religion, All Religions Are One, There is No Natural Religion, and There is No Natural Religion. He wrote All Religions Are One directed against Deism or "Natural Religion" and against Christian Orthodoxy.

Blake felt that God is not a natural or organic being; he is a creation of man's imagination or "Poetic Genius." He states that "The Jewish and Christian Testaments are an original derivation from the Poetic Genius," supporting his theory that man has imagined God. In There is No Natural Religion; he speaks against the argument that man naturally perceives God. He states that the desires and perceptions of man are not natural or organic, but are things taught to us.

Along with his prose work Blake's poetry presented the same ideas. His Songs of Innocence and Experience expose the presence of God and Spirituality in Innocence but the questions like "Could frame thy fearful symmetry?" and "Dare frame thy fearful

symmetry?" make his belief more firm and unique. This is important because when the author initially poses the question, he wants to know who has the ability to make such a creature. After more interrogation, the question evolves to "who could create such a villain of its potential wrath, and why?" William Blake's implied answer is "God."

In the end, Blake reminds us that all things in this world were accepted as "natural," then "the philosophic and experimental would soon be at the ratio of all things, and stand still unable to do other than repeat the same dull round over again. "We as humans are too dependent upon acceptance and not enough on independence. in There is No Natural Religion, Blake tries to persuade his audience that our knowledge is not limited to the physical sense, it is free and unbounded, much like Blake's ideal spiritual life.

William Blake as a Lyric Poet

Lyric is a short poem that conveys intense feeling or profound thought. In ancient Greece, lyrics were sung or recited to the accompaniment of the lyre. The lyric is the commonest kind of the poetry of self-expression. Man has always liked to pour out his intensely-felt feelings and emotion, and hence the lyric is among the earliest forms of poetry to be written in the literary history of any people. When moved by some intense emotion, love, hatred, joy, sorrow, wonder, admiration, etc., man has always expressed himself in a poetic language, and this accounts for the early appearance of the lyric among all peoples. The chief qualities of a good lyric may be summarized as follows:

1. It is a short poem, characterised by simplicity in language and treatment.

2. It deals with a single emotion which is generally stated in the first few lines. Then the poet gives us the thoughts suggested by that particular emotion. The last and concluding part is in the nature of a summary or it embodies the conclusion reached by the poet. Such is the development of a lyric in general, but often these three parts are not distinctly marked. In moments of intense emotional excitement the poet may be carried away by his emotions and the lyric may develop along entirely different lines. A lyric is more often than not, mood-dictated.

3. It is musical. Verbal-music is an important element in its appeal and charm. Various devices are used by poets to enhance the music of their lyrics.

4. A lyric is always an expression of the moods and emotions of a poet. The best lyrics are emotional in tone. However, a poet may not express merely his emotions, he may also analyse them intellectually. This gives to the lyric a hard intellectual tone. Such intellectual analysis of emotion is an important characteristic of the metaphysical lyrics of the early 17th century. Such lyrics are also more elaborate than the ordinary lyric.

5. It is characterised by intensity and poignancy (causing sadness or pity). The best lyrics are the expressions of intensely felt emotions. Like fire, the intensity of the poet's emotion burns out the non-essentials, all attention is concentrated and the basic emotion, and the gain in poignancy is enormous. It comes directly out of the heart of the poet, and so goes directly to the heart of the readers. The lyric at its best is poignant, pathetic and intense.

6. Spontaneity is another important quality of a lyric. The lyric poet sings in strains of unpremeditated art. He sings effortlessly because he must, because of the inner urge for self-expression. Any conscious effort on his part, makes the lyric look unnatural and artificial.

William Blake is a lyric poet. He was born in the neo- classical age, but the things that distinguish him from other poets of his age are the lyrical qualities of his poetry. By the lyrical qualities we understand such poetic features as subjectivity, melodiousness, imagination, description and meditation. Moreover a lyric poem is usually short and may fall into such genres as elegy, ode, ballad, sonnet etc. A lyric poem expresses a poet's private thoughts and emotions rather than telling a story. From all these perspectives the poems of Blake in Songs of Innocence and Experience are lyrics.

The first quality that makes his poems lyrics is **subjectivity**. The neo-classical approach to poetry was objective. Blake on the other hand took a subjective approach. Blake was a disturbing prophet who desired social change. He was personally against all kinds of repressions, materialism, institutional corruption, racism, worship of money and hypocrisy.

Blake **voiced against repression and constrains**. He did not follow the neo-classical restrains of writing poem. He also expressed his hatred towards institutional and personal repressions in such poems as- The Holy Thursday, The Nurse's Songs (Experience),

In Blake's time many children had to depend upon charity. In his poem 'Holy Thursday', Blake raises his voice against such repression.

And their sun does never shine,
And their fields are bleak and bare,
And their as are filled with thorns
It is eternal winter there.

Blake means here that all children are angles, not scapegoats to be the butchered on the altar of the society. How can England call herself rich and fruitful land if she has hunger children waiting for food from the so-called benefactors of society? Blake believes that children should be free and their life should be colourful. But the guardians always try to restrict them. Blake opposes such kind of restriction. In Nurse's Song, the nurse keeps a constant watch over the children and her instincts reflect her disposition. From her angle of view, life is aimless, a useless waste of time in childhood and in old age, a shame. It has no purpose as she says:

Our spring and our day are wasted in play,
And your winter and night in disguise.

She sets all her views in a depressing background such as winter, night, and dew darkness and so on. She looks back with frustration on her childhood, and instead of feeling merry she grows pale. Her 'spring' and "day" seem to express the agony of growing up to a regretful maturity. She is hostile and insensitive to innocence. She takes the children back home, leaving them unable to protest, to play and enjoy.

William Blake **dislikes Industrial Revolution** and in his poems he focuses how the Industrial Revolution represents the devil and that it must be purged. Blake focused on child labour and prostitution-the two adverse effects of Industrialization Revolution in his poems The Chimney Sweeper and London.

Blake hated the **exploitation of children's labour because of Industrial Revolution**. Blake believed in the innocence of childhood pleasures. The Chimney Sweeper by William Blake expressed the difficult lives of working children. As the title reveals it, the children are cleaning chimneys all day long in unimaginable conditions. Blake gives his readers a clear understanding of the harsh conditions of these young chimney sweepers. He says:

"There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head
That curl'd like a lamb's back,"

Blake focuses how badly these children are left powerless and with no escape. On another instance, the poem relates the misery felt by these children when it says:

"A little black thing among the snow
Crying " 'weep, 'weep," in notes of woe!"

Blake is here pointing out that man is responsible for evils of society. The picture drawn by Blake is disturbing and heart-breaking at the same time.

In his poem "London," from his work Songs of Experience, Blake describes the **woes of the Industrial Revolution**. He describes the Thames River and the city streets as "chartered," or controlled by commercial interest. He refers to "mind-forged manacles"; he relates that every man's face contains "Marks of weakness, marks of woe"; and he discusses the "every cry of every Man" and "every Infant's cry of fear."

In "London" Blake describes a world during and after the industrial revolution in which there have been many ill-fated side effects as people move away from the traditional farming families and their beliefs.

Blake vividly portrays another worse effect of Industrial revolution, "**prostitution**", in his poem "London". A prostitute or an unwed mother is unable to rejoice in her child's birth. It tells of a married couple looking down upon her for what she does in order to make a living. This is ironic because the business of prostitution is caused in part by the restrictions placed upon the married man. It is also ironic because the married man is what has created the need for, and use of prostitutes. The harlot curses the respectable and polite society because it is they who have created the demand for her, and then look down upon what she does. "Blights with plagues" implies that perhaps she also infects them with some sort of venereal disease. The final words of the poem, "Marriage hearse" compares marriage to death. The narrator sees marriage as another type of restriction placed upon man by society, marriage is a sort of death in man's ability to be free to do as he wishes.

Blake believed in **equality for all men**, and this is reflected in his poem. William Blake's The Little Black Boy revolves around the theme of slavery and the ideal slave's mentality. Blake wrote about a black African-American and his experience with slavery. Blake probably expressed his own feelings towards the whites' racism and suppression acts towards African-Americans through the black boy, which is the speaker of the poem.

The poem is about an African-American, who is the speaker of the poem, who remembers his childhood with his mother where she used to indoctrinate her child with the racist beliefs of slavers. The black boy has a dream, that all humans will be equal.

Blake **stands against puritan hypocrisy**. Two of his poems from Songs of Experience present his views on the matter: 'The Chimney Sweeper' and "The Garden of Love'. In 'The Chimney Sweeper', the child (Blake) is telling society that his pain is being caused by those in whom he put his trust— his parents. They abandon him and go ...to praise God & his Priest & King (Blake, 11). Perhaps they do this, because on the outside their child looks happy and they probably think that they are helping him more than anything:

' And because I am happy, & dance& sing
They think they have done me no injury,'

In the meantime, the church is also playing a part in his misery. How? Because it allows the parents to come inside its building to pray when they should be protecting their child from all harm:

'They are both gone up to the church to pray
………………
………………
a heaven of our misery "

All of Blake's poem are short, some very short indeed. All are written in apparently simple style, and the most usual verse form in the rhymed quatrain. (stanza of four lines). A lyric poem is usually melodious. In many of Blake's poem like "The Tyger" we find melodious tone.

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

For Blake "**imagination**" is that gift in man, which can hear the prompting's of God, or "spiritual sensation". 'Introduction' is a canonical poem of the romantic period. In it lies the key romantic element: imagination, emotion, idealism. In "Introduction" to Songs of Innocence Blake as a poet, playing his simple and innocent music attracts the attention of a muse or spirit that appears to him as a child on a cloud. The child encourages him to play a song about a "Lamb" and being impressed with the musician asks him to drop his pipe and write a book "that all may read". In this way the spirit is asking Blake to share his inspiration with a wider audience, an audience that would not depend on his presence to experience the happiness his imagination can bring.

Sometimes Blake asks **question about creation**: how can we understand a God who is capable of creating the innocence of the lamb and the fury of the tiger? The Tyger (Songs of Experience) is Blake's famous meditative poem. The tiger is Blake's symbol for the "abundant life", and for regeneration. Centrally, it Tyger! Tyger! Burning bright

In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful smmetry?

Nature was not the central focus of Blake's poems, but it was a theme that did occur in many of his works, such as "Nurse's Song" "The Lamb", "Earth's Answer", "The Garden of Love", "To Spring" and "To the Evening Star".

Each of his poems is a vehicle of expressing his personal emotion. It seems his art had been too adventurous and unconventional for the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, and we may even say he was ahead of his time.

William Blake's views of life concerning innocence and experience

William Blake, being a visionary and mystic poet, could see the contemporary real picture of the society and foresee the coming crisis and offered suggestions to relieve from it, and put them into his writings. His dealing matter is more spiritual than physical. In his "Songs of Innocence and of Experience", he expresses two states of soul – innocence and experience and how the first one gradually turns to the second. (By a conscious going through these songs, we can realize Blake's views of life, concerning innocence and experience.)

At first we can take a general idea of Blake's views or philosophy. It "asserts the contrariety of systems with regard to soul and the other objects of creation." And this contrary is between the stage of innocence and of experience. The stage of experience is energetic and unavoidable for human salvation. He says "without contrary is no progression." For him 'good' is the passive that obeys reason whereas 'evil' is the active stemming out from energy.

At the stage of innocence, a soul remains very natural, joyful, universal and related to God Himself. But, after facing the hardness, cruelty and worldliness, and getting freedom of choice, it reaches the stage of experience. Almost in every case, it is encouraged or compelled to be converted into the stage of experience by the surroundings. Here one thing is mentionable that the latter stage is more important than the former because from the latter, there is a possibility of reaching the stage of higher or greater innocence, but the former is a heavenly thing.

Now we can look at the songs how the poet treats, with his excellent use of symbols, the stages and how the first turns to the second.

At the very introductory poem of the innocence, we are informed the nature of innocence. The setting of the poem is natural, pastoral and joyful, and it is about the children under the guidance of God, as 'a child' and 'lamb' represent Christ himself in the following lines-

"On a cloud I saw a child
And he laughing said to me
'Pipe a song about a lamb!' "

And at last

"Every child may joy to hear"

That means the followers of innocence may enjoy to hear the songs. On the other hand, the 'Introduction' of the song of experience expresses the nature of experience. It begins with these lines-

Here the voice of the Bard!
Who Present, Past and Future sees;
Whose ears have heard
The Holy word,
That walked among the ancient trees,

That is, the speaker himself is experienced here and not bound to anyone. Moreover, in this poem there is 'the lapsed soul', representing the human being that was expelled from the Garden of Eden through bitter experience. However, at last of the poem, there is a hint of regeneration and salvation of this mankind.

According to Blake, through experience, the innocent 'lamb' becomes the dreadful 'Tyger'. The symbolic poem 'The Lamb' represents the meek and mild part of human soul which is connected to the 'child' as well as 'lamb' or Christ, as we mentioned earlier. On the other hand, the poem, 'the Tyger', symbolizes the strong, reckless and harsher side of human soul. It is just opposite to the lamb. Even the poet himself is surprised at this creation-

"Did he who made the lamb make thee?"

There are two poems under same name, 'The Chimney Sweeper', in both sections of innocence and experience, but they are different in nature. This different sort of harsh profession of the child is resulted from the Industrial Revolution which moved the poet much. However, in the first poem, though he has to work hard, the child is satisfied with the thought of getting God as his father and of the fact that –

" if all do their duty they need not fear harm"

On the other hand, the child in the second poem of same name is just the prey to the contemporary church system that the parents of poor children go to church, leaving their children working for chimney sweeping. The chimney sweeper is now experienced not for his own wish but by the cruel society. So, he is sad not cheerful, though he ironically expresses it.

Again, there is another pair of poems named 'Holy Thursday'; both show the children of the charity school serving for the church. However, the first one shows them as 'flowers of London town!' and 'angles;' and advises the authority to be tender to them; giving hints of coming misery. On the contrary, the second one questions, seeing their misery, about their serving for the church –

Is that trembling cry a song?
Can it be a song of joy?
And so many children poor?
It is a land of poverty!

We see another pair of poems under same name. 'The Nurse's Song' in the innocence shows the nurse as innocent caretaker granting the children's claim to play more time. But the second one in the experience shows the contrary state. Here the nurse is experienced and grave, and she has no passion for joy, play and merriment. She can not bear with the children's playing.

In this context, in Coleridge's 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner', we see that the innocent wedding guest, coming to the feast, did not attend there, after he had heard the story of the mariner's journey; he became grave because he had been experienced through hearing the story. In the same way the experienced stage of life becomes grave which can not accept the natural joy and pleasure.

'The Divine Image' in innocence with the definite article 'The', means the real, one and only divine Image which includes Mercy, Pity, Peace and love –

"Where Mercy, love and Pity dwell,
There God is dwelling too."

On the contrary, 'A Divine Image' in the experience, with indefinite article 'A', points at a particular divine image which has a unique growth. It shows the basic social thing of the experienced and cruel world, ironically saying:

"Cruelty has a human heart
And Jealousy a human face
Terror the human form of divine
And Secrecy the human dress."

C.M. Bowra, a critic, in his 'Romantic Imagination' comments on Blake's view of innocence and experience: "The two sections of Blake's book, the 'Songs of Innocence' and the 'Songs of Experience', are contrasted elements in a single design. The first part

sets out an imaginative vision of the state of innocence; the second part shows how life challenges and corrupts and destroys it."

William Blake's Criticism of Society in his Poems

William Blake, as a critic of his time, took an active role in exposing the corruption taking place in his society. He also describes the woes and injustices of civilized society. According to Blake, men are short sighted and blind and they are ignorant of the spiritual nature of life. In this role Blake appears as a critic of the age and of contemporary condition.

William Blake wrote about how the industrial revolution represents the devil and that it must be purged. Blake focused on child labour and prostitution-the two adverse effects of Industrialization Revolution.

In his poem "London," from his work Songs of Experience, Blake describes the woes of the Industrial Revolution. He describes the Thames River and the city streets as "chartered," or controlled by commercial interest. He refers to "mind-forged manacles"; he relates that every man's face contains "Marks of weakness, marks of woe"; and he discusses the "every cry of every Man" and "every Infant's cry of fear."

"London" describes a world during and after the industrial revolution in which there have been many ill-fated side effects as people move away from the traditional farming families and their beliefs.

Prostitution is one of the worse effects of Industrial revolution. A prostitute or an unwed mother is unable to rejoice in her child's birth. It tells of a married couple looking down upon her for what she does in order to make a living. This is ironic because the business of prostitution is caused in part by the restrictions placed upon the married man. It is also ironic because the married man is what has created the need for, and use of prostitutes. The harlot curses the respectable and polite society because it is they who have created the demand for her, and then look down upon what she does. "Blights with plagues" implies that perhaps she also infects them with some sort of venereal disease. The final words of the poem, "Marriage hearse" compares marriage to death. The narrator sees marriage as another type of restriction placed upon man by society, marriage is a sort of death in man's ability to be free to do as he wishes.

He also criticizes the institutions that remained silent in the faces of injustice. 'Holy Thursday' is an indictment of a society which allows children to depend upon charity.

And their sun does never shine,
And their fields are bleak and bare,
And their as are filled with thorns
It is eternal winter there.

Blake means here that all children are angles, not scapegoats to be the butchered on the altar of the society. How can England call herself rich and fruitful land if she has hunger children waiting for food from the so-called benefactors of society?

In the poem "A divine Image' the poet says that cruelty, jealousy, terror and secrecy are human qualities. Cruelty may be seen in the heart of man, jealousy may be seen in the face of man. Terror is visible in the human shape which we call divine. Secrecy is the dress or the garment which human beings wear.

In conclusion, it can be easily seen how Blake stood against the suffering of human kind and used his poems to expose the corruption of the world that surrounded him. He clearly criticized the society and hoped that people would take action to change things for the better. The problems in Blake's society aren't very different than the ones in today's world. People should take a good look around them and take action to better their surroundings.

John Keats

JOHN KEATS, 1795-1821

No less individual and unique than the poetry of Byron and Shelley is that of the third member of this group, John Keats, who is, in a wholesome way, the most conspicuous great representative in English poetry since Chaucer of the spirit of 'Art for Art's sake.' Keats was born in London in 1795, the first son of a livery-stable keeper. Romantic emotion and passionateness were among his chief traits from the start; but he was equally distinguished by a generous spirit, physical vigor (though he was very short in build), and courage. His younger brothers he loved intensely and fought fiercely. At boarding-school, however, he turned from headstrong play to enthusiastic reading of Spenser and other great English and Latin poets and of dictionaries of Greek and Roman mythology and life. An orphan at fourteen, the mismanagement of his guardians kept him always in financial difficulties, and he was taken from school and apprenticed to a suburban surgeon. After five years of study and hospital practice the call of poetry proved too strong, and he abandoned his profession to revel in Spenser, Shakespeare, and the Italian epic authors. He now became an enthusiastic disciple of the literary and political radical, Leigh Hunt, in whose home at Hampstead he spent much time. Hunt was a great poetic stimulus to Keats, but he is largely responsible for the flippant jauntiness and formlessness of Keats' earlier poetry, and the connection brought on Keats from the outset the relentless hostility of the literacy critics, who had dubbed Hunt and his friends 'The Cockney [i.e., Vulgar] School of Poetry.'

Keats' first little volume of verse, published in 1817, when he was twenty-one,-contained some delightful poems and clearly displayed most of his chief tendencies. It was followed the next year by his longest poem, 'Endymion,' where he uses, one of the vaguely beautiful Greek myths as the basis for the expression of his own delight in the glory of the world and of youthful sensations. As a narrative the poem is wandering, almost chaotic; that it is immature Keats himself frankly admitted in his preface; but in luxuriant loveliness of sensuous imagination it is unsurpassed. Its theme, and indeed the theme of all Keats' poetry, may be said to be found in its famous first line--'A thing of beauty is a joy forever.' The remaining three years of Keats' life were mostly tragic. 'Endymion' and its author were brutally attacked in 'The Quarterly Review' and 'Blackwood's Magazine.' The sickness and death, from consumption, of one of Keats' dearly-loved brothers was followed by his infatuation with a certain Fanny Brawne, a commonplace girl seven years younger than himself. This infatuation thenceforth divided his life with poetry and helped to create in him a restless impatience that led him, among other things, to an unhappy effort to force his genius, in the hope of gain, into the very unsuitable channel of play-writing. But restlessness did not weaken his genuine and maturing poetic power; his third and last volume, published in

1820, and including 'The Eve of St. Agnes,' 'Isabella,' 'Lamia,' the fragmentary 'Hyperion,' and his half dozen great odes, probably contains more poetry of the highest order than any other book of original verse, of so small a size, ever sent from the press. By this time, however, Keats himself was stricken with consumption, and in the effort to save his life a warmer climate was the last resource. Lack of sympathy with Shelley and his poetry led him to reject Shelley's generous offer of entertainment at Pisa, and he sailed with his devoted friend the painter Joseph Severn to southern Italy. A few months later, in 1821, he died at Rome, at the age of twenty-five. His tombstone, in a neglected corner of the Protestant cemetery just outside the city wall, bears among other words those which in bitterness of spirit he himself had dictated: 'Here lies one whose name was writ in water.' But, in fact, not only had he created more g

achieved by any other man at so early an age, but probably no other influence was to prove so great as his on the poets of the next generation.

The most important qualities of his poetry stand out clearly:

He is, as we have implied, the great apostle of full though not unhealthy enjoyment of external Beauty, the beauty of the senses. He once said: 'I feel sure I should write, from the mere yearning and tenderness I have for the beautiful, even if my night's labors should be burnt every morning and no eye ever rest upon them.' His use of beauty in his poetry is marked at first by passionate Romantic abandonment and always by lavish Romantic richness. This passion was partly stimulated in him by other poets, largely by the Italians, and especially by Spenser, from one of whose minor poems Keats chose the motto for his first volume: 'What more felicity can fall to creature than to enjoy delight with liberty?' Shelley's enthusiasm for Beauty, as we have seen, is somewhat similar to that of Keats. But for both Spenser and Shelley, in different fashions, external Beauty is only the outer garment of the Platonic spiritual Beauty, while to Keats in his poetry it is, in appearance at least, almost everything. He once exclaimed, even, 'Oh for a life of sensations rather than of thoughts!' Notable in his poetry is the absence of any moral purpose and of any interest in present-day life and character, particularly the absence of the democratic feeling which had figured so largely in most of his Romantic predecessors. These facts must not be over-emphasized, however. His famous final phrasing of the great poetic idea--'Beauty is truth, truth beauty'--itself shows consciousness of realities below the surface, and the inference which is sometimes hastily drawn that he was personally a fiberless dreamer is as far as possible from the truth. In fact he was always vigorous and normal, as well as sensitive; he was always devoted to outdoor life; and his very attractive letters, from which his nature can best be judged, are not only overflowing with unpretentious and cordial human feeling but testify that he was not really unaware of specific social and moral issues. Indeed, occasional passages in his poems indicate that he intended to deal with these issues in other poems when he should feel his powers adequately matured. Whether, had he lived, he would have proved capable of handling them significantly is one of the questions which must be left to conjecture, like the other question whether his power of style would have further developed. Almost all of Keats' poems are exquisite and luxuriant in their embodiment of sensuous beauty, but 'The Eve of St. Agnes,' in Spenser's richly lingering stanza, must be especially mentioned.

Keats is one of the supreme masters of poetic expression, expression the most beautiful, apt, vivid, condensed, and imaginatively suggestive. His poems are noble storehouses of such lines as these:

> **The music, yearning like a God in pain.**
> **Into her dream he melted, as the rose**
> **Blendeth its odour with the violet.**
> **Magic casements, opening on the foam**
> **Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.**

It is primarily in this respect that he has been the teacher of later poets. Keats never attained dramatic or narrative power or skill in the presentation of individual character. In place of these elements he has the lyric gift of rendering moods. Aside from ecstatic delight, these are mostly moods of pensiveness, languor, or romantic sadness, like the one so magically suggested in the 'Ode to a Nightingale,' of Ruth standing lonely and 'in tears amid the alien corn.'

Conspicuous in Keats is his spiritual kinship with the ancient Greeks. He assimilated with eager delight all the riches of the Greek imagination, even though he never learned the language and was dependent on the dull mediums of dictionaries and translations. It is not only that his recognition of the permanently significant and beautiful embodiment of the central facts of life in the Greek stories led him to select some of them as the subjects for several of his most important poems; but his whole feeling, notably his feeling for Nature, seems almost precisely that of the Greeks, especially, perhaps, of the earlier generations among whom their mythology took shape. To him also Nature appears alive with divinities. Walking through the woods he almost expects to catch glimpses of hamadryads peering from their trees, nymphs rising from the fountains, and startled fauns with shaggy skins and cloven feet scurrying away among the bushes.

In his later poetry, also, the deeper force of the Greek spirit led him from his early Romantic formlessness to the achievement of the most exquisite classical perfection of form and finish. His Romantic glow and emotion never fade or cool, but such poems as the Odes to the Nightingale and to a Grecian Urn, and the fragment of 'Hyperion,' are absolutely flawless and satisfying in structure and expression.

John Keats' Negative Capability

The Romantic poet John Keats (1795-1821) coined the phrase 'Negative Capability' in a letter written to his brothers George and Thomas on the 21 December, 1817. In this letter he defined his new concept of writing: **I mean Negative Capability, that is when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason.**

What Keats is advocating is a removal of the intellectual self while writing (or reading) poetry – after all:

> **Beauty is truth, truth beauty – that is all**
> **Ye know on earth and all ye need know**
> **- Ode on a Grecian Urn, lines 49-50**

Throughout his poetry and letters Keats proposes the theory that beauty is valuable in itself and that it does not need to declare anything for us to know that it is important. That is, beauty does not have to refer to anything beyond itself: **I am certain of nothing but the holiness of the Heart's affections and the truth of Imagination - What the imagination seizes as Beauty must be truth – whether it existed before or not – for I have the same Idea of all our Passions as of Love they are all in their sublime, creative of essential Beauty.** - Keats in letter to Benjamin Bailey (Saturday 22 November, 1817)

It is this ability to hold onto a beautiful truth despite the fact that it does not fit into an intellectual system that Keats praises in Shakespeare. He criticizes Coleridge for letting go 'by a thin isolated verisimilitude... from being incapable of remaining content with half knowledge' where he should realise that 'beauty overcomes every other consideration, or rather obliterates all consideration' (Keats in a letter to his brothers [Sunday 21 December, 1817]).

Keats' poems are full of contradictions in meaning ('a drowsy numbness pains') and emotion ('both together, sane and mad') and he accepts a double nature as a creative insight. In Ode to a Nightingale it is the apparent (or real) contradictions that allow Keats to create the sensual and hedonistic feeling of numbness that allows the reader to experience the half-swooning emotion Keats is trying to capture. Keats would have us experience the emotion of the language and pass over the half-truths in silence, to live a

life 'of sensations rather than of Thoughts!' (letter to Benjamin Bailey [Saturday 22 November 1817]). Keats here can be seen to be extending Kant's principle that much thought is sublingual by making the meaning of words less important than their 'feel'. Since you can very often not find the exact word that you need (showing that much of your thinking occurs without language) Keats often deals in the sensations created by words rather than meaning. Even if the precise definition of words causes contradiction they can still be used together to create the right ambience. Negative Capability asks us to allow the atmosphere of Keats' poems to surround us without picking out individual meanings and inconsistencies.

Whatever the complicated relations between Truth and Beauty and their respective definitions, what matters to Keats are moments of intense feeling that combine 'thought' and 'emotion' in appreciating beauty. This explains why much of Keats' poetry is devoted to catching, and holding, moments of beauty. Keats addresses this desire directly in Ode on a Grecian Urn (lines 15 – 20) where he writes,

> **Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave**
> **Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;**
> **Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,**
> **Though winning near the goal – yet, do not grieve;**
> **She cannot fade, tho thou hast not thy bliss,**
> **For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair.**

Throughout this poem, and many others, Keats captures moments, like that of the 'fair youth' stooping to kiss his lover, and holds them to prevent change and decay, revelling in that moment of perfection.

In many of Keats' poems this need to hold a perfect instant leads to an excited tone, an almost excessive use of superlatives and an atmosphere of crushing, voluptuous intensity as Keats demonstrates the depth of his appreciation for the beautiful and in the act of appreciation creates poems as exquisite as that which he is admiring. Keats' Negative Capability is the ability to bask in the beautiful without questioning either it or his methods of description. In other words to take beauty simply as it is.

Keats' Odes: Pain and Beauty

Each of the five poems by John Keats, "Bards of Passion and Mirth," "Ode on a Grecian Urn," "Ode to Melancholy," "Ode to Autumn," and "Ode to a Nightingale," all come back to their common theme: the binary nature of the human soul. As a Romantic poet Keats' works seem to agree with the idea that the human experience is characterized by pain. Moreover, Keats links beauty and pain together, a concept that seems contradictory. He does this by his implications that there we can transport ourselves from pain and into beauty and even nature. This begs the question: Can we really leave pain through the imagination or through the appreciation of beauty? For example, if we long for something we will never obtain, can we escape that tragedy through the imagination? Is longing an inevitable condition of the human experience? The answers vary, especially in relation to time and what part of our lives we are in.

As seen in the works of Wordsworth and Blake in addition to Keats poems, we are led to believe that the human soul is double sided. There is pain and there is joy. There is passion and hatred and then there is apathy. There is good and evil, right and wrong. From "Bards of Passion and Mirth," the concept that the soul itself is a contradiction is best shown in lines 31 through 34 when Keats mentions the contrasting experiences we mortals face on a daily basis:

Of their sorrows and delights;
Of their passions and their spites;
Of their glory and their shame;
What doth strengthen and what maim.

This emphasizes that sorrow, for example, draws upon delight to define the separation between the two just as delight does sorrow. Keats upholds the belief that to understand one, the presence of its opponent is required. In "Ode on a Grecian Urn," the greatest contrast drawn in relation to the human soul is Time. Life passes quickly with Time. Keats says to the urn, "Thou shalt remain," which means that the Grecian urn will stay and pass through each generation. Also, the urn depicts moments in life that are frozen in time. Although the human soul changes and transforms, that which is seen on the Grecian urn never will. It is stuck. In "Ode to Melancholy," Keats mentions the passing of moods: "But when the melancholy fit shall fall." This implies that sadness comes and goes, prior to the "fit" the soul or being was in a state of something else. This idea is upheld in "Ode to Autumn," too. Keats speaks reverently of autumn but autumn, as beautiful as it is has a sad side to it. Autumn is the slowing of the nights, the cooling of the air, the aging of the year, and the withering of life because at the end of autumn is winter, which, for many people is associated with death and the End. "Ode to a Nightingale," supports this theme, too. The idea gleaned from this particular ode is ironic. In the Poem, the speaker is pained by his overwhelming joy at the nightingale's song. This is the essence of the human soul; it is a state of utter irony. This main idea was a common focus for the Romantics. It also relates to the idea of thesis and antithesis joining to become a synthesis, or in other words, the quintessence of experiences and emotions.

Another trademark Romantic idea was that life is characterized by pain. I feel that his is, in many cases, true. We can be defined by our pain and we can be defined by how we handle it. All of life is a test. It is hard. It is a struggle and we are put on earth to see how we fair- that is one way of looking at it. The other way is to see life as a state of suffering before the final reward. Either way, life is about pain. Pain is natural. It is good for us. It keeps us grounded.

In Keats' works, I think that pain and beauty are so closely linked is because Keats believed that we could escape pain if we could delve ourselves in to the appreciation of beauty or nature. It is possible to "escape" pain through appreciation of beauty or through the imagination. However, this is nothing more than the utilization of another object to distract us from a harsh reality. Oftentimes, we are miserable, we are told to do something rather than nothing. This keeps us from brooding. We can use our imagination to get away from what is happening. This can seem silly, if not immature, to pretend like something is not really happening, but sometimes it is necessary.

The initial link between beauty and pain is due to the fact that beauty can bring pain. A lover pining after a 'beauty" is in a kind of pain: heartsickness. We can be pained by beauty. The knowing that beauty doesn't last, that beauty dies, is a painful thought. In, "Ode to a Grecian Urn," the scene of the two lovers expresses the pain of passing beauty and love in a round-a-bout way.

Bold Lover, never never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal-yet do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

This is unlike in life where we can love and love will dissipate, and beauty can bloom and then will wither. Keats moves us out of the pain of knowing that there will never be change or growth and lightens the mood by pointing out that the beauty and happiness found in the urn is permanently preserved. Keats offers advice about how to take away the pain of a moment and transform it into another emotion in "Ode to Melancholy." "…glut thy sorrow on a morning rose/ Or on the wealth of globed peonies…" Here, Keats suggests that we move the magnitude of our emotions from sadness to the appreciation of something beautiful. "Ode to Autumn" has a similar lesson. Autumn, as mentioned before, has a withering, "winnowing," dying beauty. After harvest, the "stubble plain" and trees are left bare, the cider press only oozes, the swallows are gathering to leave the skies silent." In this instance, beauty and pain are linked in that beauty can cause pain. Autumn is a very pretty season but it has a forlorn undertone. "Ode to a Nightingale" best represents the pain of beauty. Keats begins this idea by saying that in life, in reality, there are many troubles and woes and this nightingale's song is a way of escape. If he could use alcohol to be with the nightingale, to be a part of that experience, which knows nothing of the human woes, he would find it much preferable to living in the human reality. He is so happy listening to the nightingale that he could die. Keats is then saddened by the knowledge that nightingale will continue to sing his beautiful song, "Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain," even when he is dead and can no longer enjoy the song. For him, the beauty will not last. Then he says to us that in death, there is no more pain.

Now more than ever it seems rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!

Pain and beauty can also be linked by how they both relate to longing for something that we cannot have. As in the case of the Grecian Urn, the two lovers can never have their joy but it is a comfort, in a way that they will always be beautiful and always in love. It is still a disappointment, though, to always have something out of reach. It is part of life though; it is inevitable. If we let longing be synonymous with pain, it is absolutely natural and an expected art of life. A common lesson that we see is that even if you have everything n the world, there will always be something lacking. You will always want something more. I do not think that the Romantics wanted us to circumvent the human state. And argument for that might be that they explained a lot of issues that people have and lessons that people sometimes learn the hard way but I think that the Romantics wanted us to go through the full range of emotions so that we were able to fully know what it means to feel, to live, to be.

Another thread that runs through all five of these poems is age (and the progression of life). From "Bards" we understand that wisdom is something that comes with age and when we die we are endowed with divine wisdom. From "Urn" we learn that age is ephemeral. The urn will teach the coming generations that will age and pass like the previous generations, and this follows the idea that with age comes wisdom and even sadness. In "Melancholy," again, life is fleeting, death comes fast enough and we should not quicken its pace: "For shade to shade will come too drowsily/And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul." Here, Keats is telling us not to give in to a fit of melancholy and end it all but to refocus our energy into something better. From "Autumn," we are told that in youth, or Spring, there is a beauty in it but old age, Autumn, has its own beauty, even though it is a fading and tragic beauty. Finally, in "Nightingale," we see that although there is joy in being young and sadness in aging and dying, on "the other side" of dying is eternal joy.

Keats as a Writer of odes

(i) Introduction: - Originally ode was a Greek form of verse, but odes have been written in Latin Poetry also. It meant a poetic composition written to be sung to the music of lyre. So it is known as lyrical in character. But when ode form came into the hands of the English writers, the idea of Music was considered to be essential and it became a type of lyric poem only. Thus in the context of English poetry, ode can be defined as a lyrical poem which expresses exalted or enthusiastic emotion in respect of a theme which is dignified and it does so in a metrical form.

(ii) Characteristics of an Ode: - Following are the characteristics of an ode.

(a) It is an address to an abstract object which means that it is written to and not written about.
(b) Ode is a natural and spontaneous overflow of the feelings of its writer.
(c) The ode must be highly serious in character due to its dignified theme.
(d) Its language and style should also be dignified and elevated.
(d) The ode must exhibit a very clear, logic in the development of thought of its writer.
(f) The ode can adopt any of the metres regular or irregular.

(iii) Keats' Odes

John- Keats dwelt on various forms of writing. But none of them has given him as great success as the ode form. Therefore Keats is always remembered as a writer of odes, Again, Keats holds a leading rank among the ode writers of English literature.

(iv) Unity of impression

The first and foremost quality of his odes is their unity of impression. The major odes of Keats — "Ode to a Nightingale", "Ode on a Grecian Urn" and "Ode to Autumn" Malancholy" have a common subject and theme. In all these odes the development of mood is more or less similar and the mood develops in a shape of drama, i.e. first the mood takes birth, it develops, reaches climax and finally the anticlimax takes place.

(v) Ode to Nightingale

Now we study the dramatic development of Keats's mood with reference to his odes. The very of opening stanza of "Ode to Nightingale" takes Keats in a mood of escape, He wants to escape from fever and fret of life. He longs for intoxicant, either a draught of vintage or "a beaker full of the warm sough to help him fade away into the form that is the nightingale's abode. Foreign to the worries of life, he wants to share the joys of nightingale in his imagination. He wants to live in the world of "immortal bird" that was not born for death. He says; "thou was not born for death, oh Immortal bird."

(vi) Ode on Grecian Urn

Similarly in "Ode on Grecian Urn", Keats is fully aware that in real life, every thing is short lived and fleeting. But the urn which is the great piece of art gives him a sense of immortality. The pictures curved upon it are immortal because they are fresh and vigorous from centuries. In both these poems the fascinating clement for Keats in the

world of imagination. As he says in "Ode on Grecian urn;" Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweater,

The other binding element between nightingale and urn is their permanence. The song of nightingale is immortal; similarity the art that produced the urn is also immortal.

Escape into the world of imagination takes the two poems to a point of climax but in the right tradition of dramatic development, the anti-climax takes place and this anticlimax brings Keats back to the world of reality. In the "Ode to Nightingale", the world "Forlorn" and in "Ode on a Grecian Urn", the Urn's death brings Keats back into the world of man.

(vii) Ode to Autumn and Ode on Melancholy

"Ode to Autumn" can be read in the same light It depicts the theme of ripeness, decay and death in describing the natural cycle of seasons; Autumn winter, spring, summer. In "Ode on Melancholy" the throne of poem is that joys. and beauty are a source of human misery because they are short living. Thus WC have seen that there is a unifying force behind the great Odes of Keats.

We find that Keats undergoes various stages of development which a Shakespearean hero experiences. In the beginning he is in the position of Hamlet. He does not wish where to be or where not to be. "to be or riot be, that's question. " He continues to hang between the world of . reality and the world of imagination. But towards the end of his two odes, "Ode to a Nightingale and Ode on a Grecian Urn", we find that Keats has developed himself up to Hamlet's state of readiness as after his escape he is ready to accept the realities of life as they are. Keats did in odes o what Shakespeare had already done in dramas.

(viii) Keats' Negative Capability

In short, when Ode form came to Keats it reached the height of perfection and subjectivity. It was primarily under the influence of Shakespeare's negative capability that Keats came to adopt this form of verse. He wanted to attain that perfection in negative capability which Shakespeare had achieved in his dramas, but Keats found that instead of drama, Ode form of verse was best suited to his purpose.

Negative capability is a capacity to negate one's individual self and to assume the very personality of the person whom the writer wants to portray. It is a capacity to be like water with no colour of its own, but capable of assuming any colour that is put into it. Keats has been able to acquire this negative capability in his Odes and this is his individual contribution to this form of verse.

(ix) His Style

The style of the odes is as unifying as their mood and theme. Every ode has the same perfection of language. He makes use of a beautiful vocabulary. Every word is as full of meaning as it is beautiful. The language is concise, exact and concentrated. The right word has been used at the right place. The technical excellence of odes is as great as their poetical. In his odes, – we has the best and finest of Keats which is also best and finest in his poetry. Keat's odes, to sum up, are the best form of verse as far this genre is concerned. We may not find any other poet, a writer of odes, who can equal Keats in his cadence, rhythm and perfection as well as the sublimity of their themes.

Ode to a Nightingale : Summary and Critical Analysis

Summary

Keats is in a state of uncomfortable drowsiness. Envy of the imagined happiness of the nightingale is not responsible for his condition; rather, it is a reaction to the happiness he has experienced through sharing in the happiness of the nightingale. The bird's happiness is conveyed in its singing.

Keats longs for a draught of wine which would take him out of himself and allow him to join his existence with that of the bird. The wine would put him in a state in which he would no longer be himself, aware that life is full of pain that the young die, the old suffer, and that just to think about life brings sorrow and despair. But wine is not needed to enable him to escape. His imagination will serve just as well. As soon as he realizes this, he is, in spirit, lifted up above the trees and can see the moon and the stars even though where he is physically there is only a glimmering of light. He cannot see what flowers are growing around him, but from their odour and from his knowledge of what flowers should be in bloom at the time he can guess.

In the darkness he listens to the nightingale. Now, he feels, it would be a rich experience to die, "to cease upon the midnight with no pain" while the bird would continue to sing ecstatically. Many a time, he confesses, he has been "half in love with easeful Death." The nightingale is free from the human fate of having to die. The song of the nightingale that he is listening to was heard in ancient times by emperor and peasant. Perhaps even Ruth (whose story is told in the Old Testament) heard it.

"Forlorn," the last word of the preceding stanza, brings Keats in the concluding stanza back to consciousness of what he is and where he is. He cannot escape even with the help of the imagination. The singing of the bird grows fainter and dies away. The experience he has had seems so strange and confusing that he is not sure whether it was a vision or a daydream. He is even uncertain whether he is asleep or awake.

Critical Analysis

Keats's Ode to a Nightingale is considered one of the finest odes in English Literature. It reveals the highest imaginative powers of the poet. The poem was inspired by the song of a nightingale which the poet heard in the gardens of his friend Charles Brown.

The sweet music of the nightingale sent the poet in rapture and one morning he took his chair from the breakfast table, put it on the grass-plot under the plum tree and composed the poem. After he had finished the poem he came back with scraps of paper in his hand. Brown rescued the papers and found them to be the poem on the nightingale.

Thus the poem is an expression of Keats's feelings rising in his heart at the hearing of the melodious song of the bird. The song of the nightingale moves from the poet to the depth of his heart and creates in him a heartache and numbness as is created by the drinking of hemlock. He thinks that the bird lives in a place of beauty. When he hears the nightingale's song, he is entrenched by its sweetness and his joy becomes so excessive that it changes into a kind of pleasant pain. He is filled with a desire to escape from the world of cares to the world of beautiful place of the bird.

The poem presents the picture of the tragedy of human life. It brings out an expression of Keats's pessimism and dejection. He composed this poem at the time when his heart was full of sorrow. His youngest brother Tom had died, the second one had gone abroad and the poet himself was under the suspense and agony by the passionate love for Fanny Brawne. All these happenings had induced in the poet a mood of sorrow. He could not suppress it. Thus the poet enjoys the pleasure in sadness/ pain and feasts upon the very sadness/ pain into joy. This complex emotion gives the poem a unique charm.

In the beginning, Keats seems to be an immature youth with a melancholic heart urging to find a means of oblivion and escape. On catching the sight of a nightingale and hearing its music, which he assumes to be an immortal voice of happiness, Keats feels that his body is getting benumbed. But, he also feels an acute pain because he is conscious of his mortality and suffering. He fantasies of having drunk hemlock or 'some dull opiate': "My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains, / my sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk."

The initial situation of awareness and conflict is slowly to change and develop throughout the ode with a corresponding shift in tone. The tragic awareness of suffering inflicts on him a peculiar kind of ache because the opposing effect of dullness, which is the effect of desire, is increasing. The awareness is a burden that makes him 'sunk' gradually towards the world of oblivion.

After describing his plight, Keats acknowledges, rather than envy the bird's 'happy lot' and participates in its permanent happiness. He identifies the bird with dryad, the Greek Goddess of the tree. He contrasts the mortality and suffering of human being with the immortality and perfect happiness of the nightingale. Of course, Keats immortalizes the bird by thinking of the race of it as the symbol of universal and undying musical voice, which is the voice of nature, and also of ideal romantic poetry, of the world of art and spirit. This universal and eternal voice has comforted human beings embittered by life and tragedies by opening the casement of the remote, magical, spiritual, eternal, and the ideal. The poet is longing for the imaginative experience of an imaginatively perfect world. At this stage in the poem, the poet is trying to escape from the reality, and experience the ideal rather than complement one with the other. This dualism is to resolve later. Keats begins by urging for poison and wine, and then desires for poetic and imaginative experience.

But, as the poem develops, one feels that the numbness and intoxication the poet deliberately and imaginatively imposes upon his senses of pain are meant to awaken a higher sense of experience. The vintage, dance and song, the waters of poetic inspiration are the warmth of the south together make a compound and sensuous appeal.

Keats develops a dialectic by partaking both the states-the fretful here of man and the happy there of the Nightingale-and serves as the mediator between the two. After activating the world of insight and inner experience by obliterating that of the sense, Keats is revived into a special awareness of the conflict. With this awareness, he moves into a higher thematic ground moving from the ache of the beginning through yearning for permanence and eventually exploring the tension so as to balance the transient with the permanent.

In fact, no one can escape into the ideal world forever. Imaginative minds can have a momentary flight into the fanciful world. But, ultimately one has to return to the real world and must accept the reality. John Keats is no exception to this. He makes

imaginative flights into the ideal world but accepts the realities of life despite its 'fever, fret and fury'.

The process of experience he has undergone has undoubtedly left him with a heightened awareness of both the modes of experience. When the imaginative life wakes, the pressures of ordinary experience is benumbed: and when ordinary experience becomes acute, the intensity of imaginative reality is reduced. And this makes life and experience more complete.

To sum up, Keats soars high with his 'wings of poesy' into the world of ideas and perfect happiness. But the next moment, consciousness makes him land on the grounds of reality and he bids farewell to the ideal bird. At this moment, Keats must also have been conscious that the very bird, which he had idealized and immortalized, existed in the real world, mortal and vulnerable to change and suffering like himself.

Ode on a Grecian Urn: Summary and Critical Analysis

Summary

Keats' imagined urn is addressed as if he were contemplating a real urn. It has survived intact from antiquity. It is a "sylvan historian" telling us a story, which the poet suggests by a series of questions. Who are these gods or men carved or painted on the urn? Who are these reluctant maidens? What is this mad pursuit? Why the struggle to escape? What is the explanation for the presence of musical instruments? Why this mad ecstasy?

Imagined melodies are lovelier than those heard by human ears. Therefore the poet urges the musician pictured on the urn to play on. His song can never end nor did the trees ever shed their leaves. The lover on the urn can never win a kiss from his beloved, but his beloved can never lose her beauty. Happy are the trees on the urn, for they can never lose their leaves. Happy is the musician forever playing songs forever new. The lovers on the urn enjoy a love forever warm, forever panting, and forever young, far better than actual love, which eventually brings frustration and dissatisfaction.

Who are the people coming to perform a sacrifice? To what altar does the priest lead a garlanded heifer? What town do they come from? That town will forever remain silent and deserted.

Fair urn, Keats says, adorned with figures of men and maidens, trees and grass, you bring our speculations to a point at which thought leads nowhere, like meditation on eternity. After our generation is gone, you will still be here, a friend to man, telling him that beauty is truth and truth is beauty — that is all he knows on earth and all he needs to know.

Critical Analysis

Ode on a Grecian Urn is an ode in which the speaker addresses to an engraved urn and expresses his feelings and ideas about the experience of an imagined world of art, in contrast to the reality of life, change and suffering. As an ode, it also has the unique features that Keats himself established in his great odes.

The features of Keatsian Romanticism and Keats' philosophy of art, beauty and truth are also important in this poem. Though it is a romantic poem, we find the unusual classical

interests of Keats in the style and form of this poem. This is a romantic poem mainly because of its dominant imaginative quality.

Like Wordsworth's nature, Keats' imagination is a means to understand life, a means of the quest for truth and beauty, and the most reliable mode of experience and insight. The speaker in the poem begins with reality- an ancient marble urn with engravings around it. He addresses to the urn as a virgin bride of quietness. Time is slow for it. It is unchanging, perfect and silent. The carving around the urn is expressing the story of the pilgrims, lovers and other mysterious people recorded in times of gods and men on its outside. In the poet's imagination, this world and people made immortal by art are real as well as beautiful.

The Ode on a Grecian Urn expresses Keats's desire to belong to the realm of the eternal, the permanent, perfect and the pleasurable, by establishing the means to approach that world of his wish with the help of imagination. This ode is based on the tension between the 'ideal' and the 'real'. Keats here idealizes a work of art as symbolizing the world of art which represents the ideal world of his wish at an even deeper level. Then he experiences that world thus created through imagination. In this poem, the two domains of the transient real and the permanent ideal are the two facets of a deeper reality, the reality of imaginative experience. The perfect, permanent and pleasurable world of the Urn, or that of the ideal, stands against the destructive corrupting and painful effects of time. Keats' fascination with the immortality of art is duly counterbalanced with his awareness that it is lifeless. He neither supports gross realism against truly imaginative art, nor does he wander in imagination alone. Life compensates for the incompleteness of art and art compensates for the transience of life.

This ode which represents Keats mature vision consists of one of his central philosophical doctrines of art itself: "Truth is Beauty and beauty truth". This famous maxim of Keats has an intellectual basis of truth and also an emotional basis in beauty. Art may appeal to the sensuousness or just the emotion of common people, but Keats' response extends from the sensuous to the spiritual and from the passionate to the intellectual. Keats establishes a balance between the real and the ideal, and art and life, and he finds the deepest of reality in its balance. This ode gives a much importance to passion as to the idea of permanence. It is not a lyric of the escape of a dying young man, unwilling to face bitter life into the realm of everlasting happiness, but is a poem that embodies his mature understanding.

Keats indicates a contrast between the unchanging 'Urn' and temporal life in the very beginning of the poem, but shifting to the other side from where he seems to prefer warm life against the 'Cold Pastoral' where he finally resolves the duality in his doctrine of beauty and truth. The Ode begins with an apostrophe to the urn: "Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness, / Thou foster child of silence and slow time, / Sylvan historian". Keats addresses the urn as a bride of quietness that is still unravished by time. That reminds us of life that is ever ravished by time. The urn narrates its history in a silent but musical form. The silent music which Keats, the addressee, feels he can hear is sweeter than the music of the human voice for it is permanent. Unlike the temporal presentation of poetry which is prone to narrate the histories of human being, the urn narrates a 'leaf-fringed legend' as if it were in space rather than in time. The narration of the urn is itself liberated from time.

The worlds of reality and of imagination (or the real and the ideal) are explicitly contrasted in this ode. But the permanence of art created out of imagination is a

complement to the temporary aspect of life. The creation of art and its realization in the contemplation of a higher reality is a complement to the tragic awareness of temporal and painful life. Even the realities are of two kinds: the reality of life or the objective reality and the reality of art or the world of imagination. On the one hand, the lover in the world of the urn can never kiss his beloved as one can in real life. But on the other hand, the lover on the urn has the privilege that the beauty of his beloved can never fade away – as it happens in real life. This is why the poet is seeking for the reality of life to be like that of the ideal art. The urn's immunity to the time could not be an absolute ideal without the consummation of love. But the temporary satisfaction in life only intensifies the awareness of transience by consummation itself. The act of imaginative experience can bring together the unheard into a lasting melody. The poet who is emotionally involved with the picture of passion also has the unifying vision that reconciles the real with the ideal by idealizing the real.

In short, the permanently ideal world of the urn is presented in the urn that is lifeless thing when seen from the viewpoint of real life. But the idea that comes under the domain of imaginative reality is reconciled in the act of imaginative creation of the urn's legend. Therefore, the real life is complemented and enriched by this ideal. Thus, the two domains of the real and the ideal coming into conflict as usual, ultimately reconcile to make a more permanent truth as asserted in the 'truth and beauty' maxim. To sum up, in this ode, Keats begins by idealizing, personifying, and immortalizing a real object. This ideal at first clashes with the real but is reconciled by imagination and insight at the end. The poem begins with an address to the Grecian urn and with almost envious amazement, but it ends with the realization that beauty or ideal is also a dimension of the truth of the real; the beauty of imaginative experience is a part of reality or truth and the knowledge of all truth is beautiful.

Ode to Autumn : Summary and Critical Analysis

Summary

Autumn joins with the maturing sun to load the vines with grapes, to ripen apples and other fruit, "swell the gourd," fill up the hazel shells, and set budding more and more flowers. Autumn may be seen sitting on a threshing floor, sound asleep in a grain field filled with poppies, carrying a load of grain across a brook, or watching the juice oozing from a cider press. The sounds of autumn are the wailing of gnats, the bleating of lambs, the singing of hedge crickets, the whistling of robins, and the twittering of swallows.

Critical Analysis

In this poem Keats describes the season of Autumn. The ode is an address to the season. It is the season of the mist and in this season fruits are ripened on the collaboration with the Sun. Autumn loads the vines with grapes. There are apple trees near the moss growth cottage. The season fills the apples with juice.

The hazel-shells also grow plumb. These are mellowed. The Sun and the autumn help the flowers of the summer to continue. The bees are humming on these flowers. They collect honey from them. The beehives are filled with honey. The clammy cells are overflowing with sweet honey. The bees think as if the summer would never end and warm days would continue for a long time. Autumn has been personified and compared to women farmer sitting carefree on the granary floor; there blows a gentle breeze and the hairs of the farmer are fluttering. Again Autumn is a reaper. It feels drowsy and

sleeps on the half reaped corn. The poppy flowers have made her drowsy. The Autumn holds a sickle in its hand. It has spared the margin of the stalks intertwined with flowers. Lastly, Autumn is seen as a worker carrying a burden of corn on its head.

The worker balances his body while crossing a stream with a bundle on his head. The Autumn is like an onlooker sitting the juicy oozing for hours. The songs and joys of spring are not found in Autumn seasons. But Keats says that Autumn has its own music and charm. In an autumn evening mournful songs of the gnats are heard in the willows by the river banks. Besides the bleat of the lambs returning from the grassy hills is heard. The whistle of the red breast is heard from the garden. The grasshoppers chirp and swallow twitters in the sky. This indicates that the winter is coming.

Every stanza has a sense of finality when it closes. In every stanza a quatrain is followed by a sestet. The first stanza indicates the rich powers of the season. In the second stanza there is a suggestion of the gradual passing away of time. This makes the ode dramatic. Different postures are shown with the help of personification. Here we find imaginative elements in a series of images. A sense of sadness comes in the soft dying day, willful choir of small gnats etc. 'Bloom' and 'Sunset' symbolized twilight and darkness.

Ode to Autumn is an unconventional appreciation of the autumn season. It surprises the reader with the unusual idea that autumn is a season to rejoice. We are familiar with Thomas Hardy's like treatment of autumn as a season of gloom, chill and loneliness and the tragic sense of old age and approaching death. Keats sees the other side of the coin. He describes autumn as: "Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness! / Close bosom friend of the maturing sun". He understands maturity and ripeness as one with old age and decay. Obviously thin, old age is a complement to youth, as death is to life. Keats here appears as a melodist; he seems to have accepted the fundamental paradoxes of life as giving meaning to it. The very beginning of the poem is suggestive of acceptance and insight after a conflict.

The subject matter of this ode is reality itself at one level: Keats depicts the autumn season and claims that its unique music and its role of completing the round of seasons make it a part of the whole. Although autumn will be followed by the cold and barren winter, winter itself will in turn give way to fresh spring. Life must go on but it cannot continue in turn give way to fresh spring. Life must go on but it cannot continue without death that completes one individual life and begins another. This is indirectly conveyed with the concluding line of the ode: "And gathering swallows twitter in the skies". In one way, this gives a hint of the coming winter when shallows will fly to the warm south.

The theme of ripeness is complemented by the theme of death and that of death by rebirth. So, in the final stanza, the personified figure of autumn of the second stanza is replaced by concrete images of life. Autumn is a part of the year as old age is of life. Keats has accepted autumn, and connotatively, old age as natural parts and processes them.

Comparison of Ode to a Nightingale and Ode on a Grecian Urn

Both odes are masterpieces of poetry and are the fruit of mature art of the poet. Ode on Grecian Urn shows the poet's fascination which he saw in British Museum. Throughout this ode Keats has appreciated the permanence of art and compared it with transitory nature of life and worldly things. In this ode Keats has given what we now term as Keats

philosophy of life. Ode to a Nightingale is a tribute to nightingale bird. The poet expresses his fascination and appreciation for the happy condition of the bird and compares it with the miserable condition of human life on the earth. Keats wishes to escape into the nightingale's world; however, he finally realizes that he cannot run from his present condition because day dreaming is not the solution of his problem: only solution is facing and living with those problems.

In both odes poet's admiration is for the ideal worlds of art and nature. Things carved on the Grecian urn are permanent and free from decay whereas things of life are exposed to change and decay. The branches of the tree on the urn will always remain green; the lovers will enjoy their present state; the music will always remain enjoyable; the lover will always have his beloved before his eyes and the beloved will never grow old. On the other hand earthly things keep on changing. Earthly passions do not give satisfaction and comfort to human being rather they leave a heart high sorrowful and cloyed. Those who nourish these passions get nothing but a burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

If Ode on Grecian Urn shows Poet's admiration and yearning for the world of art, Ode to a Nightingale shows the same for the world of nature. Here once more the poet wants to escape in the world of nightingale which does not know and pain and suffering. The world of nightingale is free of fever and fret of human world; in that world pain and groan are totally absent; things do not grow old there; there is nothing like disease there; thought which makes people sad and sorrowful is not present in there; frustration and disappointment are nowhere in the world of nature; and love does not change there.

In both odes imagination of the poet seems to touching climax. Both poems are excellent manifestation which Kats called negative capability. Negative capability means expressing personal feelings in a way that they lose all the subjectivity. In other word make individual feelings and things universal. Negative capability also means to say things which are not true but which can be shown true with little logic. For example Keats says that lover on the urn will always enjoy love and the nightingale bird is immortal. Now both these things are not actually true but logic can prove their truth.

Ode on Grecian Urn gives us a very important message and this message is Keats' message which is recurrent motif running throughout Keats' poetry. The message is that beauty is truth and truth is beauty. On the other hand, the message which we get after reading Ode to a Nightingale is that human being can run away from the problems of life and they have to live with the problems of life.

Though subjectivity is present in both poems, Odes to a Nightingale shows comparatively stronger feelings of subjectivity. Consider the death wish of the poet. We do not find this wish in Ode on a Grecian Urn. However, the poet finally restores balance and overall impression of the poem is totally objectivity.

Pain and suffering are permanent features of Keats' poetry. Both odes dwell on pain and suffering. Greatness of Keats lies in fact that pain and suffering do not bring element of frustration and disappointment in Keats' poetry. Both odes show that Keats takes pain and suffering integral part of hum life. He wants to escape with strong realization he cannot escape.

Both odes are highly sensuous in their appeal. Keats' continuously arouses different senses of the readers: sometimes with unmatchable picture; sometimes with melodies voices; and sometimes with wonderful imagination.

Dramatic qualities are present in both odes. In Ode on Grecian Urn Keats seems to be talking to urn and in Ode to a Nightingale, he seems to talking to the nightingale. Both odes present the quick succession of picture and images and the reader feels to be watching a drama in theatre or a movie in cinema.

Both odes are full of lines which have become most quotable lines by any writer. Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter, beauty is truth is beauty, to cease upon midnight with no pain has become proverbial when we with how much frequency we find them quoted by people.

Keats love for compound words such as pouring forth, soul abroad, overwrought, evermore is very noticeable in both odes.

Music and melody which has become closely related with Keats' poetry are present in both odes to the level of perfection in both odes. Consider the following lines:

> **Ah! Happy, happy boughs!**
> **Now a line from Ode to a Nightingale:**
> **Away! Away! For I will fly to thee**

Both odes seem an earnest effort to create to ecstatic beauty. The poet does preach any philosophy or creed. If he wants it all it is the philosophy of life and existence.

Dissimilarity

The tone of "Ode to Nightingale" is pathetic and it is more subjective than "Ode on a Grecian Urn". The tone is joyous and objective in "Ode on a Grecian Urn". The overall tone of the poem is melancholic in "Ode to Nightingale". The poem is also very subjective, because it draws reference from Keats' own life. The expressions "fever and fret" the "spectre thin" etc clearly refer to the pathetic death of Keats' brother. The poem is written immediately after the death of his brother. On the other hand Keats' tone in "Ode to Grecian Urn" is very joyful. Here he celebrates the beauty of the Urn, the joyfulness of the lovers and the excitement of the religious sacrifice. He uses the word "happy" several times. More importantly unlike Nightingale it is not based on his personal loss. The poem was written after one of his visits to the British museum.

In these Odes the speaker wants to go beyond the better realties of the world by a kind of visionary imagination of the happy world. But when he comes to learn that the kind of imagination he is pursuing is a false temptation, he rejects the visionary imagination and comes back to harsh reality.

Conclusion

Keats is called least romantic of all the romantic poets. He uses all the elements of romantic poetry like imagination, escape, love of the past, enjoyment of beauty, love of picturesque, sensuality, spontaneous expression of feelings, experiment with form and theme, subjectivity, depiction of nature, love of exotic, death wish, simplicity of language and expression. Yet we find great care of a great classic poet in Keats' poetry. His balance is outstanding. Both odes carry all the qualities of classic art as well as romantic art. It is this blend of romanticism and classicism which makes Keats's poetry of everlasting appeal. And this blend is nowhere so prominent in Keats' poetry as we find

them in his great odes. This is the reason that critics say that Keats' odes were enough for his greatness.

In Keats's great odes beauty that is truth includes much of human sorrows. Discuss

Both beauty and sorrow exist side by side in great odes which Keats wrote and which are the climax of Keats's achievement because in odes Keats's art transcends all the limitation and rawness which provided critics opportunities to criticize Keats so harshly that Poesy became the second of his beloved Fanny Browne who never rewarded him for all his passion and love for the girl: Keats loved Poesy with as much intensity as much he had for Fanny Browne. Keats's odes, the perfection of this art in English language, are full of beauty which was also truth for Keats. But, while studying these odes, the reader is seldom unaware of the sorrows which emerge from every line of these odes. We nowhere find such fine blend of subjectivity and objectivity in poetry as we find in Keats poetry and to a great extent all the beauty of Keats's odes depend upon this blending of subjectivity and objectivity. It does not imply that Keats does not make use of other skills of art to create beauty in his verse. Rather Keats seems working like a classical poet more than a romantic poet when we come to think of different ingredients which Keats has used in order to make his lines the odes pregnant with beauty: rhyme, rhythm, restrain, imagination, proportion, sights, sounds, melody, and control everything is present in odes.

Let us look on some of his odes to prove what we have said just now.

Keats's Ode to Grecian is one of the near to perfect creation of the poet. In this ode Keats's has given his idea of permanence of art and temporariness of earthly life. The ode is also important because the ode contains the most quoted line by Keats. "Beauty is Truth and Truth is Beauty" sums up Keats philosophy of life. Keats has used all the devices to make this ode a beautiful piece of art. We find dramatic opening very enchanting and convincing. Then there is cinema like presentation of picture throughout the ode. The trees, the people of the village, the piper, the lover, the maiden, the priest, the animal of sacrifice all come alive and vivid before our eye and this succession and vividness of picture conveys the reader in a beautiful world of imagination which is infinite and permanent.

If we have a look at the vocabulary of the ode, the use rhetoric becomes at once clear to us. Keats seems to be using elevated and sonorous language very close the language used by Milton and other epic poets. Grecian urn has been addressed as Attic shaped and cold pastoral.

Beauty and Greek way of life are completely associated and Keats has evoked Greek elements a number of times in his odes and the title of Ode on Grecian Urn is not an exception. In this ode Keats talks about Greek art and Greek way of life.

Imagination makes the things more beautiful than they actually are and Keats's imagination is so powerful that it forces the readers to imagine things in all their beauty. Keats believes that heard melodies are sweet but those unheard are sweeter which means that concrete things are beautiful but imagined or abstract things are more beautiful.

Music is an other source of beauty in Keats's poetry and his Ode to Grecian Urn is full of music. Keats has employed different techniques to make his verses musical. Alliteration, assonance, consonance, variation in rhyme and rhythm all add music to his verses. Consider the following lines:

Ah, happy, happy boughs! That cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the spring adieu,

Yet in spite of all the beauty present in this ode, a strong undercurrent of sorrow is overwhelming in this ode. Form where does this sorrow come is not difficult to answer. This sorrow is the result of his personal experiences of life. However, Keats's greatness lies in the fact that his personal experiences appear something universal as Keats has described them. The third stanza of Ode on a Grecian Urn is full of sorrowful undercurrents but it is Keats called negative capability of the poet that it appears something universal. Nevertheless intensity of the sad feelings of the poet is evident from every verse of this stanza. In this stanza Keats describe the difference between art and life. According the poet all breathing human passions give nothing but:

That leaves a heart high sorrowful and cloy'd
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Beauty and sorrow exists side by side in Keats's Ode to a Nightingale as well. On the one hand we find beautiful painting of nature in this poem, but on the other hand picture of earth where everything is temporary and transitory haunts us and we feel like running from this world reality and where to think is full of but full of sorrow. Amid all the beauty and music of the nightingale, we find the desire of death in the poet.

"That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade into the forest unseen.

Whichever ode we take, we find the very same qualities of existence of beauty and sorrow side by side. His Ode to Autumn is perhaps most objective of all. Here we do not subjective elements as we find in all other odes. The whole ode is studded with beautiful pictures. Personification of autumn and description of nature scenes is unmatchable any where in poetry. Yet the undercurrent of sorrow is always very prominent. There is very melancholy that broods on the total effect of the poem.

We can conclude our argument with reiterating the fact that Keats's odes are full of beauty which also truth for Keats but this beauty is not without all the pain which life has for us who life and experience things. It is this characteristic his that makes Keats least romantic of all romantics i. e. a fine blend of subjectivity and objectivity.

Keats as an Escapist

Escape means to run, to avoid and to flee. As a literary term escape means writing about things which are imaginary, having nothing do with the realities of life, which are pleasant, having very little of the bitterness of real life.

Escapism is a special characteristic of romantic poetry. Now term romantic is not easy to define, yet we can say that poetry which is the result of imagination is called romantic poetry. This kind of poetry generally does not deal what is happening with human beings

as they living their life on this earth surrounded by different problems. Rather it seeks to present human beings in a sort of make belief work-a world which do not exist.

As I said that escapism is a very dominant trait of romantic poetry, we have to see why it confined to the romantic poetry and why it does not appear in classical poetry. In order to understand this we will have to socioeconomic changes which were taking place in English society at the time when romantic poetry was being written.

Escapism, which we find in romantic poetry, and industrialization and urbanization have vital relation. Both industrialization and urbanization affected the sensibility of the poets because of their special demands and those who could not fulfill the demands of the time found it convenient to avoid those demands and live in a world without those demands. Of course this world was not present. They had no option but to dream of that world.

Keats was one of the romantics and he felt what all romantics felt. Yet Keats was different from other romantics because of his unique experiences of life.

His failure in love, his failure to write poetry good enough to satisfy the critics of his time, his experience of death of his brother and his fear of death lend some special escapist traits to his poetry. Nowhere in his poetry has he discussed the social, moral and political issues of his time. Again and again he seems to escape or attempting to escape in a world which is not the real day to day world of his time. Rather and ideal world he creates with his powerful imagination.

In spite of the fact that Keats died at very young age, yet he created the poetry of highest order. His famous odes and his epic Hyperion put him the top English poets. All these poems show Keats as an escapist. In these poems he has created imaginary worlds of beauty and perfect calm. In all his odes he is concerned with creation of beauty. Though he has succeeded marvelously in his attempt, the beauty we find in his poems is not the beauty of our world. Rather it is the beauty of the world which the poets creates through his imagination in order to seek refuge from the harsh realities of life.

His odes are good examples to show escapism in his poetry. In Ode on Grecian Urn he seeks refuge in the beautiful world of antiquity. It is a world where things are permanent and enjoyable forever. It is world where passion though always remains unfulfilled; it does not leave parching tongue and heart cloyed. Consider the following lines from this ode:

More happy love! More happy, more happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoyed
For ever panting, and for ever young.
All breathing human passions far above
That leaves heart high sorrowful and cloyed
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

His Ode to Nightingale is very remarkable in many ways. In this ode the poet wants to escape in the world of nightingale because the world where nightingale lives is very different from the world where the poet lives. The world of the nightingale is free of weariness, fever, fret, death, pain and old age. His imagination actually carries him to the world of nightingale and he forgets his own world completely. The whole poem is search of an ideal world free of all pains and problems of the earthly life. Though the

poem ends with realization that he cannot escape from his world yet nostalgia of the poet is never lost. Consider the last two lines of the poet:

Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music:-Do I wake or sleep?

Escapist elements are never absent from Keats' poetry. When we say Keats is an escapist poet, we mean that he does not write about the day to day matters of life. Rather he creates imaginary worlds in his poetry and it seems that he wants to escape in that world. Many things were responsible for lending this characteristic to Keats' poetry. Firstly, all the poets belonging to that period were escapist because of special circumstances of that period. Secondly, Keats never found anything in real world. His life was permanent disappointment. This led him live in the world of imagination. Thirdly, he believed that poetry should be a pure attempt to create beauty and for beauty, he turned to the world of imagination and in order to give true sparkle to his poetry, antiquity came as the best source.

Keats is different from other romantic poets in many ways. Though he creates imaginary world as much as other romantic poets do, we do not find the fever of other romantic poets in Keats. He is devoid f any idealism which is a dominant trait of other romantics. Actually other romantics exhibit two sort of escapism: escape in the past world and escape in the future world which they created with there idealism. But in Keats escapism is just creation of imaginary world and his imaginary world always belong to the past. It does not have any relation with future. The realization that the world is what it is gives objectivity to Keas poetry in spite of all the subjectivity which makes Keats' poetry something special and something unique.

Keats' concept of beauty

Keats was considerably influenced by Spenser and was, like Spenser, a passionate lover of beauty in all its forms and manifestations. The passion of beauty constitutes his aestheticism. Beauty was his pole star, beauty in nature, in woman and in art.

"A thing of beauty is a joy forever."

He writes and identifies beauty with truth. Of all the contemporary poets Keats is one of the most inevitably associated with the love of beauty. He was the most passionate lover of the world as the career of beautiful images and of many imaginative associations of an object or word with a heightened emotional appeal. Poetry, according to Keats, should be the incarnation of beauty, not a medium for the expression of religious or social philosophy. He hated didacticism in poetry. **"We hate poetry that has a palpable design upon us."**

He believed that poetry should be unobtrusive. The poet, according to him, is a creator and an artist, not a teacher or a prophet. In a letter to his brother he wrote: **"With a great poet, the sense of beauty overcomes every other consideration."**

He even disapproved Shelley for subordinating the true end of poetry to the object of social reform. He dedicated his brief life to the expression of beauty as he said: **"I have loved the principle of beauty in all things."**

For Keats the world of beauty was an escape from the dreary and painful life or experience. He escaped from the political and social problems of the world into the realm of imagination. Unlike Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron and Shelley, he remained untouched by revolutionary theories for the regression of mankind. His later poems such as "Ode to a Nightingale" and "Hyperion" show an increasing interest in human problems and humanity and if he had lived he would have established a closer contact with reality. He may overall be termed as a poet of escape. With him poetry existed not as an instrument of social revolt nor of philosophical doctrine but for the expression of beauty. He aimed at expressing beauty for its own sake.

Keats did not like only those things that are beautiful according to the recognized standards. He had deep insight to see beauty even in those things that are not thought beautiful by ordinary people. He looked at autumn and says that even autumn has beauty and charm:

> **"Where are the song of Spring? Ay, where are they?**
> **Think not of them, thou hast thy music too, –**
> **While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,**
> **And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue."**

In Keats, we have a remarkable contrast both with Byron on the one side and with Shelley on the other. Keats was neither rebel nor utopian dreamer. Endowed with a purely artistic nature, he took up in regard to all the movements and conflicts of his time, a position of almost complete detacher. He knew nothing of Byron's stormy spirit of hostility of the existing order of things and he had no sympathy with Shelley's humanitarian and passion for reforming the world. The famous opening line of "Endymion", 'A thing of beauty is a joy forever' strikes the keynote of his work. As the modern world seemed to him to be hard, cold and prosaic, he habitually sought an imaginative escape from it. He loved nature just for its own sake and for the glory and loveliness which he found in it, and no modern poet has ever been nearer than he was to the simple "poetry for earth" but there was nothing mystical in love and nature was never fraught for him, as for Wordsworth and Shelley, with spiritual message and meanings.

Keats was not only the last but also the most perfect of the Romantics while Scott was merely telling stories, and Wordsworth reforming poetry or upholding the moral law, and Shelley advocating the impossible reforms and Byron voicing his own egoism and the political measure. Worshipping beauty like a devotee, perfectly content to write what was in his own heart or to reflect some splendour of the natural world as he saw or dreamed it to be, he had the noble idea that poetry exists for its own sake and suffers loss by being devoted to philosophy or politics.

Disinterested love of beauty is one of the qualities that made Keats great and that distinguished him from his great contemporaries. He grasped the essential oneness of beauty and truth. His creed did not mean beauty of form alone. His ideal was the Greek ideal of beauty inward and outward, the perfect soul of verse and the perfect form. Precisely because he held this ideal, he was free from the wish to preach.

Keats' early sonnets are largely concerned with poets, pictures, sculptures or the rural solitude in which a poet might nurse his fancy. His great odes have for their subjects a storied Grecian Urn; a nightingale; the goddess Psyche, mistress of Cupid; the melancholy and indolence of a poet; and the season of autumn, to which he turns from

the songs of spring. What he asked of poesy, of wine, or of nightingale's song was to help him:

> **"Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget,**
> **What thou amongst the leaves hast never known,**
> **The weariness, the fever and the fret,**
> **Here, where men sit and hear each other groan."**

"I Stood Tiptoe Upon a Little Hill" and "Sleep and Poetry" – the theme of both these poems is that lovely things in nature suggest lovely tales to the poet, and great aim of poet is to be a friend to soothe the cares, and lift the thoughts of man. Perhaps Keats would have said that he attempted his nobler life of poetry in poems like "Lamia" and "Hyperion" but it is very doubtful whether he believed that he had done justice to this elevated type of poetic creation.

Keats' love of beauty is not 'Platonic' in nature. He loves physical objects and takes interest in human body. He does not become obscene but his love of beauty gives us very attractive and suggestive picture of women:

> **"Yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,**
> **Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,**
> **To feel forever its soft fall and swell,**
> **Awake forever in a sweet unrest,**
> **Still, still to hear her tender taken breath,**
> **And so live ever."**

Religion for him took definite shape in the adoration of the beautiful, an adoration which he developed into a doctrine. Beauty is the supreme truth. It is imagination that discovers beauty. This idealism, assumes a note of mysticism. One can see a sustained allegory in "Endymion" and certain passages are most surely possessed of a symbolical value. Sidney Colvin says:

"It was not Keats aim merely to create a paradise of art and beauty discovered from the cares and interests of the world. He did aim at the creation and revelation of beauty, but of beauty whatever its element existed. His concept of poetry covered the whole range of life and imagination."

As he did not live long enough, he was not able to fully illustrate the vast range of his conception of beauty. Fate did not give him time enough to fully unlock the 'mysteries of the heart' and to illuminate and put in proper perspective the great struggles and problems of human life.

Keats's Sensuousness

The term 'sensuous' usually refers to the enjoyment and delights borrowed from the senses. Sensuousness is that quality which is derived from five senses- sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste. It is a way of perception through five senses. A sensuous poet uses those word pictures that help the reader to understand the sights and sounds expressed or suggested in a poem .John Keats is best known for his use of such images that appeal to human senses. For this reason, he is often called a sensuous poet.

The **Ode on a Grecian Urn** contains a series of sensuous pictures—passionate men and gods chasing reluctant maidens, the flute-players playing their ecstatic music, the fair youth trying to kiss his beloved, the happy branches of the tree enjoying an everlasting spring, etc. The ecstasy of the passion of love and of youth is beautifully depicted in the following lines:

> **More happy love! more happy happy love!**
> **For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,**
> **For ever panting, and for ever young.**

The **Ode to a Nightingale** is one of the finest examples of Keats's rich sensuousness. The lines in which the poet expresses of passionate desire for some Provencal wine or the red wine from the fountain of the Muses appeal to both our senses of smell and taste:

> **O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been**
> **Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,**
> **Tasting of Flora and the country green,**
> **Dance, and Provencal song, and sunburnt mirth!**
> **O for a beaker full of the warm South,**
> **Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene…….**

These lines bring before us a delightful picture of Provence with its fun and frolic, merry-making, drinking and dancing. Similarly the beaker full of the sparkling, blushful Hippocrene is highly pleasing. Then there is the magnificent picture of the moon shining in the sky and surrounded by stars. The rich feast of flowers described in the stanza that follows is one of the outstanding beauties of the poem. Flowers, soft incense, the fruit trees, the white hawthorn, the eglantine, the fast-fading violets, the coming musk-rose—all this is a delight for our senses.

In the **Ode to Autumn**, the bounty of the season has been described with all its sensuous appeal. The whole landscape is made to appear fresh and scented. There is great concentration in each line of the opening stanza. Each line is like the branch of a fruit tree laden with fruit to the breaking point. The vines suggesting grapes, the apples, the gourds, the hazels with their sweet kernel, the bees suggesting honey—all these appeal to our senses of taste and smell. The three stanzas of "To Autumn" Keats presents three different sets of images appealing to three different senses. "To Autumn", thus, very strongly reflects Keats' sensuousness.

The first stanza of "To Autumn" mainly appeals to the sense of taste. The poem opens with a rich picture of Autumn in the mind.

> **"Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,**
> **Close bosom friend of the maturing sun;"**

Here autumn is a season of "mellow fruitfulness". The vines, laden with the clusters of the thatch roofed country houses. The juicy grapes appeals to the sense of taste of the readers. Similarly, the apples, the gourd, the hazelnuts and honey bring water to the mouths of the readers. Though these images at first appeal of the sense of sight, they ultimately appeal to the sense of taste.

The second stanza appeals to the sense of sight. Keats personifies 'Autumn' and presents it as a country woman to convey an idea about Autumn's occupations. Autumn, in the shape of a woman, is seen on a granary floor, sitting carelessly while her disordered hair is soft lifted by the winnowing wind. Sometimes, she is found in deep sleep on a half reaped cropland .At some other time, she is found to wade across a hilly brook taking the load of a gleaner on her head. She is also found to work patiently with her cider-press to collect juice from the fruits. Thus, autumn has several occupations that can be seen with our eyes. In other words, Autumn is a woman appeals to our sense of sight very vividly.

The third stanza deals with the sense of hearing. The poet says-

> **"Where are the songs of spring? Ay, where are they?**
> **Think not for them, thou hast they music too,………"**

In describing autumn, the poet alludes to the season of spring. Autumn does not have the song of spring. But she has her own music. There is the wailful choir of small gnats, which directly appeals to our sense of hearing. Then there are lambs 'bleating, the songs of the hedge-crickets, the whistles of redbreast, the twittering of the swallows that appeal directly, to the sense of hearing.

Conclusion

Keats is a poet of sensations. His thought is enclosed in sensuousness. In the epithets he uses are rich in sensuous quality – delicious face, melodious plot, sunburnt mirth, embalmed darkness and anguish moist. Not only are the sense perceptions of Keats are quick and alert but he has the rare gift of communicating these perceptions by concrete and sound imagery.

As time passes Keats mind matured and he expresses an intellectual and spiritual passion. He begins to see not only their beauty but also in their truth which makes Keats the "inheritor of unfulfill'd renown".

Keats is more poet of sensuousness than a poet of contemplation. Sometimes he passes from sensuousness to sentiments. In his mature works like Odes or the Hyperion, the poet mixes sensuousness with sentiments, voluptuousness with vitality, aestheticism with intellectualism. However the nucleus of Keats' poetry is sensuousness. It is his senses which revealed him the beauty of things, the beauty of universe from the stars of the sky to the flowers of the wood.

Keats' pictorial senses are not vague or suggestive but made definite with a wealth of artistic detail. Every stanza, every line is replete with sensuous beauty. No other poet except Shakespeare could show such a mastery of language and felicity of sensuousness.

Keats' Hellenism in his odes

Keats, as is well known, was not a classical scholar, yet he has been famous for his Hellenism, a term which may be defined as a love of Greek art, literature, culture and way of life. Keats had an inborn love for the Greek spirit,-their Religion of Joy and their religion of Beauty. He once wrote to one of his friends that he never ceased to wonder at 'all that incarnate delight' of the Greek way of life. In fact, he was driven to the world of

Greek Beauty because he wanted to escape imaginatively from the harsh realities of his present. It should, however, be noted that 'Keats was a Greek' because he could enter lovingly and imaginatively into the world of the ancients, and not because his knowledge of it was accurate and scholarly. His presentation of Hallas is romantic and not realistic.

Keats' mind was saturated with Greek literature and mythology. He habitually chooses Greek stories for his poetry. Endymion. Hyperion, Lamia, Grecian Urn, Psyche etc,- all have the themes borrowed from the Greeks. The Grecian Urn is a monument of the poet's power of entering imaginatively into another world. We as readers feel that we have been transported entirely to the Hellenic world of beauty, love, festivity and ritual. It is permeated through and through with the Greek spirit. It may also be noted that the 'Ode' form, which he made particularly his own and in which he excels all other English poets, is typically a Greek verse form.

Moreover, there are countless allusions to Greek legends and stories in poems which are not directly based on Greek themes. He frequently refers at all places to Muses, Apollo, Pan, Narcissus, Endymion, Diana, and a number of other classical gods and goddesses. In Ode to Nightingale, we have references to Dryads (That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees), the goddess Flora (Tasting of Flora and the country green), and Bacchus and his pards (Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards). In Ode on Melancholy, references are made to the river Lethe, goddess Proserpine and Psyche. These allusions are not mere conventional personifications as with other poets; there is a tone of enjoyment in these allusions which shows that Greek mythology had really taken possession of his mind.

The Greek temper of Keats is also revealed particularly in his joy in the Beauty of nature and his zest for an out of door life lived in her midst. Like the Greeks, Keats also takes a sensuous, childlike pleasure in the forms, colours, scents and sounds of nature and sees a god or goddess behind every object and phenomenon of the external world. The following lines can be cited in this regard-

> **And haply the Queen –Moon is on her throne,**
> **Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;**

The Greeks had a zest for life in nature and loved the activities of such life; but they also loved the serenity and quiet of pastoral life. Both these aspects are combined vividly in the Ode on a Grecian Urn. For example, the scenario of the Bacchanalian procession consisting of the flute players, the youth singing under the tree, and the lover about to kiss represent the joy of youth and its energy. On the other hand, the picture of the lowing heifer being led to the sacrificial altar represents the charm of a serene and quiet life. In fact, in his worship of Beauty, Keats justifies the remark of Shelley that he was a Greek.

The Hellenic spirit was re-incarnated in Keats. Through his contact with Greek sculptures, he imbibed, as if by instinct, the classical discipline, simplicity and austerity. He was basically a romantic, and in the beginning his art is characterized by the romantic excess. But at times, he could achieve the clearness of outline, the directness and restraint and the austerity and finish of the classics. As Matthew Arnold points out, the last three lines of the Ode on a Grecian Urn, 'is as Greek as anything from Homer or Theocritus'. Similarly the stanza of this Ode beginning, 'Who are those coming to the sacrifice' has been described as having 'the clear radiance of Greek style'.

In his description, Keats often achieves not only clarity, directness and simplicity, but also the happy combination of movement with repose which characterizes Greek art. For example, in the Ode on Melancholy we get;

> **'Beauty that must die**
> **And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips bidding adieu'**

Keats also has the passion for perfection of the Greeks. He has the epigrammatic terseness and brevity of the Greeks. Phrases like 'drowsy numbness', 'leaden-eyed despair', 'leaf-fringed legends', 'cold pastoral, 'wakeful anguish of the soul' etc bear enough testimony to this. The opening two lines of the Ode on a Grecian Urn have even been called by Rossetti as the 'Pillars of Hercules of the human language'.

However, this Greek note in Keats' poetry should not be exaggerated. He surely has the romantic melancholy, romantic exuberance and the love of colour and pageantry of the romantics. As a matter of fact, he got his knowledge of Greek mythology and literature through the study of the Elizabethans and in the process also imbibed their romanticism. In his poetry, we find a rare combination of classicism with romanticism. As Legoius and Cazamian put it, ' Keats affects the rare union of classical discipline, guided by the examples and precepts of the ancients, with the more intrinsically precious matter, which the artist finds in romanticism'. We may also add that he is not always content with the enjoyment merely of the beauty of form. He often tries to penetrate to the real significance and truth which may lie at the back of formal beauty.

Views on Transience, Permanence, Art, Life, and Beauty in Keats' Odes

Keats is a poet of beauty. But he is not a poet of sensuous and ephemeral beauty. He is a poet of permanent and ever-lasting beauty. As a poet of beauty, Keats considers art as the embodiment of that everlasting beauty. So, to Keats art represents a permanent, everlasting beauty which contrasts the transient human life. Keats' view on art is mainly expressed through the contrast between the human life and art that are represented in the form of urn, song, and autumn.

Keats' most significant views on art are expressed in his "Ode to a Grecian Urn," In this Ode he makes a contrast between human life and the life of the Urn. Keats finds the Urn much superior to human life. As a work of beauty the Urn represents a permanent life.

In "Ode to a Grecian Urn," Keats emphasizes the fact love, beauty and youth are all immortalized in the work of art. The beloved in the Grecian Urn is immortal; she will not lose her beauty.

> **She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,**
> **For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!**

The lady's beauty and youth have been made permanent in the Urn which is a wrought piece of art. His final comment about the Grecian Urn is:-

> **When old age shall this generation waste,**
> **Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe**
> **Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,**
> **"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"**

The poet discovers beauty which is unfading and truth. This beauty is undying in excellent artistic creations. He gets the very taste of eternity in the excellent work of art.

Comparing the transience of life with the permanence of a work of art, 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' asserts the quality of both the real world and the world of art. In 'Ode on a Grecian Urn', Keats actually prefers the immortal nature of art over the mortal nature of human activities in the real world.

Although the urn exists in the real world which is subject to time and change, the life it presents and itself are static and unchanging; thus the bride is "unravished" and as a "foster" child, the urn goes through the "slow time" and not the time of the real world. The figures carved on the urn are not subject to time, though the urn may be changed or affected by slow time.

Keats views on art are also expressed in his "Ode to a Nightingale" as a work of beauty. Once again he makes a contrast between the world of the Nightingale which represents the world of art and the human world. In Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale," he contemplatse the essence of the nightingale and contrasts it with his own worldly state and the nature of mortal life.

In Ode to Nightingale the poet spotlights the beauty and fascinating charm of the bird's song. He simultaneously underscores the mast fleeting nature of human life. Human youth and life itself are quite transient. Human beings grow up, flower up into blossoming youths and then fade and die. This is the nature of all human passions. Human beings do not have permanent beauty and permanent joy. Human life on this earth is ever a stratum of happiness and contentment. Human youth and human happiness soon disappear leaving behind an arena of desolation and dry dreariness. Keats refers to life in this world in the following lines of Ode to a Nightingale.

The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;

Here the poet refers to the importance of youth. Man's weariness, his fret, palsy, grey hair, pale youth have been referred I order to show that life is just like a passing show on the earth. Again he says

Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

The poet has drawn the vivid picture of the mortal world. Here beauty fades, love pines, sorrow and despair seize men and to think is to be full of sorrow. Happiness in the earth is just a feeling thing. So, the idea of importance or transience is quite dominant in Keats's poem.

But it is only the aspect of Keats's poetry. He is occupied with the idea of impermanence, it is true. But that is not the only phase. We also represent the idea of permanence. He is searching of unfading beauty and permanence in the world of the Nightingale. Not with the help of intoxicating wine but with the fluttering wings of his imagination he will go to

the world of the Nightingale, i.e the shelter of nature where he gets abode of permanence and then he will take refuge in the stratum of permanence. He says

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,

Here we see that Keats passing from the world of transience to that of permanence. He discovers unerring permanence in the world of nature which does not change and betray.

According to Keats the Nightingale as a part and parcel of nature is immortal. A bird may die as individual but the species will continue from generation to generation. So, Keats adds:-

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:

The song of the Nightingale has immortal delight because it is an integral part of nature and nature does not die. The song of the bird stirs the poet's imagination ad opens the "magic" casement of poetry. This is the theme of permanence as we find in Ode to Nightingale where the poet is transported to imaginative ecstasy.

As a romantic poet Keats imagines a pure and enduring life for all natural objects and natural creatures. In "Ode to autumn" Keats celebrates the season of autumn. Autumn is abstracted and given a universal form. The beauty and the activities of autumn are true for all ages.

The basic tension of the poem "Ode on a Grecian Urn" is between art and the human life. Art though unreal has permanence of beauty and the power to enrapture us through fanciful experiences which are richer than those of artificial life. He clearly portrays the shapes of the Urn which have an eternal life. In "Ode to Nightingale" the speaker wants to share his experience of intensifying to the song of a Nightingale and its effect on his mind. He states the unrestricted, spontaneous happiness of the bird. By simultaneously using figures as personifies of autumn, Keats raises them out of their transient human bodies and eternizes them.

Ecstasy and Disillusionment in Keats' Odes

In his Odes, Keats makes a balance between the flux of human experience and the fixity of art. Keats' poetic imagination changes easily from the living world to the world of dreams, from art to reality, and from a place of ecstasy to a place of disillusionment.

In the poem, "Ode to a Nightingale," written by John Keats, the speaker attempts to use a nightingale as a means of escaping the realities of human life. The speaker wants to share his experience of listening to the song of a Nightingale and its effect on his mind. The time is night, a moon lit night and place is a green woods. There is a path in the woods which ends somewhere in the woods. In this romantic place and time, a Nightingale is "pouring forth" its soul. The song of the Nightingale has a hypnotizing effect on his mind. It appears in the poem that Keats is tempted into the nightingale's world of beauty and perfection. The speaker cherishes a longing to join the world of the

bird which he wants to do through at first, country celebrations and secondly through drinks. The speaker visualizes the happy, excited, and ecstatic frenzies which he wants to have in order to join the happy world of the Nightingale.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:

The speaker also gives the description of his actual journey into the dim-sum woods. But as soon as the speaker in the deep woods he can't see anything in embalmed darkness. He can only guess. In this imaginative forest he finds all the sensual enjoyment of his life. In the darkness of the forest he is surrounded by all the pleasures that he would think to have in the ideal world. There are flowers and fragrance every where and the summer season of woodland takes him to the extremity of joy of living.

The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

At this point the speaker becomes so excited that he wants to die.

Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!

But all this ecstasy is followed disillusionment and the speaker comes down to reality. The world of imagination can shelter us for a short time, but it can not give us the solution of the reality of life.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.

Keats begins his "ode on a Grecian Urn" simply describing the various figures that are curved on its surfaces.

The first scene depicts musicians and lovers in a setting of rustic beauty. The speaker attempts to identify with the characters because to him they represent the timeless perfection only art can capture.

THOU still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of Silence and slow Time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:

The lovers will always love, though they will never consummate their desire. The musicians will always play beneath trees that will never lose their leaves.

The speaker ends the poem with "heart high-sorrowful." This is because the urn, while beautiful and seemingly eternal, is not life. The lovers, while forever young and happy in

the chase, can never engage in the act of fertility that is the basis of life, and the tunes, while beautiful in the abstract, do not play to the "sensual ear" and are in fact "of no tone.

Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

In Ode to Autumn, the act of creation is pictured as a kind of self-harvesting Autumn is a season of ripe fruitfulness. It is the time of the ripening of grapes, apples, gourds, hazelnuts etc.

SEASON of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;

It is also the time when bees suck the sweetness from "later flowers" and "make honey." Thus the autumn is pictured as bringing all the fruits of earth to maturity in readiness for harvesting. Despite the coming chill of winter, the late warmth of autumn provides Keats with ample beauty to celebrate: the cottage and its surroundings in the first stanza, the agrarian haunts of the goddess in the second, and the locales of natural creatures in the third. Keats experiences these beauties in a sincere and meaningful way.

But the music of autumn is 'wailful' and "mournful". Also we have in the last stanza the "soft-dying day" after the passing of "hours and hours'. Thus the poem's latent theme of mortality is symbolically dramatized by the passing course of the day. "And gathering swallows twitter in the skies" and "Birds habitually gather in flocks toward nightfall" means that the day is coming to a close. Also, birds gather particularly when they are preparing to fly southwards at the approach of winter.

While barrèd clouds bloom the soft-dying day
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river-sallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;

The sense of coming loss confronts the sorrow underlying the season's creativity. When Autumn's harvest is over, the fields will be bare, the swaths with their "twined flowers" cut down, the cider-press dry, the skies empty. This means that the season too is drawing to a close. A feeling of disillusionment is inevitable because of these suggestions.

From the above discussion we can say that the strain and stress of practical life makes him fly to the world of imagination for the time beings but he thinks of the short coming of the imagery world and finally accepts life as it is.

Keats' Hyperion

Greek Mythology

Greek myths and legends form the richest, most fertile collection of stories in Western culture, excluding the Bible. Yet despite their diversity they tend to share a common outlook on life. The Greeks cherished life and believed in living it to the fullest degree, since death was an inevitable fact. Only a small minority accepted the idea of resurrection after death; to the rest of the Greeks death was a dismal state, whereas life was dangerous, thrilling, and glorious. So the Greeks believed the only answer to death was to carve an imperishable legend for themselves. They pursued fame with astonishing energy in the five centuries from Homer to Alexander the Great. They were a tough, restless, ambitious, hard-living, imaginative race. But their lust for reputation made them touchy about their honor, and so they were also feisty and vengeful. Their myths and stories show all of these traits in abundance.

The Olympian Gods mirrored these Greek qualities, being quarrelsome, unforgiving deities who enjoyed warring, banqueting, and fornicating. They were always depicted in human form with beautiful, powerful bodies. The Greeks admired strength, beauty, and intelligence. And to them man was the measure of all things.

Because of the Greek urge for fame, their mythology produced a wealth of heroes, who tended to be adventurous fighters - bold, experienced, strong, and clever. However, they also had faults that sometimes ruined them: overweening pride, rashness, cruelty, all of which arose from the very source of their successes - ambition.

The legends of tragic dynasties show this same characteristic. Despite their worldly power, the royal families of Crete, Mycenae, Thebes, and Athens were afflicted with faults that rendered them vulnerable to disaster: pride, ruthlessness in getting revenge, stubbornness, and sexual conflict. No race has understood quite as clearly as the Greeks how character is destiny, or how our very achievements can stem from the same source as our shortcomings.

Hyperion was the Titan god of light, one of the sons of Ouranos (Heaven) and Gaia (Earth), and the father of the lights of heaven-Eos the Dawn, Helios the Sun, and Selene the Moon. His wife was Theia, lady of the aither-the shining blue of the sky. Hyperion's name means "watcher from above" or "he who goes above" from the Greek words hyper and iôn.

Hyperion was one of the four Titan brothers who conspired with Kronos in the castration of their father Ouranos. When Sky descended to lie with Earth, Hyperion, Krios, Koios and Iapetos-posted at the four corners of the world--seized hold of their father and held him fast while Kronos castrated him with a sickle. In this myth these four Titanes personify the great pillars which appear in Near-Eastern cosmogonies holding heaven and earth apart, or else the entire cosmos aloft. As the father of the sun and dawn, Hyperion was no doubt regarded as the Titan of the pillar of the east. His brothers Koios, Krios and Iapetos presided respectively over the north, south and west.

The Titanes were eventually deposed by Zeus and cast into the pit of Tartaros. Hesiod describes this as a void located beneath the foundations of all, where earth, sea and sky have their roots. Here the Titanes shift in cosmological terms from being holders of heaven to bearers of the entire cosmos. According to Pindar and Aeschylus (in his lost play Prometheus Unbound) the Titanes were eventually released from the pit through the clemency of Zeus.

Introduction to Hyperion

Hyperion deals with the overthrow of the primeval order of Gods by Jupiter, son of Saturn the old king. There are many versions of the fable in Greek mythology, and there are many sources from which it may have come to Keats. At school he is said to have known the classical dictionary by heart, but his inspiration is more likely to have been due to his later reading of the Elizabethan poets, and their translations of classic story. One thing is certain, that he did not confine himself to any one authority, nor did he consider it necessary to be circumscribed by authorities at all. He used, rather than followed, the Greek fable, dealing freely with it and giving it his own interpretation.

The situation when the poem opens is as Saturn, king of the gods, has been driven from Olympus down into a deep dell, by his son Jupiter, who has seized and used his father's weapon, the thunderbolt. A similar fate has overtaken nearly all his brethren, who are called by Keats Titans and Giants indiscriminately, though in Greek mythology the two races are quite distinct. These Titans are the children of Tellus and Coelus, the earth and sky, thus representing, as it were, the first birth of form and personality from formless nature. Before the separation of earth and sky, Chaos, a confusion of the elements of all things, had reigned supreme. One only of the Titans, Hyperion the sun-god, still keeps his kingdom, and he is about to be superseded by young Apollo, the god of light and song.

In the second book we hear Oceanus and Clymene his daughter tell how both were defeated not by battle or violence, but by the irresistible beauty of their dispossessors; and from this Oceanus deduces 'the eternal law, that first in beauty should be first in might'. He recalls the fact that Saturn himself was not the first ruler, but received his kingdom from his parents, the earth and sky, and he prophesies that progress will continue in the overthrow of Jove by a yet brighter and better order. Enceladus is, however, furious at what he considers a cowardly acceptance of their fate, and urges his brethren to resist.

In Book I we saw Hyperion, though still a god, distressed by portents, and now in Book III we see the rise to divinity of his successor, the young Apollo. The poem breaks off short at the moment of Apollo's metamorphosis, and how Keats intended to complete it we can never know.

It is certain that he originally meant to write an epic in ten books, and the publisher's remark[245:1] at the beginning of the 1820 volume would lead us to think that he was in the same mind when he wrote the poem. This statement, however, must be altogether discounted, as Keats, in his copy of the poems, crossed it right out and wrote above, 'I had no part in this; I was ill at the time.'

Moreover, the last sentence (from 'but' to 'proceeding') he bracketed, writing below, 'This is a lie.'

This, together with other evidence external and internal, has led Dr. de Sélincourt to the conclusion that Keats had modified his plan and, when he was writing the poem, intended to conclude it in four books. Of the probable contents of the one-and-half unwritten books Mr. de Sélincourt writes: 'I conceive that Apollo, now conscious of his divinity, would have gone to Olympus, heard from the lips of Jove of his newly-acquired supremacy, and been called upon by the rebel three to secure the kingdom that awaited him. He would have gone forth to meet Hyperion, who, struck by the power of supreme beauty, would have found resistance impossible. Critics have inclined to take for granted the supposition that an actual battle was contemplated by Keats, but I do not believe that such was, at least, his final intention. In the first place, he had the example of Milton, whom he was studying very closely, to warn him of its dangers; in the second, if Hyperion had been meant to fight he would hardly be represented as already, before the battle, shorn of much of his strength; thus making the victory of Apollo depend upon his enemy's unnatural weakness and not upon his own strength. One may add that a combat would have been completely alien to the whole idea of the poem as Keats conceived it, and as, in fact, it is universally interpreted from the speech of Oceanus in the second book. The resistance of Enceladus and the Giants, themselves rebels against an order already established, would have been dealt with summarily, and the poem would have closed with a description of the new age which had been inaugurated by the triumph of the Olympians, and, in particular, of Apollo the god of light and song.'

The central idea, then, of the poem is that the new age triumphs over the old by virtue of its acknowledged superiority--that intellectual supremacy makes physical force feel its power and yield. Dignity and moral conquest lies, for the conquered, in the capacity to recognize the truth and look upon the inevitable undismayed.

Keats broke the poem off because it was too 'Miltonic', and it is easy to see what he meant. Not only does the treatment of the subject recall that of Paradise Lost, the council of the fallen gods bearing special resemblance to that of the fallen angels in Book II of Milton's epic, but in its style and syntax the influence of Milton is everywhere apparent. It is to be seen in the restraint and concentration of the language, which is in marked contrast to the wordiness of Keats's early work, as well as in the constant use of classical constructions, [247:1] Miltonic inversions [247:2] and repetitions, [247:3] and in occasional reminiscences of actual lines and phrases in Paradise Lost. [247:4]

In Hyperion we see, too, the influence of the study of Greek sculpture upon Keats's mind and art. This study had taught him that the highest beauty is not incompatible with definiteness of form and clearness of detail. To his romantic appreciation of mystery was now added an equal sense of the importance of simplicity, form, and proportion, these being, from its nature, inevitable characteristics of the art of sculpture. So we see that again and again the figures described in Hyperion are like great statues--clear-cut, massive, and motionless. Such are the pictures of Saturn and Thea in Book I, and of each of the group of Titans at the opening of Book II.

Striking too is Keats's very Greek identification of the gods with the powers of Nature which they represent. It is this attitude of mind which has led some people--Shelley and Landor among them--to declare Keats, in spite of his ignorance of the language, the most truly Greek of all English poets. Very beautiful instances of this are the sunset and sunrise in Book I, when the departure of the sun-god and his return to earth are so described that the pictures we see are of an evening and morning sky, an angry sunset, and a grey and misty dawn.

But neither Miltonic nor Greek is Keats's marvellous treatment of nature as he feels, and makes us feel, the magic of its mystery in such a picture as that of the

tall oaks
Branch-charmèd by the earnest stars,
or of the
dismal cirque
Of Druid stones, upon a forlorn moor,
When the chill rain begins at shut of eve,
In dull November, and their chancel vault,
The heaven itself, is blinded throughout night.

This Keats, and Keats alone, could do; and his achievement is unique in throwing all the glamour of romance over a fragment 'sublime as Aeschylus'.

"Hyperion, A Fragment": An Introduction

Date of Composition: - Hyperion was begun by Keats beside his brother's sickbed in September or October, 1818. It is to Hyperion that he refers when he speaks in those days of "plunging into abstract images", and finding a "feverous relief" in the "abstractions" of poetry. These phrases are applicable only to Hyperion. It was finished sometime in April, 1819.

Keats's Original Plan about This Poem: - The subject of Hyperion had long been in Keats's mind, and both in the text and the preface of Endymion he indicated his inten-tion to attempt it. At first he thought of the poem to be written as a "romance", but his plan changed to that of a blank verse epic in ten or twelve books. His purpose was to describe the warfare of the earlier Titanic dynasty with the later Olympian dynasty of the Greek gods; and in particular one episode of that warfare, the dethronement of the sun-god Hyperion and the assumption of his kingdom by Apollo. Hyperion exists in two versions, both incomplete. The second version was a revision of the first, with the addition of a long induction in a new style which makes it into a different poem. The two versions of the poem extend over Keats's greatest creative period. The first version was written mostly before the great Odes, the second mostly after them. As a matter of fact, the period covered by Hyperion is the period of Keats's most intense experience, both of joy and sorrow, in actual life, and of his most rapid development.

The Dethronement of Hyperion, the Proposed Theme: - The theme of the war between the Titans or the earlier generation of gods, and the later Olympians who overthrew them often occurs in the literature which Keats was fond of reading. The specific theme, the dethronement of Hyperion, the old sun-god, by Apollo the new, is Keats's own. Apollo is also the god of poetry, and as Endymion had symbolis

of the lover of beauty in the world, so the story of Apollo and Hyperion was perhaps going to symbolise the fate of the poet as creator. Since the poem is unfinished, we cannot know.

The Miltonic Influence: - The design of Hyperion owes much to Milton. The poem opens in the regular epic manner, in the middle of the story. The Titans, like Milton's fallen angels, are already outcasts and have lost their power. Hyperion alone is not yet overthrown, and, like Milton's Satan, he is the one hope of further existence. The open-ing scene is followed by a council to discuss the regaining of the lost dominion, in which Enceladus, like Moloch,[1] pronounces his sentence for open war, and Oceanus, like Belial,[2] stands for more moderate measures. Externally, at least, this is modelled on Paradise Lost, and marks a clear break with the loose and incoherent struc-ure of Endymion.

Keatsian Originality of Style: - In spite of its fragmentary condition, Hyperion remains Keats's most imposing piece of work. According to the publishers, 'the hostile reception given to Endymion discouraged Keats from conti-nuing with the poem. Keats himself said that he gave it up because of the excessive Miltonism of the style. "There were too many Miltonic inversions in it", he wrote to Reynolds. "Miltonic verse cannot be written but in an artful or rather in an artist's humour." The Miltonic influence is certainly obvious in the verse and diction of the first Hyperion as it is in the design. There is, for instance, a constant use of inversions ("stride colossal", "rest divine") typical of Milton's Latinized style. Especially noticeable is the trick of sandwiching a noun between two adjectives ("gold clouds metropolitan"). There are other fragmsnts of classical sentence-structure too:

save what solemn tubes,
Blown by the serious Zephyrs, gave of sweet
And wandering sounds, slow-breathed melodies.

But the poem is hardly Miltonic in any stricter sense. In the matter of rhythm, Keats's blank verse has not the flight of Milton's. "Its periods do not wheel through such stately evolutions to so solemn and far-foreseen close; though it indeed lacks neither power nor music." It is still the verse of Keats, but immensely purged and strengthened by contact with a severer master. Some of the most beautiful images in their delicacy and precision are utterly unlike Milton's generalised verbal grandeur, and indeed could be by nobody but Keats:

. . . .No stir of air was there
Not so much life as on a summer's day
Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass,
But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest. (1, 7-10)

Books I and II. The Speeches of Oceanus and Clyniene

The first book of Hyperion gives us a picture of the fallen Titans, with Saturn as the central figure, but Hyperion as the only one who remains even potentially active. The second book shows them in council and the vital part of it is undoubtedly the speech of Oceanus. The sum and substance of his speech is as follows:

My voice is not a bellows unto ire.
Yet listen, ye who will, whilst I bring proof
How ye, perforce, must be content to stoop:
And in this proof much comfort will I give,
If ye will take that comfort in its truth.
We fall by course of Nature's law, not force

Of thunder, or of Jove. (11,176-82)

Saturn was not the first power in the universe, and should not expect to be the last. Chaos and darkness produced light; light brought heaven and earth and life itself into existence; and the Titans were the first-born of life. Just as heaven and earth are more beautiful than chaos and darkness,

So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,
A power more strong in beauty, born of us
And fated to excel us. … (11, 212-15)

The Titans should not grieve over the situation and should not envy their successors

. . . .for 'tis the eternal law,
That first in beauty shall be first in might. (11, 228-29)

The simple Clyniene follows and supports Oceanus by bearing testimony to the beauty of young Apollo's music which she has heard. The lesson of all this is that Hyperion is to be a poem of evolution, of the super-session of lower forms by higher; and that the successors are to prevail because they are superior in beauty.

Apollo, the Subject of Book III: - In the fragment of the third book the interest shifts from the Titans to the young Apollo. Mnemosyne (Memory) alone among the Titans has formed relations with the younger gods. She has watched over the childhood of Apollo, and now she finds him wavering and uncertain of his course. In his talk with her he finds the consciousness of his destiny and assumes his new-found godhead. At this point the poem breaks off.

Reasons of incompleteness: - It seems that what began as an epic poem about a mythological conflict has become a symbolical poem of a different kind. But in the process new difficulties have arisen for the poet. The conventional epic conflict would have afforded a wealth of scenes and incidents. The new scheme, of an evolution in beauty, presents far greater problems. It could hardly be put forth in events and actions, and would not therefore afford material for the ten books originally proposed. Perhaps there were other difficulties as well. The poem remains unfinished because Keats did not know how it was to go on.

Treatment of Greek Things, But Not in a Greek Manner: - Although Keats has been called a Greek, he does not write of Greek things in a Greek manner. The very description of the palace of Hyperion, with its vague, far-dazzling pomps and phantom terrors of coming doom, shows that. Keats is here far in workmanship from the Greek purity and precision of outline, and from definition of individual images. Some of his pictures of Nature, too, show not the simplicity of the Greek, but the complexity of the modern, sentiment of Nature. But Keats shows a thorough grasp of the essential meaning of the war between Titans and Olympians. He illustrates with great beauty and force (in the speech of Oceanus in the second book) that essential meaning : the dethronement of an older and ruder worship by one more advanced and humane, in which ideas of ethics and of arts held a larger place beside ideas of Nature and her brute powers.

Keats's Success in Animating the Colossal Gods: - Again, Keats attains great success in conceiving and animating the colossal shapes of the early gods. He shows a masterly instinct in the choice of comparisons, drawn from Nature by which he tries to make us realise the voices of those gods, with their personalities between the elemental and the human.

A Dramatic Representation of Human Emotions: - Indeed, Hyperion is Keats's most serious and considerable attempt at the dramatic presentation of emotion, because the Titans are conceived in human terms, and their sorrows are human sorrows. There is far greater power, too, of discourse, of argument in verse, than ever before; there is no parallel in Keats's earlier work to the speech of Oceanus.

Sublimity of Book I, and Intensity of Book III: - The second book of Hyperion, relating the council of the dethroned Titans, has neither the sublimity of the first, nor the intensity of the unfinished third. In the first book we have a solemn vision of the fallen Saturn, followed by a resplendent vision of Hyperion threatened in his empire. In the third book we see Apollo undergoing a convulsive change under the afflatus of Mnemosyne, and about to put on the full powers of his godhead. But the third book has a ripeness and controlled power of its own which places it quite on a level with the other two.

One of the Grandest English Poems: - "With a few slips and inequalities, and one or two instances of verbal incorrectness, Hyperion is indeed one of the grandest poems in the English language, and in its grandeur seems one of the easiest and most spontaneous. Keats, however, had never been able to apply himself to it continuously, but only by fits and starts. Partly this was due to the distractions of bereavement, of material anxiety, and of dawning passion amid which it was begun and continued: partly (if we may trust the statement of the publishers) to disappointment at the reception of Endymion; and partly, it is clear, to something not wholly congenial to his powers in the task itself."

Summary of "Hyperion, A Fragment

BOOK ONE

Saturn's Despondency after His Defeat: - The Titans were defeated by the Olympians in a war which had started when the Olympians rebelled against the authority of the Titans who had been ruling the universe ever since their conquest of Chaos and Darkness.

Saturn was the chief of the Titans, while Jove or Jupiter was the supreme leader of the Olympians. The grey-haired Saturn had, after his defeat, taken shelter in a remote and shady place in a valley, where he now sat, quiet as a stone. Perfect silence prevailed around him. He was feeling absolutely listless, arid his right hand lay, nerveless, on the ground, looking like the hand of a dead body. There was no longer the divine rod of authority in his hand. He sat there in a state of deep despondency, with his eyes closed.

A Visit By Thea: - It seemed that no force would be able to wake up Saturn from his trance. But there did come somebody to wake him up. The visitor was goddess Thea, the wife of the sun-god, Hyperion. She too was a member of the defeated party, and she too was grief-stricken. She woke up Saturn from his listlessness and wanted to know how he was feeling. She told him that she had brought no comfort for him and that she was well aware that he had lost all his power and his authority. She told him that he could continue sleeping and that she would sit at his feet and weep.

Thea's Suggestion, Accepted By Saturn: - Saturn opened his eyes and, looking around him, realized that he was now a deposed monarch who had lost all his kingdom. He told Thea that he had not only lost his empire but his identity and his real self also. He asked her if it would be possible for him to regain his empire. He said that, if it had been possible for him to find another chaos somewhere, he would have created another universe out of it, just as another power had originally crea

primeval Chaos. In reply, Thea suggested that he should visit his fellow-Titans who had taken refuge at a place to which she could escort him. She wanted that Saturn should rejoin his defeated fellow-Titans and comfort them. Saturn accepted her suggestion, and they both set out on their journey.

The Fears of the Undefeated Hyperion, and His Resolve: - Some of the defeated Titans had been captured by the victorious gods and been put into prisons. A few of the other Titans were wandering about in the world at large in a disconsolate condition. But the majority of them had taken shelter at the particular place where Thea was now taking Saturn. However, there was one Titan who had still not been defeated and who stills held sway over his sphere. He was Hyperion, the god of the sun. But, although Hyperion, who lived in a splendid and radiant palace and who commanded the blazing planet of the sun, was still sovereign in his own kingdom, he had begun to feel mentally disturbed by certain ill-omens which seemed to indicate that even he could not feel secure and that his authority might also be threatened. The ill-omens almost unnerved Hyperion, but he was able to overcome his fear and, gathering all his strength and will-power, he declared that he would use his terrible right arm to infuse terror into the heart of Jove who had rebelled against the authority of Saturn and that he would even succeed in restoring Saturn's throne to Saturn.

Hyperion, Urged By Coelus to Go and Meet the Defeated Titans: - There were still a few hours before the sun was due to rise. Hyperion had already prepared himself to start the day's journey. And, though he was impatient to begin the day, he could not commence his task before the due hour. He therefore lay down to while away the few hours which still remained. Although he had formed a strong resolution to fight against Jove, yet his mind was not at ease. The fear of the danger which threatened his supremacy still weighed upon his mind. In this state of mind he heard a voice whispering into his ears. It was the voice of his aged father, Coelus (or Uranus) who now spoke to him from somewhere in heaven. This is what the aged god, Uranus, said to Hyperion:

"You are the brightest of my children. You were born under mysterious circumstances, and the mystery of your birth was not revealed even to me and to your mother. You as well as your brothers and sisters are all manifestations of that beauty which pervades the whole universe. It is very unfortunate that a civil war has taken place among the gods and goddesses, as a result of which my eldest son, Saturn, has been defeated and dethroned. I was in no position to give any help to him. You, my son, are still retaining your authority and governing your dominion. I want you to go down to the earth and meet Saturn and his fellow-gods to see what help you can give to them. It is a bad sign that, while you have all lived and governed your kingdoms with dignity, you are all now experiencing such emotions as fear, anger, and hope which are the feelings characteristic of mankind and not of gods."

At these words, Hyperion got up and, leaving the planet of the sun in the charge of his father who had spoken to him, plunged noise-lessly into the deep night in order to go down to the earth and meet his fellow-Titans.

BOOK TWO

The Defeated Gods Feeling Miserable: - In the meantime, Saturn and Thea had arrived at the place where most of the defeated Titans had taken refuge in a cave among the rocks. As already pointed out, some of the gods and goddesses were in prison where they were being tortured. These included Coeus, Gyges, Briareus, Typhon, Dolor, and Porhyrion. Some others were wandering about aimlessly in the world. They included Mnemosyne, the goddess of memory; and Phoebs, a daughter of the moon-goddess. Those who had taken shelter in this cave among the rocks included Creus, Iapetus,

Cottus, Caf, Enceladus, Phorcus, Ocaanus, Tethys, Clymsne, Trutnis, Ops. These gods and goddessss included also Asia, the daughter of the mountain-god Caf by his union with Tellus. All the gods and goddesses assembled here were in a most wretched and miserable condition because of their removal from their respective high positions of authority in the universe.

Saturn's Address to His Fellow-Gods: - On arriving at this place, Saturn felt even sadder than before. This god, who had once wielded supreme authority in the universe, was now experiencing such distressing emotions as rage, fear, anxiety, remorse, and revenge. And he experienced not only these emotions but also that of despair. It seemed that Fate had robbed him of his divine powers and infected him with the weaknesses and infirmities of human beings. Under the stress of these emotions, Saturn might have collapsed to the ground but, by chance, he met the eyes of Enceladus of whose exceptional strength and might he was fully aware. Seeing anger in Enceladus's eyes, Saturn felt invigorated and strengthened. The presence of Enceladus acted as a great stimulus upon him, and so he shouted to the assembled Titans: "Titans, behold your supreme god". At Saturn's words some of the gods groaned, some got up on their feet, some shouted, some wept, some wailed; but all of them bowed to Saturn reverently. Saturn had now conquered his feelings of fear and despair, and he spoke in a self-confident manner. Addressing his fellow-gods, he said:

"I do not understand why you should feel so dejected. Neither in my own heart nor in the book of wisdom which I have always kept close to myself, am I able to discover any reason why you should have given up all hope. There have been no portents to show that we are a doomed race. Seeing you in this mood of dejection, I do not know what message I should give to you. If I ask you to arise, you will groan because you are in no mood to fight; if I ask you to cringe to the conqueror (Jove) you will still groan because your self-respect will be hurt. What can I then do? Tell me, my brother-gods, how we can wreak vengeance upon the rebellious gods who have won a victory over us. You, Oceanus, are a deep thinker. What advice can you give me?"

Oceanus's Reply: - Saturn here ended his speech. Oceanus now replied to Saturn's question. This is what Oceanus said:

"What I have to say should be a source of comfort to you, provided you can find comfort in what is true. The truth is that we have been defeated not by the power of Jove but in accordance with Nature's law. Great Saturn, you have studied this universe but, having been accustomed to wield unlimited power, you have missed certain small points which lower minds could easily understand. You should realize that, just as you were not the first power to rule the universe, so you are not the last. You are not the beginning, and you are not the end. We all acquired our positions and our authority after the original chaos and the primeval darkness had been conquered. And just as we are fairer than that chaos and that darkness, those who have now become the rulers of the universe are fairer than we are. On our heels a fresh perfection treads, a power more strong in beauty, a power born of us but destined to surpass us just as we surpass the original chaos and the primeval darkness. Besides, it is not a question of conquest; we have not been conquered by Jove and his comrades just as we did not in any sense conquer chaos and darkness; it is just a question of progress which proceeds inevitably according to the law of Nature. We should not resent having been superseded just as the dull soil does not resent the existence of the grand forests which it has itself nourished and fed, and just as a tree does not resent the dove which sits on its branches and sings. We have ourselves begotten those who have now taken our places as the rulers and, in course of time, they too would be ousted by another race because the law of Nature is that "first in beauty should be first in "might". I have been succeeded on my throne by another god

(Neptune) but I am not resentful of him because he is far more impressive in his appearance and far more handsome than I am. I myself bade farewell to my empire in order to make way for him, even though I felt sad to relinquish my authority. Now what I want is that you should understand the principle which is behind our dethronement, and draw comfort from it."

Clymene's Account of Her Strange Experience: - None of the gods said anything in response to Oceanus's speech. The only one who now spoke was the goddess Clymene. She said that she wanted to tell the assembly of the gods an experience which she had gone through in the forest and which had convinced her that the gods who had now come into power after displacing the previous rulers of the universe were really superior to their predecessors. She said that, while singing and playing on a musical instrument on the sea-shore, she had suddenly become conscious of a magic influence which seemed to be coming from an island opposite. She had thereupon thrown away her musical instru-ment and started listening to the music which began to come from the same direction. The music which she heard consisted of a succession of melodious sounds which fell upon her ears one after the other like pearl beads dropping suddenly from their string. She had never heard such music before; and it now made her sick with simultaneous feelings of joy and grief. She was filled with joy because this music was rapturous, and she felt sad because this music was superior to any music which she herself could produce. The feeling of grief proved to be stronger than the feeling of joy and, stopping her ears with her hands, shi fled from that place in order not to hear that music any longer. But a voice, sweeter than all music, followed her, crying: "Apallo! Young Apollo! The morning-bright Apollo!" What Clymene meant by describing this experience of hers was that the music of Apollo, who belonged to the new race of rulers, was far superior to the music which could be produced by the Titans.

Enceladus, Opposed to an Attitude of Passivity and Submission: - While both Oceanus and Clymene had wanted to convince the defeated gods that the best course for them would be to reconcile themselves to their present state, Enceladus the Giant felt deeply annoyed with what these two speakers had said. Hi regarded the dethronement of the Titans as an unbearable humiliation and he therefore suggested that the Titans should not give way to despair but should make a vigorous effort to regain their kingdoms. He said that he would tell the Titans how they could destroy the power of Jove and how they could once again become the proud rulers of their realms. He said that he could not forget the days of peace and tranquility which he had enjoyed during the period of the rule of the Titans, and that he would like those days to return. Enceladus went on to say that one of the Titans, namely Hyperion, had still not been displaced and that even the defeated Titans could therefore hope to regain their lost empires. After expressing these views, Enceladus said that he was happy to note that his words had produced the desired effect on his listeners.

Hyperion's Arrival to Meet the Defeated Gods: - Just then Hyperion, who had been urged by Coelus (or Uranus) to go down to the earth in order to meet the defeated Titans, arrived at the scene. When Hyperion alighted on a rock near the cave, where the defeated gods were holding their conference, his radiance filled the atmosphere all around. Every gulf, every chasm, every height, and every depth looked bright with the radiance shed by Hyperion. Hyperion looked at the assembled Titans and noted the wretchedness of the dethroned gods who could now, in the light being shed all around by Hyperion, see how miserable they appeared by contrast with him. But Hyperion was in no joyous mood, because the sight of the defeated and miserable gods filled him also with depression. Four of the gods including the fierce Encealdus now got up and advanced to greet Hyperion. Going near him, these four gods shouted the name of Saturn and, in reply, Hyperion answered from the mountain-peak: "Satu[illegible]

himself at this time was sitting near the mother of all the gods whose face showed no joy on account of the sad fate which had overtaken her progeny.

BOOK THREE

Keats to Sing About Apollo: - At this point Keats deviates from the story of the Titans which he has been narrating and from the role of Hyperion which he has been describing. He thinks of the premature death of his brother Tom and says that he should turn rather to sing about his own sorrow than about the woes of the gods. But he does not then proceed to sing even about his own personal sorrow. He says that he would like to sing about Apollo, "the father of all verse." The thought of Apollo fills him with a great enthusiasm and joy, and he calls upon all Nature to put on fresh glory in order to join him in celebrating the greatness of Apollo who was born on the island of Delos. He announces to all Nature that "Apollo is once more the golden theme" of his verse. Evidently, Keats's purpose now is to take up the theme of the dethronement of Hyperion by Apollo. But Apollo is not yet a god. Keats therefore first takes up the theme of how Apollo became a god.

Apollo's Encounter with an Awful Goddess: - When Hyperion stood radiant in the midst of his grief-stricken fellow-Titans, Apollo left his mother and his twin-sister sleeping in their bower and wandered forth in the morning twilight. Walking through the lilies of the valley at that early hour, when the nightingale had just stopped singing and when there were only a few stars left in the sky, Apollo came to a stop on the banks of a stream and suddenly burst into tears. While he stood there weeping, with his golden bow in his hand, an awful goddess came and stood before him. Apollo was surprised to see this mysterious figure who seemed to have come from nowhere. He then realized that he had always been conscious of the presence of this goddess on this island and that he had often heard the sweep of her garments over the fallen leaves as she walked about in the valley and in the forest. He told the goddess that he had either actually seen her before on this island or had dreamed of her. The goddess replied that he had dreamed of her and that, on waking up from his dream, he had found a golden lyre which she had placed for him by his side. From the strings of that lyre he had produced sweet music which the whole universe had heard with both pain and pleasure, realizing that a new kind of music had come into existence.

The Goddess's Deep Interest in Apollo: - The goddess now asked Apollo why he had been weeping and what it was that had been making him so sad. She told him that she had been keeping a watch upon him during his hours of sleep and during his hours of wakefulness ever since his childhood. She said that she had given up her allegiance to the old gods for his sake and for the sake of the new loveliness which he possessed and the new music which he had originated.

Apollo's "Aching Ignorance": - Thereupon Apollo suddenly realized who this goddess was. He said that her name had suddenly occurred to him and that she must be Mnemosyne. Then he said that his sorrow, which had made him shed tears, was not a mystery to her and that she knew everything about him. He went on to say that there were certain things which he did not understand. He wanted the goddess Mnemosyne to clear his doubts about certain matters. He wanted to know the nature of the stars, the identity of the power behind the forces of Nature, the divinity who ruled the universe, and the reason why he was often overtaken by a melancholy which was so deep as to have a numbing effect on his limbs. He asked her to tell him why he often listened to the sounds of the elements "in fearless yet in aching ignorance."

The Deification of Apollo, Or Keats's Emergence as a True Poet: -

Mnemosyne remained silent. Apollo's mind was now suddenly illumined by a new

discovery. He said that he could read a wonderful lesson in the goddess's silent face. "Knowledge enormous makes a god of me", he said. Then he told her what he could read in her face. Her face had brought to him a sudden awareness of "names, deeds, old legends, dire events, rebellions, majesties, sovereign voices, agonies, creations and destroyings." This new awareness, he said, was like a wine or an elixir which seemed to deify him and make him immortal. As he said these words, keeping his eyes steadfast on Mnemosyne, he experienced wild convulsions which shook his whole body. He underwent an agonizing experience. The agony which he felt was akin to the agony of death. While he was going through this painful ordeal, Mnemosyne kept her arms upraised like one who was making a prophecy. At last Apollo shrieked with joy and ecstasy, and from all his limbs came a glory which showed that he had become a god. Apollo had died into life. Apollo the mortal was dead bat Apollo the god was born. In other words, Apollo had risen to great heights of poetry and music by his contact with Mnemosyne who symbolized all human experience, all experience which mankind had had in the past and an awareness of which is a necessary part of the equipment of a poet. (Mnemosyne represents not only the past of mankind but also the present and even the future. The deification of Apollo means that Keats himself feels that he has become a true poet because of his realization that a keen and sensitive awareness of the reality of all human experience is essential if a poet wants to write true poetry).

Critical Appreciation of "Hyperion"

It is a commonplace of Keats criticism to present the poet as struggling against both a debilitating sense of his own immaturity and the wider public perception of him as 'immature'. Keats's doleful suspicion that he was merely a 'weaver-boy' in the eyes of reviewers and other 'literary fashionables' was confirmed by Byron's caustic reference this 'pass a bed' poetry, and by John Gibson Lockhart's conclusion that Keats was only 'a boy of pretty abilities'.

In 1820, the Guardian ironically praised his 'juvenile industry', while the London Magazine condemned his 'boyish petulance'. Throughout his poetic career, Keats contended with reviewers who configured him as 'effeminate' or 'callow', and who routinely exhorted him to 'grow up'. But while Keats's relationship with immaturity and 'juvenile industry' may have been fraught, it was by no means wholly disabling. Marjorie Levinson has shown with customary dexterity how Keats used his cultural marginality, stylistic vulgarity, and 'adolescent' sexuality to subvert authoritarian values extolled by' so distant guardians of public taste' like Lockhart and J. W. Croker. Indeed, Keats's work often teeters self-consciously on the edge of puerility, such 'teeterings' becoming the condition for contestations of various kinds.

In the prevailing callous critical atmosphere, Keats continued to prove himself the greatest of his contemporaries. Though he was never admitted in his lifetime, yet his approach towards fine or poor creations was par excellence. His assortment and denunciation of poetic process was from a full-grown mind. Famous fragmentary poem "Hyperion" seems to have afforded Keats less satisfaction than any other of his works. It was printed, as the "Advertisement" shows, at his Publishers' desire, "and contrary to the wish of the author." Still later, he "re-cast it into the shape of a Vision, which remains equally unfinished."

"I have given up Hyperion," Keats writes from Winchester, Sep. 22, 1819 "there were too many Miltonic inversions in it—Miltonic verse cannot be written but in an artful, or rather, artist's humour. I wish to give myself up to other sensations. English ought to be kept up."

This phrase apparently refers to the mood in which he had just written those noble lines to Autumn, which we put, with Lamia, and five or six more pieces, amongst his maturest work; the work wherein art touches its genuine triumph in concealing itself: the work which, in matter and manner alike, embodies his most essential, his most intimate, genius. And, in the remarks, which follow, the poet clearly shows a consciousness that in Hyperion the "artist's humour "was too prevalent: "the false beauty, proceeding from art," blended with "the true voice of feeling." Keats, criticizing here for the last time his own work, touches on the note, which is most sensible in his poetry, as it is that which lay the deepest in his own nature. Almost more than passion for beauty, although, indeed it is, rather, itself the fine flower of beauty, tenderness, almost passing into tremulousness, seems his characteristic. Here and there, whilst he was little more than a boy, we hear this note in excess.

But Keats, in both the qualities just named, true child of Spenser, has also the manliness of nature, the sanity of sentiment, which underlie everywhere that river of gold, which ripples through the Faerie Queene. Beyond any of his great compeers during the last two centuries, (if we may here venture thus to sum up the imperfect criticisms on his genius which are offered in these notes), Keats had inherited, not only as Man but as Poet, or rather, as Poet because he was so as Man, the inspiration and the magnanimity of the great age of our Muses; —more than any, he is true English-Elizabethan: Had the years of Milton been destined for him, of him, more than of any other it might have been prophesied, fortunate.

Despite the marvellous grandeur of its execution, the judgment of Keats upon this work appears to be thoroughly well founded. After an introduction worthy to be compared with what the Propylaea of the Acropolis at Athens must have been, at once in severe majesty and in refinement of execution, the interest of the story rapidly and irremediably falls off. It is, truly, to take a phrase from the Preface to Endymion, "too late a day." The attempt to revivify an ancient myth, —as distinguished from an ancient story of human life, —however alluring, however illustrated by poets of genius, seems essentially impossible.

It is for the details, not for the whole, that we read Hyperion, or Prometheus Unbound, or the German Iphigeneia. Like the great majority of post-classical verse in classical languages, those modern myths are but exercises, (and, as such, with their value to the writer), on a splendid scale.

The story of which "Hyperion" tells the beginning is, in fact, far too remote, too alien from the modern world: it has neither any definite symbolical meaning, nor any of that "soft humanity" which underlies the wild magic of his other works, and has rendered possible a picture, true not only to Corinth two thousand years ago, but to all-time. Yet, with such strange vital force has he penetrated into the Titan world, and all but given the

reality of life to the old shadows before him, that, had this miracle been possible, we may fairly say that Keats would have worked it.

The author was, hence, right in giving up "Hyperion". Yet, by a singular irony of literary fate, "Hyperion" was the first of his poems, which seems to have reached fame beyond his own English circle of admirers. Byron, in a passage often quoted, placed its sublimity on a level with Aeschylus. But the criticisms, which it called forth from Shelley, are the most noteworthy. In Nov. 1820 we find him writing that he has received "a volume of poems by Keats; in other respects insignificant enough, but containing the fragment of a poem called "Hyperion".... It is certainly an astonishing piece of writing. "Nor was this Shelley's first impression only; for on 15 Feb. 1821 he returns to Keats: "His other poems are worth little; but, if the Hyperion be not grand poetry, none has been produced by our contemporaries."

If we remember the masterpieces contained in the precious little book of 1820, it may be reasonably held that even the political antagonists of Keats and his friends could hardly have exceeded these criticisms in blind prosaic injustice. So may one great poet, and he, snow-pure from taint of envy or malice, misunderstand and misestimate another!

Hyperion", An Epic of Beauty's Triumph

First in Beauty Should Be First in Might: - The fragmentary epic, Hyperion, is concerned chiefly with beauty. A war in heaven was the basis for the narrative which Keats had planned to write. An older race of gods known as the Titans had been overthrown by the younger Olympians.

Hyperion, the sun-god, after whom the poem was named, had been visualized by Keats as the champion of the Titan cause because he was the only one of them yet undefeated when the poem begins. The main action of the poem would almost certainly have been the overthrow and supersession of Hyperion by the Olympian Apollo. The fundamental theme, then, is the war which had taken place between two classes of gods. From the outset we find ourselves in the company of the defeated Titans, experiencing their bitter sorrow and asking their questions; and the centrality of beauty is asserted precisely here, because the only theatrical answer to the question why the older gods have suffered at the hands of the younger gods is that beauty should triumph and that in the present case it has actually triumphed. The victorious Olympians are more beautiful than the Titans; there is no more to be said on this point because "it is the eternal law that first in beauty should be first in might." This one statement made by Oceanus not only puts beauty at the centre of the poem but interweaves it with pain by denning a metaphysic of suffering out of beauty's triumph. To the riddle of the defeat of the Titans, the solution is that the less beautiful must be superseded and pushed into the background. In this poem Keats simultaneously vindicates the beautiful and gives his explanation of the pain and suffering in this world. In his view the pain and suffering of the world are the price of beauty's victory. The survival of the fittest is the tune to which creation dances; this constitutes the world's outward drama and equally its inner sense. The greater or the fitter is one who is the more beautiful because Nature's law is that first in beauty should be first in might.

The Problem of Suffering and Pain: - The poem opens with a striking picture of Saturn sitting still and silent after his defeat. He is joined by the goddess Thea (who was the wife of Hyperion, the sun-god). She rouses Saturn from his stupor in order to stress his total discomfiture and to say that she has to offer no explanation of these recent events and that she has no comfort to offer either. "I have no comfort for thee, no, not one", she pointedly says. In reply, Saturn asks her if his feeble shape is really his and if his voice is really his. In other words, through Saturn's questioning, Keats raises the problem of human suffering (even though the questioner is a god). Thea only under-stands that disaster has befallen the Titans. Saturn only understands the pain of defeat. Both of them want to understand more; and Keats now sends them together to that sad place where Cybele and the bruised Titans sat in mourning. Some of the defeated Titans are then named and described, where after Saturn proceeds to address them. His speech goes deeper still into the sheer puzzle of pain. He puts it thus:

Not in my own sad breast,
Which is its own great judge and searcher out,
Can I find reason why ye should be thus: (II, 129-31)

At the end of his speech he turns to Oceanus whose "severe content", which is the result of thought and musing, has surprised him and from whom he now seeks guidance.

Stoic Resignation to the Truth: - It is Oceanus who, in his reply to Saturn's question, urges his fellow-gods to see their Titanic woes as part of a process called beauty's triumph. Whether the process justifies the pain involved is not easy to decide. Oceanus proclaims his message to be "the pain of truth"; but at the same time he asserts that those who take his message to be painful are foolish. The dominant note of the speech of Oceanus is Stoic resignation to the truth rather than welcome of it. He concludes with the following advice:

Receive this truth, and let it be your balm.

But there is no suggestion that pain can be transformed into something else. In other words, pain and suffering remain pain and suffering, and cannot undergo any mystic transformation. All that Oceanus can say is that the defeated gods have to suffer but that they are suffering in a good cause. So his mandate is that the sufferers must achieve calm and tranquility.

The Superior Beauty of the New Sea-God and of the New God of Music: - Oceanus cites his own individual defeat as an illustration of the general principle which he has just laid down. He refers to the new Olympian god who has overthrown him. He speaks about the new god of the sea in ardent terms, praising the beauty and the glow of the new god. Oceanus was so impressed by the new god that he voluntarily relinquished his position as the sovereign of his empire and came away from his headquarters, so to speak. Following Oceanus, the goddess Clymene expresses her own sense of bewilderment but then goes on to speak of Apollo in the same eloquent and glowing terms in which Oceanus had spoken about his successor. Says she:

A voice came sweeter, sweeter than all tune,
And still it cried, "Apollo ! Young Apollo!"
I fled, it follow'd me, and cried "Apollo"! (II, 292-94)

Thus the reference to Apollo emphasizes a singing voice of the utmost beauty. And the beauty is, of course, the point, because the final triumph of beauty will be the triumph of Apollo; and in this way Oceanus's assertion of the eternal law of Nature will be vindicated. No doubt, Enceladus, who speaks after Clymene, rejects both her opinion and the view of Oceanus. Enceladus describes Oceanus as "over-wise" and he describes Clymene as "over-foolish". Enceladus speaks in a militant tone, and he relies on Hyperion to come to the rescue of the defeated Titans. But the event described in Book III, in which Apollo achieves his deification, clearly shows that Enceladus's defiance and militancy would come to nothing, if the poem had been continued, it would have described the conflict between Hyperion and the new god Apollo, and it would have described the triumph of the latter who is more beautiful by virtue of his music and melody the like of which had never before been heard in the universe.

Major Themes in Hyperion

Human Sufferings in Hyperion/ "the agonies, the strife of human hearts" in Hyperion

Hyperion" is an uncompleted epic poem by John Keats. It is based on the Titans and Olympians, and tells of the despair of the former after their fall to the latter. Keats wrote the poem for about one year, when he gave it up as having "too many Miltonic inversions." He was also nursing his brother Tom, who died in January of 1819 of tuberculosis. Hyperion relates the fall of the Titans, elemental energies of the world, and their replacement by newer gods. The Olympian gods, having superior knowledge and an understanding of humanity's suffering, are the natural successors to the Titans.

Keats's epic begins after the battle between the Titans and the Olympian gods, with the Titans already fallen. Hyperion, the sun god, is the Titans' only hope for further resistance. The epic's narrative, divided into three sections, concentrates on the dethronement of Hyperion and the ascension to power of Apollo, god of sun and poetry. Book I presents Saturn fallen and about to be replaced and Hyperion threatened within his empire. The succeeding events reveals the aftermath of the situation and the Titan's acceptance of defeat after Oceanus' speech. In Hyperion, the quality of Keats's blank verse reached new heights, particularly in the opening scene between Thea and the fallen Saturn:

> **"Deep in the shady sadness of a vale,**
> **... Sat gray-hair'd Saturn, quiet as a stone"**

Many themes introduced in the Hyperion are identifiable as those associated with Romanticism. Hyperion, which marks the exchange of the old powers for the new, addresses ideas about poetry, beauty, knowledge, and experience. Hyperion's dominant themes address the nature of poetry and its relationship to humanity and the sublimity of human suffering the knowledge gained through it. The narrative suggests

consideration of progress, particularly toward enlightenment and depictions of beauty, even as it evokes classical ideals found in Greek mythology. Visual and verbal representations, in the use of language and of Greek sculptural forms, contribute to this exploration. Through his representation of gods, Keats's commentary on Romantic opposites includes the real and ideal, history versus myth, finite versus infinite. The theme of truth is also prevalent. The speech of Oceanus and the ascension of Apollo both point to Hyperion's concern with truth and its relationship with beauty, knowledge, and suffering. Truth is closely associated with knowledge and both are acquired through pain, which results from the understanding and acceptance of change and impermanence. However painful, truth is pure and beautiful, and what is beautiful is eternal. It is this honourable truth that the human spirit strives to attain. That is why Keats calls Hyperion:

> **"the agonies, the strife of human hearts"**

The poem is tragic with most of the qualities of a tragedy. Oceanus is working as a chorus giving the poem's moral and working as a mediator. Keats says: All I hope is that I may not lose interest in human affairs. In his later poetry, the realm of Flora and Old Pan are gone. His early poems were sensuous, but later he became aware of human sufferings. He thought that poetry of escape is not the real poetry. Real poetry deals with human beings. The function of poetry according to Keats is a friend to soothe the cares of man and lift up his thought. In the poems, gods have been given human qualities symbolizing sufferings of man. Gods are huge and Titanic, but have been given human characteristics effectively and realistically. Saturn's misery, Thea's stature all perfect human as exemplified in the line, 'I have no comfort for thee, no, not one'. Keats has humanized the gods to reveal human sufferings as further in Saturn's speech:

> **"Who had power**
> **To make me desolate? Whence came the strength?"**

For Saturn, dethronement is a question of identity as Napoleon or any human being, may be Nawaz Sharif or Musharraf, and could have felt. Thea's reassurance to Saturn is a typical human activity. The suffering of Titans is the collected suffering of humanity at large. Hyperion is a militant whose spirit is dampened by danger. So Keats, unlike other poems, has human concern in this poem. The Confidence with Saturn reminds us of Duke in "My Last Duchess" by Browning as "I gave commands and all smiles stopped". Saturn is like Milton's Satan who doesn't want to establish his own kingdom for sovereignty as much as to take revenge on God. So the gods are all humanized. This is also visible in the Hyperion's apprehensions about his dethronement and mock-determinations.

> **"I will advance a terrible right arm**
> **Shall scare that infant thunderer, rebel Jove"**

He has seen certain omens which indicate that his downfall may be imminent. Human beings feel apprehensive when they hear a dog howling or an owl screeching; and this god is feeling apprehensive because the wings of eagles darkened his palace and because the neighing of steeds has been heard which had nev

gods or wondering men". The omens are different no doubt, but Hyperion's reaction to the omens is the same as that of human beings is. And just as a human being might still resolve to fight against a coming danger, so Hyperion too says that he will use his terrible right arm. He feels most restless to think of the fate which might overtake him. But his restlessness is human restlessness under the pressure of a coming danger. Just as a wealthy man is afraid lest he should become bankrupt, so Hyperion is afraid lest he should lose his "lucent empire". Just as a wealthy man is afraid lest he should be deprived of all his gains, so Hyperion is afraid lest he should lose "the blaze, the splendour, and the symmetry". Hyperion is at this time like a fish out of water. Ha would like to begin the day sooner than usual, but the laws of Nature do not permit him to do that. He picks up courage only when his father whispers to him from somewhere in heaven and urges him to go and join his fellow-Titans on the earth; another human activity.

Keats suffered from the two experiences of entirely different nature: imagination and reality. It is evident, then, that Keats was grappling with the problem of human suffering and with a human dilemma. He even suggests the simple formula: What cannot be cured must be endured. Human beings should face the facts squarely and calmly, and such a calm acceptance of realities shows not a defeatist mentality but a manly or even a divine frame of mind. Having arrived at this stage in his thinking, Keats went on to write the great odes in which his human concerns find a full utterance. Keats has like Apollo, acquired the tragic vision and become a great poet. Had he lived longer, he would have written even greater poetry and it would have been a poetry marked by profound thought, intense emotion, and a portrayal of the stern realities of human life.

"Hyperion is a veritable gallery of studies in pain" and "what Keats achieves above all in Hyperion is the sublimation of suffering." What is your opinion?

Keats is a poet of suffering and pain. Throughout his poetry feelings of suffering is the prominent feature. In spite this we cannot call Keats a poet of sadness. We find a strange tranquility and calm in Keats' poetry even when he tells the story of loss, pain and suffering. Keats seems to accept as something integral and inevitable for human existence.

When we say that Hyperion is the veritable gallery of pain, we that we find only pain in the poem and nothing else. Actually Hyperion like all other masterpieces written by Keats gives the impression of a gallery with having different picture, the most important being those of Saturn, Thea, Hyperion and Nature. All these pictures are embodiment of pain, though in quite different ways.

When we say that achievement of Keats in Hyperion is the sublimation of suffering, we mean that suffering has been described with so much beauty that they appear to be sublime and inevitable to human existence , and, therefore, integral part of life.

The poem deals with the theme of change. It is the law of nature that new things replace the old things but this change is always painful. Keats has captured this pain with such blend of objectivity and subjectivity that he has succeeded in making sufferin

Keats is Hyperion is surely a tail of pain and suffering. This is tale of loss and of suffering which emanates from loss. Actually the poem deals with the fall of Titans at the hand of Olympians. From the very beginning the feelings of pain dominate and the sadness and anguish which Saturn feels after his defeat by Jove has been dramatized and portrayed with such poignancy and pathos that loss appears to be personal.

The poem opens when Saturn has already fallen and is deprived of all the powers he previously enjoyed. His condition and torture finds expression in very powerful and moving lines.

Deep in the shady sadness of a vale
Far sunken from the healthy breath if morn,
Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,
Sat grey-haired Saturn, quiet as stone,

This sad story continues and each line tells something more about anguish and torture which mind and soul of Saturn was undergoing.

…………Upon the sodden ground
His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,
Unsceptred; and his realmless were closed;
While his bowed head seemed listening to the Earth,
His ancient mother for some comfort yet.

Saturn is not the only person the anguish and pain of his soul whose soul and mind is depicted in Book 1 of Hyperion. Thea and Hyperion also have their share of pain and suffering with Saturn. Consider the following lines which Keats has written for Thea when she comes meet defeated Saturn:

But O! how unlike marble was that face,
How beautiful, if sorrow had not made
Sorrow more beautiful than Beauty's self.

All the conversation which takes place between Thea and Saturn is full of pain. Every word, every line and every thought seems to dwelling on pain and suffering of both the God and The Goddess.

Saturn look up! –though wherefore, the poor old king?
I have no comfort for thee, no not one.

Now let us try to look the pain and its intensity in some of the speeches of Saturn. He speaks the following words to Thea when listens to Thea's speech.

Thea, I feel thee ere I see thy face
Look up, and let me say our doom in it

ختم نبوت ﷺ زندہ باد

عظمت صحابہ زندہ باد

السلام علیکم ورحمۃ اللہ وبرکاتہ:

معزز ممبران: آپ کا وٹس ایپ گروپ ایڈ من "**اردو بکس**" آپ سے مخاطب ہے۔

آپ تمام ممبران سے گزارش ہے کہ:

- گروپ میں صرف PDF کتب پوسٹ کی جاتی ہیں لہذا کتب کے متعلق اپنے کمنٹس / ریویوز ضرور دیں۔ گروپ میں بغیر ایڈ من کی اجازت کے کسی بھی قسم کی (اسلامی وغیر اسلامی، اخلاقی، تحریری) پوسٹ کرنا سختی سے منع ہے۔
- گروپ میں معزز، پڑھے لکھے، سلجھے ہوئے ممبرز موجود ہیں اخلاقیات کی پابندی کریں اور گروپ رولز کو فالو کریں بصورت دیگر معزز ممبرز کی بہتری کی خاطر ریموو کر دیا جائے گا۔
- کوئی بھی ممبر کسی بھی ممبر کو انباکس میں میسج، مس کال، کال نہیں کرے گا۔ رپورٹ پر فوری ریموو کر کے کاروائی عمل میں لائے جائے گی۔
- ہمارے کسی بھی گروپ میں سیاسی و فرقہ واریت کی بحث کی قطعاً کوئی گنجائش نہیں ہے۔
- اگر کسی کو بھی گروپ کے متعلق کسی قسم کی شکایت یا تجویز کی صورت میں ایڈ من سے رابطہ کیجئے۔
- سب سے اہم بات:

گروپ میں کسی بھی قادیانی، مرزائی، احمدی، گستاخِ رسول، گستاخِ امہات المؤمنین، گستاخِ صحابہ و خلفائے راشدین حضرت ابو بکر صدیق، حضرت عمر فاروق، حضرت عثمان غنی، حضرت علی المرتضیٰ، حضرت حسنین کریمین رضوان اللہ تعالیٰ اجمعین، گستاخ اہلبیت یا ایسے غیر مسلم جو اسلام اور پاکستان کے خلاف پراپیگنڈا میں مصروف ہیں یا ان کے روحانی وذہنی سپورٹرز کے لئے کوئی گنجائش نہیں ہے لہذا ایسے اشخاص بالکل بھی گروپ جوائن کرنے کی زحمت نہ کریں۔ معلوم ہونے پر فوراً ریموو کر دیا جائے گا۔

- تمام کتب انٹرنیٹ سے تلاش / ڈاؤنلوڈ کر کے **فری آف کاسٹ** وٹس ایپ گروپ میں شیئر کی جاتی ہیں۔ جو کتاب نہیں ملتی اس کے لئے معذرت کر لی جاتی ہے۔ جس میں محنت بھی صَرف ہوتی ہے لیکن ہمیں آپ سے صرف دعاؤں کی درخواست ہے۔
- عمران سیریز کے شوقین کیلئے علیحدہ سے عمران سیریز گروپ موجود ہے۔
- **لیڈیز کے لئے الگ گروپ کی سہولت موجود ہے جس کے لئے ویریفکیشن ضروری ہے۔**
- اردو کتب / عمران سیریز یا سٹڈی گروپ میں ایڈ ہونے کے لئے ایڈ من سے وٹس ایپ پر بذریعہ میسج رابطہ کریں اور جواب کا انتظار فرمائیں۔ برائے مہربانی اخلاقیات کا خیال رکھتے ہوئے موبائل پر کال یا ایم ایس کرنے کی کوشش ہر گز نہ کریں۔ ورنہ گروپس سے تو ریموو کیا ہی جائے گا بلاک بھی کیا جائے گا۔

نوٹ: ہمارے کسی گروپ کی کوئی فیس نہیں ہے۔ سب فی سبیل اللہ ہے

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اللہ تبارک تعالیٰ ہم سب کا حامی وناصر ہو

The whole speech of Saturn is soaked with the pain and torture which soul suffers. The following lines reveal the torture of his soul:

——————————I have left

My strong identity, my real self,
Somewhere between the throne, and where I sit
Here on this spot of earth.
Thea! Thea! Thea! Where is Saturn?

We find the same pain and its permanent presence even Keats introduce Hyperion. Though Hyperion is still on his throne and consoles himself with the thought that he can restore Saturn to his Throne by defeating Jove, his anguish and pain is perceivable in every description Keats has used to reveal the mind and soul of the great God.

I cannot see-but darkness, death and darkness.
Even here, into my centre of repose,
The shady vision comes to domineer,
Insult, and blind, stifle my pomp-

When we study further this poem, finally we come to believe that Hyperion is no one but the poet himself Hyperion's story the story of the poet himself. And this subjective element in the poem which makes every verse of the poem drenched in sadness and pain.

What makes suffering sublime in Keats is not difficult to understand. Keats, as an artist knew what is common to him is common to all human being and expressing this poetry will lend sublimity to his thought and expression and this is what Keats so frequently did in his poetry and in which he always succeeded.

Death, loss, cravings for love, creation of beauty with realization that beauty does not remain forever though it is truth and love of life have stood first during the creative concerns of the poet. And very nature of these things brings pain in human life because they not forever and realization that they cannot remain forever bring sublimation in the suffering which human being under while they hanker after the above mentioned things. Keats' Hyperion is the artist expression of what Keats considered true of human life. On the surface he seems to be telling the story of Gods and Goddess having no relation the lives of the mortals but actually he tells the story of human beings living on the earth.

The Greek Note in Keats's Poetry

The Greek Spirit in Keats's Poetry: - Shelley expressed the opinion that "Keats was a Greek". Indeed, Keats was unmistakably a representative of Greek thought, in a sense in which Wordsworth and Coleridge and even Shelley were not. The Greek spirit came to Keats through literature, through sculpture, and through an innate tendency, and it is under Hellenic influence as a rule that he gives of his best.

Keats's Inborn, Temperamental "Greekness": - The inborn, temperamental "Greekness" of Keats's mind is to be seen in his love of beauty. To him, as to the

Greeks, the expression of beauty is the ideal of all art. And for him, as for them, beauty is not exclusively material nor spiritual, nor intellectual, but is the fullest development of all that goes to make up human perfection.

His Personification of the Forces of Nature: -Keats is a Greek, too, in his manner of personifying the forces of Nature. His Autumn is a divinity in human shape: she does all kinds of work, and directs every operation of harvest. This is a typical attitude of the Greek. The Pan of Greek myth was more than half human. Whoever wandered into the lonely places of the wood might expect to hear his pipe or even to catch a glimpse of his hairy hands and puck-nosed face; and the Pan of Keats's ode is half-human, too, as he sits by the riverside or wanders in the evenings in the meadows. Keats has "contrived to talk about the gods much as they might have been supposed to speak". The world of Greek paganism lives again in his verse, with all its frank sensuousness and joy of life, and with all its mysticism. Keats looks back and lives again in the time

When holy were the haunted forest boughs,
Holy the air, the water, and the fire. (Ode to Psyche)

His Interest in Greek Mythology: - Towards the creations of Greek mythology Keats was attracted by an overmastering delight in their beauty, and a natural sympathy with the phase of imagination that created them. "He possessed the Greek instinct for personifying the powers of Nature in clearly defined imaginary shapes endowed with human beauty and half-human faculties. Especially he shows himself possessed and fancy-bound by the mythology, as well as by the physical enchantment, of the moon. Never was bard in youth/so literally moon-struck. Not only had the charm of the myth of the love of the moon-goddess for Endymion interwoven itself in his being with his natural sensibility to the physical and spiritual spell of moonlight; hut deeper and more abstract meanings than its own had gathered about the story in his mind. The divine vision which haunts Endymion in dreams is for Keats symbolical of Beauty itself, and it is the passion of the human soul for beauty which he attempts, more or less consciously, to shadow forth in the quest of the shepherd-prince after his love."

His Main Themes Drawn from Greek Myths, Art, and Literature: - Greek myth, and to a smaller extent Greek art and literature, provide either his main themes or numerous allusions. Keats's boyish enthusiasm had been nourished by his Elizabethan reading, by Leigh Hunt, by the Elgin Marbles, and by Wordsworth. One reason for Keats's high regard for The Excursion would be the account in the fourth book of the Greek religion of Nature and its imaginative expression in myth. Classical myth had been a very rich element in Renaissance poetry from Spenser to Milton, but had been blighted by Augustan rationalism. It revived with the romantic religion of Nature and the imagination. Wordsworth's sonnet "The World Is Too Much With Us" shows the attraction of classical myth for Wordsworth. Wordsworth here points out that the Greeks, who saw Proteus rising from the sea and heard old Triton blow his horn, were nearer religion than Christian Englishmen bent upon making money and with no eye or ear for Nature. Keats's Sleep and Poetry contains echoes of Wordsworth's sonnet.

No First Hand Knowledge of Greek Literature: - Keats had no first-hand knowledge of Greek literature. He derived his knowledge of

translations and books of reference like Chapman's translation of Homer, and Lempriere's Classical Dictionary. His sonnet on Seeing the Elgin Marbles reveals the important influence exerted on him by Greek sculpture. According to a critic, Hyperion is in poetry what the Elgin Marbles are in sculpture. The calm grandeur of Greek art, its majesty and symmetry and simplicity, its economy of ornament and subordination of parts to the whole, came to Keats through his knowledge of these marbles. This influence is most obvious in the two odes, On Indolence and On a Grecian Urn.

His Limitations as a "Greek" : - But Keats has his limitations as a Greek. He does not write of Greek things in a Greek manner. Something indeed in Hyperion—at least in its first two books—he caught from Paradise Lost of the high restraint and calm which was common to the Greeks and Milton. But his palace of Hyperion, with its vague, far-dazzling pomps and phantom-terrors of coming doom, shows how far he is in workmanship from the Greek purity and precision of outline, and firm definition of individual images. Similarly one of the most characteristic images[1] of Nature from this poem shows not the simplicity of the Greek, but the complexity of the modern, sentiment of Nature, with its concourse of metaphors and epithets. Keats produces here every effect which a forest-scene by starlight can have upon the mind: the pre-eminence of the oaks among the other trees, their aspect of human venerableness, their verdure unseen in the darkness, the sense of their stillness and suspended life, etc.

The Absence of Certain Greek Elements from His Poetry: - The rooted artistic instincts of the Greeks were absent from Keats's nature and temperament. He did not have the Greek instinct of selection and simplification, or of a rejection of all beauties except the vital and the essential. He did not have the capacity to deal with his material in such a way that the main masses might stand out unconfused, in just proportions and with outlines perfectly clear. And like his aims and his gifts, he was in his workmanship essentially romantic, Gothic, English. At the time when he wrote Endymion, he believed that poetry should surprise by a fine excess, and the manner in which Keats deals with the Greek story of Endymion, is as far from being a Greek or classical manner as possible.

Sidney Colvin's Analysis of Keats's Hellenism: - "But though Keats sees the Greek world from afar, he sees it truly. The Greek touch is not his, but in his own rich and decorated English way he writes with a sure insight into the vital meaning of Greek ideas. For the story of the war of Titans and Olympians he had nothing to guide him except the information that he got from classical dictionaries. But as to the essential meaning of that warfare and its result, it could not possibly be understood more truly, or illustrated with more beauty and force, than by Keats in the speech of Oceanus in the Second Book. In the dethronement of an older and ruder worship by one more advanced and humane, in which idea of ethics and of arts held a larger place beside ideas of Nature and her brute powers—this idea has fully been brought out. Again, in conceiving and animating the colossal shapes of early gods, Keats shows a masterly instinct. This is clear from his choice of comparisons, drawn from the vast inarticulate sounds of Nature, by widen he seeks to make us realise their voices.

Hyperion as an Epic

Characteristics of an Epic Poem: - An epic is a long narrative poem with a lofty theme treated in a lofty style. An epic generally deals with the mighty deeds of heroes, be they men or gods or both. An epic Is always written in the same metre throughout. The subject of an epic poem may be some well-known legend or some momentous sequence of historical events. An epic poem portrays characters on a grand scale. An epic is written in a grand style. An epic has a grand underlying idea. Thus grandeur is the keynote of an epic poem. Some of the best-known epic poems in western literature are the Iliad and the Odyssey by Homer, and the Divine Comedy by Dante. (In Indian literature the Ramayana and the Mahabharata are outstanding examples of epic poetry recognized by the whole world).

The Subject of Keats's Epic Poem "Hyperion": - Keats intended his Hyperion to be an epic poem. It was originally meant to be an epic in ten or twelve books. Keats's purpose was to describe the warfare of the earlier Titanic dynasty with the later Olympian dynasty of Greek gods and, in particular, one episode of that warfare, namely the dethronement of the sun-god Hyperion by a younger god called Apollo. The theme of the war between the Titans and the Olympians who overthrew the former often occurs in the literature which Keats was fond of reading. The specific theme, namely the dethronement of Hyperion, the old sun-god, by Apollo, the new god, is Keats's own. Apollo is also the god of poetry, and so the story of Apollo and Hyperion was perhaps going to symbolize the fate of the poet as a creator. Since the poem is unfinished, we cannot be sure. In any case, it is obvious that Keats's poem has a lofty theme.

Very Little Action in This Epic Poem: - An epic poem abounds in heroic actions. However, there is a dearth of action in Hyperion. The reason for this dearth is that, when the poem begins, the Titans have already been defeated by the Olympians. In other words, the main action of the story has already taken place. Perhaps, if Keats had continued with the poem, he would have narrated some of the major episodes in the warfare retros-pectively. But as the poem stands, there is some talk of heroic action, especially by Enceladus and Hyperion himself, but there is actually little of such action in the poem. (The material for the poem has been drawn from Greek mythology, a knowledge of which was derived by Keats from various sources.)

The Characters in The Poem: Saturn: -As already indicated, an epic poem has an exalted theme treated in an exalted style, but the portrayal of characters is perhaps even more important. The characters must be heroic beings. They may be men or gods, or both. Hyperion deals only with gods. There is, to be sure, one human being: namely Apollo, but he has a divine origin; and, what is more, he is deified in the poem, thus becoming a. god (who will challenge the sovereignty of Hyperion). The leading characters in Keats's poem are Saturn, Thea, Hyperion, Oceanus, Enceladus, Clymene, Mnemosyne, and Apollo. Keats's portrayal of these characters is certainly very impressive, even though most of the gods including a few from this list are suffering from a deep depression of spirits on account of the defeat which they have suffered at the hands of the Olympians. We meet Saturn in the very opening lines where he is hardly depicted as a heroic figure. Saturn is described as sitting in a valley, silent and motionless, with "his old right hand" lying on the ground "nerveless, listless, .dead, and unsceptred". Subsequently also he produces as impression, more of weakness and helplessness than of heroism. In reply to Thea's speech, for

defeat of the Titans in language which arouses our sympathy rather than admiration. Later still, we find him experiencing all those emotions which would become a human being more than an immortal god who had been the chief ruler of the universe. The ex-ruler of the universe is described as experiencing such emotions as grief, rage, fear, anxiety, but most of all despair. It seems that Fate has poured a mortal oil upon his head and deprived him of his god-like qualities and attributes. In spite of all this, the figure of Saturn does create an impression of hugeness and vastness. His very lament over the loss of his empire conveys to us some idea of his past glory.

Character-Portrayal: Thea: - The portrayal of Thea produces a slightly more favourable impression. Her very size and stature give rise to a feeling of awe in our hearts. The tall Amazon, we are told, would have looked like a pigmy by the side of this goddess. Thea would have seized Achilles by the hair and twisted his neck. She could have, with one finger, brought to a stop the ever-revolving Ixion's wheel. Her face was as large as that of Memphian Sphinx pedestalled in an Egyptian palace. Her face could be called beautiful if the expression of sorrow on it had not seemed to be even more beautiful than the face. She has one hand upon her heart as if she were feeling a cruel pain even though she is an immortal.

Character-Portrayal: Oceanus: -Of Oceanus we are not given any physical description, but he emerges as one of the most impressive figures in the poem. He is a sage and a philosopher. The defeat of the Titans has not made him despondent. He has been able to reconcile himself to the defeat by his cogitation, contemplation, and musing, so that there is an expression of "severe content" on his face. He tries his utmost to provide comfort to the grief-stricken gods and goddesses by his philosophy. His discourse is one of the grandest passages in the whole poem. It is, indeed, a memorable exhortation, pregnant with wisdom. His heroism lies in this capacity to explain and justify the defeat which the Titans have suffered at the hands of the younger gods. It is his great intellect and his deep wisdom which make a hero of him in our eyes.

Character-Portrayal: Enceladus: - Enceladus is another striking character in the poem. He was once tame and mild like an ox grazing calmly in a pasture. But at this time he is tiger-passioned, lion-thoughted, and wroth. In his imagination he is hurling mountains at his opponents in the second war which is yet to come. Oceanus's exhortation produces no effect at all on this fearless giant. He dismisses the counsel offered by Oceanus as of no account at all. He addresses Oceanus as "thou, sham monarch of the waves", and reminds him of the scalding which Oceanus had received during the war. Enceladus's view is that the Titans must not lose heart because of their defeat but should get ready to fight again in order "to stifle that puny essence in its tent" (that is, to destroy the power of Jove who, in the eyes of Enceladus, is a puny or insignificant being as compared to the older gods). Enceladus's defiance reminds us of Satan's in Paradise Lost.

Character-Portrayal: Clymene: -Another character who wins our sympathy and even our admiration is Clymene. She is a modest goddess who speaks somewhat shyly and timidly but who strikes us as an admirable being by virtue of her sensitive and artistic temperament. She is fond of singing and playing on musical instruments. When she suddenly hears a new kinds of music, which comes to her from an island in t

feels enchanted and bewitched. Although she tries to run away from that music, she is chased by a voice which keeps shouting the name of Apollo. Evidently, Clymene has felt completely overwhelmed by the sweetness of this new music the like of which had never been heard before.

Character-Portrayal: Mnemosyne: - Mnemosyne is another unforgettable character. It is she who confers godhood on Apollo. She has appeared to him in a dream, and she had placed by his side a golden lyre from the strings of which he was able to produce unprecedented music. It is by looking at her face that Apollo undergoes a transformation and "dies into life." In her face he reads a wondrous lesson; there he reads names, deeds, gray legends, dire events, rebellions, majesties, sovran voices, creations and destroyings, all at once. She personifies the past, the present, and even the future. She is undoubtedly a grand figure in the poem.

Character-Portrayal: Hyperion: - However, it is the portrayal of Hyperion which stirs in us feelings of awe, terror, admiration, and sympathy. Keats devotes plenty of space to a portrayal of Hyperion. Hyperion still retains his sovereignty, his rule, and his majesty. Blazing Hyperion sits on his "orbed fire", inhaling the incense sent up from man to the sun's god. He paces from hill to hill with "stride colossal". Entering his palace, he gives a roar which scares away the Hours. On the flares from vault to vault till he reaches the gate of the central dome where he stamps his foot fiercely. And yet, despite all this show of strength, the great sun-god is experiencing fear and apprehension lest he too should be dethroned. However, he takes heart when Father Uranus speaks to him in a whisper from heaven, urging him to rise above his fears and to go down to the earth in order to give whatever comfort and help he can to the defeated Titans. If Keats had continued the poem, he would have surely depicted Hyperion in action against Apollo, waging a mighty though losing battle against the younger god.

A Grand Idea Behind the Poem: Evolutionary Progress: - There is thus no doubt at all that the characters in this poem have been drawn on a grand scale and are worthy of an epic. We then come to the idea behind the poem. As already pointed out, this idea too is grand. In fact, there are two grand ideas behind the poem. One is to be found in the speech of Oceanus who urges the defeated Titans to accept their defeat with a good grace. He explains to them that evolution is the law of nature, and that no one can govern the universe for all time. He says that just as chaos and darkness had given way to light and life, and just as Heaven and Earth had been conquered by Saturn and his fellow-Titans, so the Titans must now accept their dethronement by the Olympians as an essential and inevitable part of the scheme of things. Saturn was not the first and he cannot be the last of powers. "So on our heels a fresh perfection treads", he says. Those who have conquered the Titans will themselves be conquered one day by some other gods. We may define the principle underlying the speech of Oceanus as evolutionary progress or as revolutionary development (coup d'etat). We can also regard his speech as advocating the ideal of beauty. Perhaps the most important lines in this speech are:

for 'tis the eternal law
That first in beauty should be first in might.

From this point of view Hyperion may be regarded as an epic of

The Other Grand Idea: A Knowledge of the Past: - The other grand of idea underlying this poem is that a poet can attain the height of his powers only if he comes into close contact with the stern and stark realities of human life. A poet must not live in an ivory tower. Apollo has been experiencing a vague sorrow. His sorrow has been a source of great perplexity to him because he cannot understand what is tormenting him. There are several questions which he puts to Mnemosyne, and he receives an answer simply by looking at her face more closely. From her face he derives enormous knowledge which makes a god of him. What is this knowledge which he obtains? This is knowledge of the entire history of mankind. Apollo's attaining this knowledge means that he has become fully acquainted with the sorrows, sufferings, agonies, and the tumults of the life of mankind. It is his acquisition of this knowledge which transforms Apollo into a god. In symbolic terms, the transformation of Apollo into a god means that the poet Keats has attained ripeness and maturity. So far Keats had only been theoretically talking about the strife and the agonies of the human heart; but now he has come into a direct contact with those aspects, of human life. Like Apollo, Keats now "dies into life".

Certain Other Features of an Epic in "Hyperion" : - Then there are certain other features of this poem which give it the character of an epic. There is an invocation to the Muse at the beginning of Book III. Invocations are generally a part of the machinery of an epic poem. Then there is a long passage in which the various gods and goddesses are named and briefly described and individualized. This passage reminds us of the catalogue of warships in Homer's Iliad. The description of the fallen Titans in this poem reminds us of the description of the fallen angels in Milton's Paradise Lost. The conference of the Titans is akin to the conference of the angels in that poem. Enceladus, like Moloch in Paradise Lost, urges open war; while Oceanus, like Belial in Paradise Lost, stands for more moderate measures. And there are several other points of contact between this poem and Paradise Lost. Besides, Keats's poem moves within all the three worlds. The fallen Titans are hiding in a cave, that is, in the under-world; Hyperion is described as still ruling his planet of the sun in the sky; while Apollo is described as dwelling on an island in this world.

Epic Similes: - Another important feature of Hyperion is the use of epic similes by Keats. A famous simile is the one found in the passage which describes the tall oak trees dreaming all night without a stir. Thea's words to Saturn came and went like a gust of wind blowing suddenly through those oak trees which are regarded by the poet as "green-robed senators of mighty robes". Another epic smile is found in the passage where the noise heard from the immortals when a god proceeds to make a speech is compared to "the roar of bleak-grown pines".

In Praise of "Hyperion": -Hyperion has received some glowing tributes from poets and critics. Byron said: ''Hyperion seems actually inspired by the Titans and is as sublime as Aeschylus." Shelley said: "If Hyperion be not grand poetry, none has been produced by our contemporaries." Cazamian writes: "Hyperion is an epic poem in which Keats, competing with Milton on a footing of equality, set out to relate the celestial revolutions of pagan mythology, as did Milton the Christian cycle of a paradise lost and regained. Scarcely outlined as it is, already arresting by the vastness of conception which it promises by its visions of a gigantic and primitive world, this work stands out in wondrous majesty." Another critic describes it as "one of the grandest pc

language and in its grandeur one of the most spontaneous". According to yet another critic "no English poem of any" length since Milton—complete or fragmentary—begins with a more majestic sureness of phrase than Hyperion."

A Fault of Structure: - All this does not, however, mean that Hyperion is a perfect poem. It suffers from several imperfections and faults. In the first place, there is a fault in the structure. The first two books of the poem certainly form one compact unit. Here the poet sticks to the main line of the story. There is no digression, and no deviation from the chief concern of the poem. Every single line is relevant to the theme. But Book III marks a sudden and unexpected departure from the subject, thus giving a jolt to our minds. Book III has not been integrated with the first two books of the poem as it stands. Of course, if Keats have gone on with the poem and completed it, Book III would too have fallen into its proper place. In that case, Keats would have picked up the thread of the story where he left off at the end of Book II and, after describing some of the main episodes of the war between the Titans and the Olympians retrospectively, he would have depicted the conflict between Hyperion and the newly-deified Apollo, leading to Hyperion's defeat. But as it is, the reader cannot see any connection between the first two books and the third. There is thus a discontinuity.

Too much of the Miltonic Influence, Another Fault: - Another fault of the poem is an excess of the Miltonic influence. The Miltonic influence is certainly not altogether a fault because it is responsible for much of the majesty and grandeur of the poem; but too much of the Miltonic influence is certainly a flaw. Keats himself realized this and said that he had abandoned the poem because there were too many Miltonic inversions in it and because he could not write in Milton's artful humour.

Lack of Action: - There is a lack of action in the poem. An epic deals with mighty deeds. But no mighty deeds are performed in Hyperion as the poem stands. The mighty deeds lie either in the past or in the future but none in the present poem. There are certainly some dramatic situations such as Clymene's experience and Apollo's deification, but no heroic actions. This too is a weakness in the poem. Besides, the epic strain of the first two books gives way to a lyrical note in the third. This too is a flaw.

Other Faults, As Pointed Out by a Critic: - At least one critic raises certain fundamental objections to the poem. According to him, the poem begins with a premature sense of an ending. The poem emerges into a scene of inaction, immobility, and silence. From the very beginning, then, Keats's epic threatens to collapse under an impossible contradiction. How can a narrative move beyond its origin when that origin is itself both beginng and end. This critic also says that Keats portrays Saturn merely as a great fragment. "Farest on forest" hung above Saturn's head; Saturn's old right hand lay nerveless and listless; Saturn's realmless eyes were closed; and Saturn's head was bowed. Saturn is thus a thing of fragments: parts of him are magnified, but never, the whole. This critic further says that the state of spechlessness depicted at the beginning of the poem extends to the Titans themselves. The poem produces an impression not of an Aeschylean sublimity of style but the sublime immobility of death. However, it is not possible for us to agree with much of this criticism.

The Theme of Hyperion

The Subject of the Epic: the War between the Gods: - Although Hyperion is an incomplete poem and was therefore described as a fragment, yet the idea behind it emerges clearly as we go through it. The subject which Keats chose for his poem was the war between the Titans and the Olympians, and the victory of the latter over the former.

If the poem had been completed, Keats would almost certainly have described retrospectively some of the main episodes in the war which has ended when the poem begins. After describing the course of the war, he would have gone on to pick up the thread of the narrative from the point where Apollo is trans-formed into a god. Then would have come the crux of the whole saga, namely an encounter between Hyperion and Apollo, and the triumph of the latter. As it stands, the first two books of the epic describe the state of affairs after the war between the two classes of the gods has ended in the defeat of the Titans, with the exception of Hyperion who still retains his sovereignty over his realm of the sun. The Titans are feeling very despondent and are on the verge of total despair, with exception of Encladus who is still in a defiant mood.

Oceanus, Asked For His Views: - The chief of the Titans, namely Saturn, is feeling even more grief-stricken than the others. Hyperion's wife Thea comes to him and concurs with him so far as his bleak view of the situation is concerned. Satan laments the loss of the power and authority, which he says, he had always exercised in 3 benevolent manner so as to keep his subject happy. Thea takes him to the den where the other Titans sit or lie in a despondent state. There Saturn makes a speech to his fellow-gods, expressing his puzzlement over the defeat which they have suffered. At the end of his speech he turns to' Oceanus, the "sophist and sage", and asks him for help and guidance in the present situation. Saturn has perceived an expression of "severe content" on the face of Oceanus; and this makes him think that Oceanus may be able to throw some light on the problem which is baffling Saturn.

The Underlying Idea of the Poem, Stated by Oceanus: - It is the speech which Oceanus makes in reply to Saturn's question that contains the underlying idea of the whole poem. This underlying idea is that things can never stand still in this universe and that change and development are the law of Nature. According to Oceanus, progressive change must always take place (whether by evolution or by revolution). That is why we may say that the concept of evolutionary progress is the theme of the poem or that Keats is here writing an epic of the revolutionary idea. Oceanus makes some very significant and memorable remarks, his object being not to incite the gods against the victorious ones but to make it possible for them to reconcile themselves to their defeat.

Saturn, Not the Beginning nor the End: - Oceanus tells the gods that the proper course for them to follow now is to be contented with their lot and to accept it even if means a loss of dignity. He says that he would be able to provide much comfort to them by his arguments provided they are willing to draw comfort from the facts as they are. He says that the Titans have fallen from their high positions as a result of the operation of the law of Nature and not because of the destructive thunderbolts of Jove. He tells Saturn in particular that, having been the supreme ruler of the universe and having held a position far above the others, he had missed the small point which minds of a lower order would fully perceive. According to Oceanus, Saturn has missed tl

wisdom and truth. Oceanus says that Saturn should realize that just as he was not the first ruler of the universe so he cannot be the last ruler. Saturn could not have remained the ruler of the universe forever. "Thou art not the beginning nor the end," Oceanus tells him. Originally chaos and darkness had prevailed in the universe. From the chaos and darkness had come light, and with light had come life. It was at this point that the first gods, Heaven and Earth, came into being. Then Saturn was born, the first issue of the union of Heaven and Earth. Then all the rest of the race of Titans and the race of Giants followed, so that they all found themselves to be the rulers of the various beautiful kingdoms. Oceanus points out to his fellow-gods that they should not be depressed by the loss of their kingdoms, because the real height of supremacy lies in the ability to look facts in the face in a spirit of complete calmless:

And to envisage circumstance, all calm,
That is the top of sovereignty.

First in Beauty Should Be First in Might: - Oceanus, countinuing his discourse, says that the Titans who were born of the union of Heaven and Earth had surpassed their parents in beauty, in compactness, in symmetry, in will-power, in the freedom of action, in the spirit of comradeship, and in a thousand other ways. And just as they had surpassed their parents, so the next generation of gods, led by Jove, had surpassed the Titans:

So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,
A power more strong in beauty, born of us
And fated to excel us,………

Oceanus says that the Titans had to be succeeded by a power more beautiful and more strong than the Titans, even though that power had been begotten by the Titans themselves. The law governing the universe according to Oceanus is that "first in beauty should be first in might." According to this law, the Olympians (Jove and his comrades) would in course of time be dethroned by another race which would be more beautiful and therefore more strong. Oceanus then cites his own ease, saying that the new god of the sea possesses greater glory than Oceanus and has such a glow of beauty in his eyes that Oceanus had voluntarily surrendered his empire to him and departed thence to come to this den to meet his fellow-Titans. Oceanus ends his exhortation by saying to his fellow-Titans: "Receive the truth and let it be your balm."

Keats's Message in the Fragmentary Epic, Expressed Fully: - Now, this is the truth which Keats wants also us to recognize and accept. Change, flux, ferment, development, evolution, revolution—these are inevitable. Change may come steadily or change may come in the form of the French Revolution or the Russian Evolution; but change must come. Change may take place peacefully or change may come through conflict and war; but come it must. Mankind should remain prepared for change: slow and steady, or violent and swift. And change in this universe has always been progressive. Saturn claims that his rule was a benevolent one. Speaking to Thea, he deplores the fact that he would no longer be able to exercise his benign influence on the planets, on the winds and seas, and on the life of mankind. He deplores the fact that he would no longer able to perform those acts by means of which

used to give an outlet to his love for mankind as well as for the forces of Nature. He deplores the fact that he has lost his "strong identity" and his "real self". He says that he would try to re-establish himself as the chief ruler of the universe. But, in the light of Oceanus's discourse which comes later in the poem, we feel sure that Saturn's reasoning is fallacious. His rule must have been benign, as he says. But what makes him think that his successor would not prove even more benign or that his successor would not do greater good to the universe than Saturn himself done? The continuity of Saturn's rule would have meant stagnation. There is no end to the good that can be done to mankind, and there is no end to the evolutionary process so far as the universe as a whole is concerned. This is the valuable lesson which we are expected to draw from Keats's poem as it stands. The narrative about the war between the defeated gods and the victorious ones, and especially the encounter between Hyperion .and Apollo, is certainly not complete; but Keats's message is complete, though the poem is a fragment.

Oceanus's View Reinforced by Clymene's Experience: - The lesson urged by Oceanus is reinforced by Clymens's account of her strange experience. She had suddenly heard a new kind of music which had enchanted her. The new "blissful golden melody" which she had suddenly heard had made her "sick with joy and grief at once". She had felt joyous because of the repturous notes of music which she had heard, but she had felt sad at the thought that her own music had been superseded by this new music. She had fled from the spot but had been chased by a sweet voice which kept uttering the name of Apollo. Clymene's experience implies that a new musician has appeared on the scene and will now dethrone the existing deity governing the realm of music. This again is a case of evolutionary or revolutionary change. Clymene herself is reconciled to this change, but gods like Enceladus are not.

Enceladus's Militancy, Unjustified: - Enceladus refers to Oceanus as "over-wise" and to Clymene as "over-foolish". Enceladus is still in a defiant mood, and in his imagination is hurling mountains upon his enemies. Enceladus speaks scornfully about Oceanus, calling him "thou sham monarch of the waves." Enceladus is burning with the fire of revenge. He is not only sorry because the Titans have lost their realms but he is even more sorry at the loss of those days of peace and "slumberous calm" which the Titans used to enjoy during Saturn's reign. Enceladus argues that Hyperion is still undefeated, and that there is still a hope for the Titans to win a victory over the Olympians-and to re-establish themselves as the rulers of the universe. The point here is that Enceladus's whole approach is wrong because Enceladus has not been able to grasp the truth contained in the speech of Oceanus. Enceladus is an uncompromising militant. He would learn his lesson only when Hyperion too is overthrown.

An Epic of Beauty's Triumph: The Meaning of Beauty: - One other point that deserves attention in connection with the theme of this poem is that beauty is Oceanus's criterion of superiority. The eternal law, according to Oceanus, is that "first in beauty should be first in might." now, we can understand the idea of evolutionary progress and we can understand also the revolutionary idea; but it is somewhat difficult to understand the concept of the progressive change brought about by superior beauty. Science teaches us the theory of evolution. This biological theory needs no explanation. We can also understand evolutionaty development or revolutionary changes in the political, social, and cultural life of mankind. History provides countless exampl

changes. In fact, changes of this kind are taking place before our very eyes. But what does Oceanus or Keats mean by saying that first in beauty should be first in might? Well, this poem is not a scientific discourse. Keats wants us to look at the evolutionary development or progress with the eyes of a poet and not with the eyes of a scientist. For Keats, beauty was the supreme consideration. Beauty was the supreme power in his eyes. Beauty was a magnificent obsession with him. "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever", he had written. Later he was to write:

Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty,—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

Of course, beauty does not merely mean physical attractiveness. For the mature Keats, beauty came to be identified with truth. Beauty has thus intellectual and philosophical connotations in Keats's eyes, Truth implies all the facts of life in the aggregate, all the accumulated knowledge and wisdom of all mankind. It is only a man with a vast vision who can accept the entire range of the life of the universe, including the life of mankind, and who can be said to have a capacity to appreciate beauty. Interpreted thus, Oceanus's criterion of beauty does not conflict basically with the scientific view of evolution. Thus considered, Keats's poem becomes an epic of beauty's triumph. Keats's approach to the whole issue is aesthetic, as is con-finned by the experience of Clymene who represents the artistic temperament.

The Relevance of Apollo's Deification in Book III: - A discussion of the theme' of the Hyperion cannot end here. There is something more to it. While the first two books form a compact unit, Book III marks an abrupt transition which mars the structure of the poem. Book III contains an account of the experience by which Apollo was transformed into a god. Now, if Keats had been able to complete the poem, this particular episode would have fallen into place. After describing the process of Apollo's deification, Keats would have gone on to describe a second war between the Titans (with Hyperion and Enceladus at their head) and the Olympians (with Jove as their leader). The central episode in this second conflict would have been an encounter between Hyperion and Apollo in which Apollo would have won, not by the force of arms but by the sheer power of his enchanting music. Perhaps, Hyperion, overwhelmed by that music, would have surrendered as readily to his opponent as Oceanus had previously surrendered to Neptune. But the poem breaks off at the point where Apollo has been transfigured and deified.

A Second Theme of the Poem: The Symbolism of Apollo's Deification: -The process by which Apollo becomes a god is itself significant because here we have, in additions to its obvious meaning, a symbolic description by Keats of Keats's own emergence as a mature poet. In symbolic terms, Apollo is Keats himself. Apollo has been feeling afflicated by a vague grief and has often wept because of this grief. When he comes into contact with Mnemosyne, he experiences a strange exhiliration and asks her several questions regarding the nature of this universe and the divinity who controls the powers of Nature. He speaks to her of his "aching ignorance". Mnemosyne makes no reply. Apollo thereupon suddenly discovers a wonderful meaning in the expression of her silent face. Her face proves to be a source of infinite knowledge to him and he says that this new knowledge which he has derived from her face mak

become a god. He reads in her face names, deeds, gray legends, dire events, rebellions, majesties, sovran voices, agonies, creations and destroyings. Thereupon he is shaken by convulsions and tortured by an indescribable agony. He experiences the agony of a dying man but in the very moment of his death he is reborn. He dies into life, and he is reborn as a celestial being. Apollo has become a god. In symbolic terms, Keats the poet has attained matarity and the ripeness of his poetic powers. Keats has acquired "the lore of good and ill" and, leaving the world of Flora and old Pan far behind, he has passed to the nobler world of human suffering and human strife. Now he will write truer and higher poetry than before (and the great odes were a specimen of that poetry). It is to be noted that Mnemosyne's face contains all life, past, present, and even to come. She is the eternal existence of the universe, as it were. She belongs to the old order, and also to the new, for she is immanent and ever-lasting. She is a mirror of all the essential facts of life—"agonies, creations and destroyings." And of her Keats had dreamed. She was "the vast idea" that had come to him that night as he slept on Leighs Hunt's sofa. She had become the "might abstract idea of beauty in all things"; and Keats had struggled through "purgatory blind" for a vision of her, face to face. Now he had achieved what he sought, and "knowledge enormous mode a god of him" through the pain of a death and a second birth. Keats has become a true poet through a comprehension of history and change human suffering.

A Complete Poem in One Sense: - Thus Hyperion is a complete poem so far as its basic themes are concerned. What is not complete is the story of the conflict between Hyperion and Apollo.

Hedda Gabler

Life and Works of Henrik Ibsen

Ibsen, born Henrik Johan Ibsen in 1828 in Skien, Norway, was the eldest of five children after the early death of an older brother. His father, Knud Ibsen, a product of a long line of sea captains, had been born in 1797 in Skein and married Marichen Cornelia Martie Altenburg, a German daughter of a merchant, in 1825. Though Ibsen later reported that Skein was a pleasant place during his youth, his own childhood was not particularly happy. Described as an unsociable child, his sense of isolation was increased at the age of sixteen when his father's business was found to be in such disrepair that everything had to be sold to meet his creditors. On top of this, a rumour, to which young Ibsen was privy, began to be circulated that Henrik was the illegitimate son of another man. This fear (never proved) manifested itself in a theme of illegitimate offspring in Ibsen's later work. After Knud's business was possessed, all that remained of the family's former wealth was a dilapidated farmhouse at the outskirts of Skein.

At the farmhouse, Ibsen began to attend a small middle-class school where he cultivated a talent for painting, if nothing else. In 1843, at the age of fifteen, Ibsen was confirmed and taken from school. Though he had declared his interest in becoming a painter, Ibsen was apprenticed to an apothecary shortly before his sixteenth birthday.

Leaving his family, Ibsen travelled to Grimstad, a small, isolated town, to begin his apprenticeship where he studied with the hopes of gaining admissions to the University to study medicine. (He also fathered an illegitimate son by the servant of the apothecary.)Despite his unhappy lot, Grimstad is where Ibsen began to write in earnest. Inspired by the revolution of 1848 that was being felt throughout Europe, Ibsen wrote satire and elegant poetry. At the age of twenty-one, Ibsen left Grimstad for the capitol. While in Christiania (now Oslo), Ibsen passed his exams but opted not to pursue his education, instead turning to playwriting and journalism. It was here that he penned his first play, Cataline. Ibsen also spent time analysing and criticizing modern Norwegian literature.

Still poor, Ibsen gladly accepted a contract to write for and help manage the newly constituted National Theatre in Bergen in 1851. Untrained and largely uneducated, Ibsen learned much from his time at the theatre, producing such works as St. John's Night. The majority of his writings of this period were based on folksongs, folklore, and history. In1858, Ibsen moved back to Christiania to become the creative director of the city's Norwegian Theatre.

That same year, Ibsen married Suzannah Thoresen, with whom he fathered a child named Sigurd Ibsen. Though his plays suggest otherwise, Ibsen revered the state of marriage, believing that it was possible for two people to travel through life as perfect, happy equals. During this period, Ibsen also developed a daily routine from which he would not deviate until his first stroke in 1901: he would rise, consume a small breakfast, take a long walk, write for five hours, eat dinner, and finish the night off with entertainment or in bed. Despite this routine, Ibsen found his life in Bergen difficult. Luckily, in 1864, his frien

him money that they had collected, allowing him to move to Italy. He was to spend the next twenty-seven years living in Italy and Germany. During this time abroad, he authored a number of successful works, including Brand (1866) and Peer Gynt (1867).

Ibsen moved to Dresden in 1868 and then Munich in 1875. It was in Munich, in 1879that Ibsen wrote his ground-breaking play, A Doll's House. He pursued his interest in realistic drama for the next decade, earning international acclaim; many of his works were published in translation and performed throughout Europe. Ibsen eventually turned to a new style of writing, abandoning his interest in realism for a series of so-called symbolic dramas. He completed his last work in exile, Hedda Gabbler, in 1890.

After being away from Norway for twenty-seven years, Ibsen and Suzanna returned in 1891. Shortly afterwards, he finished writing The Master Builder and then took a short break. In late 1893, in need of moist air to help cure her recurring gout, Suzannah left for southern Italy. While his wife was away, Ibsen found a companion in a young female pianist, Hildur Andersen, with whom he spent a great deal of time and corresponded with even after Suzannah¹s return. Ibsen's relationship with Andersen was characteristic of his larger interest in the younger generation; he was famous for seeking out their ideas and encouraging their writing. After suffering a series of strokes, Ibsen died in 1906 at the age of seventy-eight after having been unable to write for the last few years of his life.

The Rebel: - In a letter to George Brandes, shortly after the Paris Commune, Henrik Ibsen wrote concerning the State and political liberty:

> *"The State is the curse of the individual. How has the national strength of Prussia been purchased? By the sinking of the individual in a political and geographical formula..... The State must go! That will be a revolution that will find me on its side. Undermine the idea of the State, set up in its place spontaneous action, and the idea that spiritual relationship is the only thing that makes for unity, and you will start the elements of a liberty which will be something worth possessing."*

The State was not the only bête noire of Henrik Ibsen. Every other institution that, like the State, rests upon a lie was an iniquity to him. Uncompromising demolisher of all false idols and dynamiter of all social shams and hypocrisy, Ibsen consistently strove to uproot every stone of our social structure. Above all did he thunder his fiery indictment against the four cardinal sins of modern society: the Lie inherent in our social arrangements; Sacrifice and Duty, the twin curses that fetter the spirit of man; the narrow-mindedness and pettiness of Provincialism, that stifles all growth; and the Lack of Joy and Purpose in Work which turns life into a vale of misery and tears.

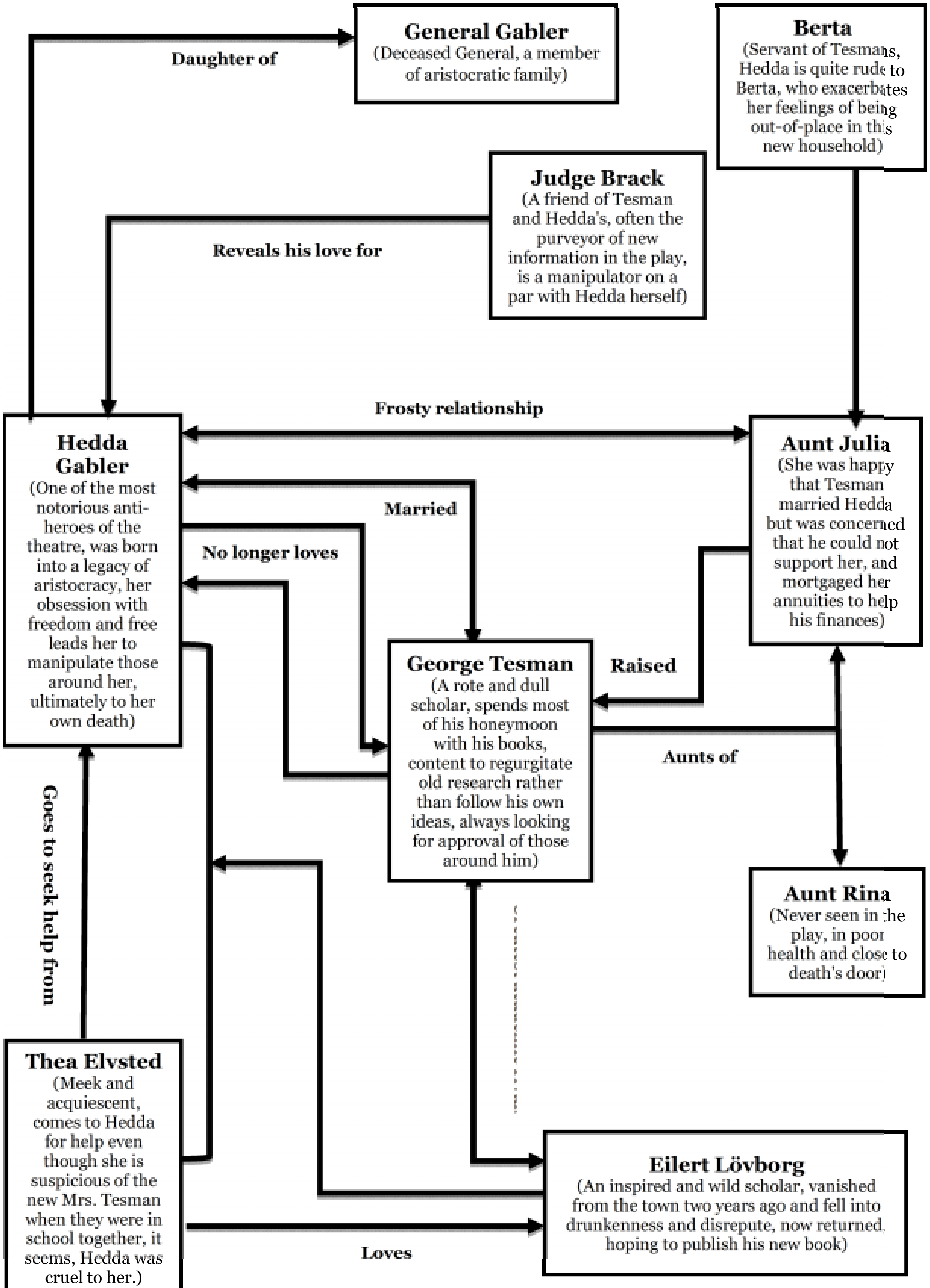
Father of Modern Drama: - Henrik Ibsen, Norwegian playwright from the 19th Century, has been called the "Father of Modern Drama." This title, exclusively given to him is arguably not an understatement; the playwright's personal and public life significantly influenced his dramatic plays containing various political, religious, and historical messages. Like Shakespeare, Ibsen tried to incorporate as much prose writing into his plays as possible without losing the story's focal point. Shakespeare's work convinced Ibsen that serious drama must strive towards a psychological truth and form its foundation on the characters and conflicts of mankind. Ibsen tried to incorporate social and psychological problems in realistic contemporary settings in his plays; each play dealing with th

called a "problem play."(Henrik Ibsen Essay) While living in Norway for much of his youth, Ibsen experienced the horrors of poverty, loneliness, and disgrace of himself, his family, and his country. Aside from the negative aspects of his childhood, he was fortunate to experience the joys of literature, transition from boy to man, and the importance of friendship. Every main detail surrounding Ibsen's life is somehow intertwined within his literary works.

In A Doll's House (1879), a family experiences severe financial problems after Norah Helmer, a young wife, secretly borrows an inordinate amount of money to send her husband to a warmer climate, and improve his health after becoming seriously ill. She keeps this expenditure a secret from her husband knowing he would be furious. To pay back the person she borrowed the money from, she saves as much money as possible by purchasing the poorest quality items for herself. (Ibsen, 1-96)

Not only did Ibsen write about various families' financial problems, he also wrote about illegitimate children. An example of this can be found in one of Ibsen's most successful and well-known plays, The Wild Duck (1884). In this play, Gregers Werle, a young man returns to the house of his wealthy and cynical father, Hakon Werle. The two have not seen or spoken to each other in seventeen years. The reason Gregers visits his father is because Hakon is getting married, and Gregers rightfully opposes the marriage. While on his visit, Gregers meets up with an old friend, Hialmar Ekdal. He [Gregers] learns his father arranged for his former mistress, Gina, to marry Hialmar. Hilamer does not know that his wife was the former mistress of Hakon Werle. Hialmar and Gina have a daughter together, Hedvig, and later in the play, Hilamer discovers the truth behind the former love affair between Gina and Hakon. He questions if Hedvig is his legitimate daughter. Hialmer shuts himself up from his family, and distraught Hedvig shoots herself with an old hunting pistol. (Ibsen, 1-384)

Ibsen's superior plays have distinguished him as one of the greatest playwrights of all time next to other notable playwrights like Aristophanes, Voltaire, and even Shakespeare. Ibsen's "problem plays" have helped people reexamine the world around them, and fix the problems that menace society.



Character Map of Hedda Gabler

Summary and Analysis of Act I

Summary

After a six-months wedding trip, the bride and groom have returned home. Aunt Julia, George's aunt, arrives to welcome them the following morning. As the curtain rises, the motherly old lady enters the well-furnished living room. She hands a bouquet of flowers to Bertha, the servant, who places them among the others which decorate the room at every corner. The aunt and the maid converse about the newlyweds, remarking with wonder and pride that the orphan nephew Miss Tesman raised is now a professor married to General Gabler's daughter.

At this point George enters, greeting his aunt with warmth and affection. She inquires about the honeymoon, expecting to hear details of the romantic journey the young couple took touring southern Europe. Instead, George delightedly recalls his tours through the archives and the collections of various libraries in order to gather research materials for his intended book, "The Domestic Industries of Brabant during the Middle Ages." His aunt, still curious, asks if George has "anything special" to tell her, if he has "any expectations," but George merely answers that he expects to be appointed a professor. Aunt Julia mentions George's former colleague Eilert Lövborg. Despite publishing a recent book, she says, Lövborg has fallen a victim to his own misguided excesses. She is glad that her nephew's abilities will no longer be eclipsed by Lövborg's.

This brilliant but undisciplined young man was in love with Hedda some years ago, and they were close comrades. Confessing to her all his extravagant dissipations, his ambitions, the young man exposed his soul to this sheltered girl who was fascinated by a knowledge of life forbidden to her. When the friendship became serious, Hedda threatened Lövborg with her pistol, and he disappeared from her life from that moment on. George has no knowledge of his wife's former relationship with his friend.

The brief mention of Lövborg prefaces Hedda Gabler's entrance. She is tall and lovely, about twenty-eight years old, and responds coldly to the warmth of Miss Tesman's greeting. She is obviously bored by George's relatives and shows no interest when her husband exclaims with pleasure over the pair of his old slippers Aunt Julia has brought him. Embroidered by Rina, the invalid sister of Miss Tesman, the slippers recall for George cherished memories of his childhood.

Hedda abruptly changes the subject, complaining that the servant has thrown her old bonnet on one of the chairs. The hat, however, belongs to Aunt Julia, who has just purchased it in honor of George's bride. To overcome the embarrassment, George hastily admires the bonnet, then bids his aunt admire Hedda's splendid appearance and to note how she has filled out from the journey. Angry, Hedda insists she looks the same as always, but Miss Tesman is enraptured at the implied pregnancy. Emotionally, she blesses Hedda Tesman "for George's sake." Promising to call each day, she takes her leave.

The maid announces an unexpected caller, a younger schoolmate of Hedda and a former acquaintance of George. Nervous and shy, Thea Elvsted explains the purpose of her visit. For the past year, Eilert Lövborg has lived in her house as tutor to her husband's children. The

writer's conduct this past year has been irreproachable, Thea says, and he has managed to complete his successful new book while at the Elvsteds' without once succumbing to temptation. Now that Lövborg has left their village, she is worried, for he has already remained a week "in this terrible town" without sending news of his whereabouts. Thea begs the Tesmans to receive him kindly if Eilert should visit them. Eager to extend hospitality to his former friend, George goes to write a letter of invitation.

Left alone with Thea, Hedda aggressively questions the reluctant younger woman, promising that they shall be close friends and address one another as "du." Thea admits that her marriage is not a happy one. She has nothing in common with her elderly husband, who married her because it is cheaper to keep a wife rather than a housekeeper to look after the children.

Gaining confidence, Thea tells Hedda how a great friendship grew between Lövborg and herself until she gained an influence over him. "He never wrote anything without my assistance," she proudly declares; sharing Lövborg's work was the happiest time she has known all her life. The relationship means so much to her that Thea has run away from home in order to live where Eilert Lövborg lives.

Yet her happiness is insecure, she tells Hedda. Although Lövborg had mentioned it only once, a woman's shadow stands between them. Hedda intently leans forward, eager to hear more. All that Lövborg said, Thea replies, is that this woman threatened to shoot him with a pistol when they parted. Mrs. Elvsted has heard about a red-haired singer whom Eilert used to visit, and she is especially worried now that this woman is in town again.

The maid announces Judge Brack, a family friend who has arranged George's affairs so that he could borrow money for his wedding trip and the villa that Hedda had set her heart on. A handsome moustached gentleman, carefully groomed and youthfully dressed, enters. About forty-five years old, Brack is very smooth in manner and bows gracefully when he and Thea are introduced.

Judge talks with George about his debts while Hedda sees her guest to the door. When she returns, Brack announces his bad news: because Lövborg's book has been received so well, the writer might favourably compete for George's promised professorship. George is thunderstruck, but Hedda shrugs indifferently. "There will be a sort of sporting interest in that," she says, and her husband apologizes for being unable to provide the necessities she expected: a livened footman, a saddle horse, means for "going out into society." After Brack leaves, Hedda concludes wearily, "I shall have one thing at least to kill time with in the meanwhile — my pistols, George." She crosses to the next room, smiling coldly at her startled husband. "General Gabler's pistols!" she adds mockingly, and the curtain rings down.

Analysis

This first act, besides introducing characters, acquaints the audience with Hedda Gabler's surroundings in her new life as Mrs. Tesman. Brought up as a general's daughter accustomed to travel in aristocratic social circles, Hedda must confront her future as a housewife in a middle-class household. The fact that she is pregnant reinforces her potential role as homemaker. The nature of her doom is underscored by the character of Miss Juliana Tesman,

who represents the older generation of domestic womanhood who has devoted her life to the care of others.

George Tesman, good natured and sentimental, assumes that the duty of a husband is merely to satisfy the domestic requirements of his wife so that she can be happy in the confines of her home. With this in mind, he agrees that they shall keep an open house — in Hedda's chosen home — and maintain the luxuries important to proper entertaining. Believing that a woman naturally falls into household routines once she is married, George has no further insight into Hedda's temperament. George's research into the "domestic industries of medieval Brabant" is an ironic symbol of his conservative, simple-minded views of married life, as well as a symbol that indicates his inability to encompass other than material details.

As to his heroine, Ibsen establishes her main symptoms of disaffection with life: a profound emotional coldness, an incapacity to interest herself in anything besides social pleasures, and a destructive desire to control the lives of others. Hedda cannot respond to the warmth of Aunt Julia, she cannot abide the idea of expecting a child, and was totally bored during her wedding trip.

To further express her emotional sterility, Ibsen shows how Hedda is unable to reciprocate in a relationship. Like a young child, she can only receive without knowing how to give in return. Without reciprocating, she accepts George's love and support; by pretending friendship, she learns all about Thea's personal life yet reveals no confidences of her own. Later on, when Lövborg recalls his previous relationship with Hedda, he describes how she extracted detailed confessions from him yet withheld her own self-revelations. This intense, almost morbid interest in the lives of others is another aspect of her empty emotional life. At the same time that investigating and analysing other people's lives is one way for Hedda to gain some understanding of her own unsatisfied nature, she reveals her personal frigidity and adolescent self-centeredness.

This first act also demonstrates a pathological quality in Hedda's personality. Cruelly insulting Aunt Julia by complaining that it is the servant's bonnet lying in the chair, Hedda tries to undermine Miss Tesman's sense of worth. Compelling Thea to reveal her innermost feelings, she seems to search for Mrs. Elvsted's weaknesses so she can later use this knowledge for her own selfish purposes. Having established that his heroine is emotionally empty yet eager to learn how other people face life's experiences, Ibsen shows how the imperious and unsubmissive Hedda tries to destroy the personal values of those whose satisfactions she cannot attain.

Summary and Analysis of Act II

Summary

As the curtain rises, Hedda is busy loading one of her pistols. There is nothing else to do besides shoot, she tells Judge Brack, who has come to see George. As they chat, Hedda tells him how bored she was during her wedding trip. She complains that her husband, with his everlasting talk about medieval civilization, is also boring. She is glad that Brack is a lively conversationalist who is "not at all a specialist." Her visitor wonders why Hedda accepted George in the first place. "My day was done," she sighs. "I had positively danced myself tired

my dear judge." Besides, among all her suitors, George, "who is correctness itself," was the one who offered marriage and a promising economic future; she saw no reason to refuse his proposal.

Brack, having himself been one of Hedda's admirers, admits that he never considered marriage. He enjoys being their family friend, he says, adding, "especially a friend of the mistress of the house." Very smoothly, he suggests that Hedda accept him as a third party in her domestic circle, for a "triangular friendship" will be convenient to all concerned. Hedda would then be able to enjoy the companionship of one who is not "a specialist," and Brack's relation with George would continue as before. Hedda agrees without committing herself.

At this moment, George enters. He has just visited his invalid Aunt Rina, who is very sick, and he has brought some books, including the recent publication by Eilert Lövborg. Although George expects to attend Brack's bachelor party this evening, he says he is eager to begin reading Lövborg's book and will come downstairs when it is time to leave. Hedda and the judge are free to continue their conversation.

Brack cannot understand why she is constantly bored; isn't she mistress of the very house she had set her heart on? She never liked this villa, replies Hedda. The matter came up when George escorted her home from a party one evening. As a pretext for conversation with the shy historian, Hedda relates, she pretended great interest in the villa they were just passing. This sham enthusiasm provided the first bond of sympathy between herself and George; from this followed the courtship, engagement, and eventual marriage.

Brack observes that she requires a vocation as a relief from boredom. Hedda confesses she would like to try and push George into politics, but now that they have such meagre finances this is impossible. Having the responsibility of a child would give her life an objective, Brack ventures. "No responsibilities for me," Hedda retorts angrily, and the judge remarks that her instincts are very unlike those of ordinary women. She despairs her purposeless life. "I often think there is only one thing in the world I have any turn for," Hedda observes darkly, " — boring myself to death."

George, dressed for the dinner, comes to ask if Lövborg left any message. Don't expect him to join the party, Hedda says; he shall spend the evening with herself and Thea. At this moment, Lövborg enters. When they discuss his latest book, the writer denies its virtues, saying it is just a sop he threw to the critics. "This is the real book," he says drawing a packet from his coat, "the book I have put my true self into." Dealing with the "civilizing forces of the future," the manuscript excites George's curiosity and he is eager for Lövborg to read aloud from it. George is further delighted when his friend promises not to compete with him for the professorship. The only interest Lövborg has in making his scheduled lecture tour, he tells George, is to accomplish a "moral victory." Refusing to drink a glass of punch with Brack and George, Lövborg joins Hedda, and she shows him the photograph album of their wedding journey. While she impersonally points out dull landscapes, Lövborg reminds her of the time when they were close comrades and he exposed all his secret thoughts to her. Her interest was not motivated by love, she admits, but by curiosity to learn about the outside world. "Comradeship in the thirst of life" could have continued even when they became serious lovers, Lövborg pursues. He regrets that she did not shoot him down as she threatened, for he still finds her lovely and fascinating. I was afraid of a scandal, replies Hedda, and adds, "The fact that I dared not shoot you down — that was not my most arr

evening." Lövborg is filled with emotion. "Ah, Hedda! Hedda Gabler!" he murmurs. "Now I begin to see a hidden reason beneath our comradeship! You and I! After all, then, it was your craving for life — " and he understands that she was afraid to give herself in love.

Mrs. Elvsted appears, and as they sit down together, Lövborg exclaims how courageous and lovely and inspiring Thea has been for him. When Lövborg refuses her offer of punch, Hedda subtly taunts him for feeling insecure about his temperance vow. She says that George and Brack also noticed his lack of self-confidence. Again Lövborg refuses to drink, and Hedda turns smilingly to Thea. "You see," she says, "he is as firm as a rock." Thea needn't have run to her house, distracted with fear and worry about her friend's will power. Deeply injured at this lack of trust, Lövborg downs two cocktails in vengeance. Then he announces that he will, after all, join George and Brack at this evening's dinner party.

Hedda assures them she will entertain Mrs. Elvsted until the writer returns to escort her home. When the men go out, Hedda comforts the agitated Thea. He will return at ten o'clock, she tells her friend. "I can see him already — flushed and fearless — with vine leaves in his hair." As the curtain falls, the victorious Hedda draws Thea, limp with exhaustion and anxiety, into the dining room for tea.

Analysis

In this act, Hedda fully expresses her desire to have power over someone. Frustrated at being unable to push her husband into a political career, incapable of maternal feelings, Hedda strives to compete with Thea for her influence over Lövborg. Having restored his liberty, she now looks forward to Eilert's fulfilling her romantic image of him as the incarnation of "the joy of life": he shall return "flushed and fearless with vine leaves in his hair!" That she has at once destroyed Thea's life work and Lövborg's morale is unimportant to Hedda; she merely wishes to have proof of her own worth by having power over someone.

At the same time that her craving for life distinguishes Hedda from "ordinary women," she shows, in this act, her deep commitment to the same bourgeois ethics which chain a woman to her domestic duties. Expressing to the judge that she accepted George Tesman because he "is correctness itself," Hedda implicitly rejects Brack's proposition of a domestic triangle: such a scandalous relationship would be repugnant to her. The judge, not recognizing that Hedda maintains such strict conventions, believes she has accepted his frank proposal.

Eilert Lövborg, however, shows more insight into Hedda's nature. When he accuses her of cowardice, he recognizes that she was too much a conformist to love an erratic and unconventional personality. Nevertheless, at the time of their youthful friendship, Hedda expressed her "craving for life" by being fascinated by Eilert's intensity and brilliance; extracting detailed confessions from him was her way of vicariously experiencing a liberated and excessive way of life she was too afraid to live for herself.

Summary and Analysis of Act III

Summary

It is 7:00 the next morning. The ladies have been fitfully dozing during their night watch, and Hedda now sends Thea off for a good nap, promising to wake her when Lövborg arrives. When George appears, Hedda is wide awake and listens eagerly as he tells her of Lövborg's extravagant behaviour at the party. He was so drunk that he even dropped his manuscript without noticing, and George picked it up. George praises his friend's book, admitting he feels envious for being himself unable to accomplish such brilliant work. Hedda demands the packet of papers, saying she would like to keep it awhile and read the manuscript.

At this moment, George receives a telegram that his Aunt Rina is close to death. He rushes out, barely greeting Brack, who has just arrived. The judge describes the rest of Eilert's activities. After the party, Lövborg landed at another soiree given by the red-haired singer, Diana. Accusing her of robbing him, he caused such a disturbance that the police were called; to make matters worse, Lövborg resisted arrest by assaulting one of the officers.

Expecting Lövborg to seek Hedda's home as a refuge where he can meet with Mrs. Elvsted, Brack warns Hedda that he will resist any intrusion into the triangle; he wants nothing to threaten his free passage in and out of the Tesman residence. Hedda smiles mockingly at the implied threat. In other words, she calls to him as he goes, "you want to be the one cock in the basket."

When left alone, she takes the manuscript from the desk but replaces it hastily at Lövborg's approach. Thea Elvsted emerges to greet the dishevelled writer. He has come, he sorrowfully says, to say their ways must part; from now on she must live her life without him. Thea implores him to allow her to experience her crowning satisfaction: to be with him when the book appears. There will be no book, he answers, for he destroyed the manuscript. It is as if he "killed a little child," she says in despair, and because the "child" belonged to her too, he had no right to destroy it. Thea can do nothing but return home, facing a life without any future, without any further meaning.

Alone with Hedda, Lövborg declares he is unable to try to rebuild his life. Worse than destroying the manuscript, which he had in his keeping like his own child, he just lost it during this night of "debauchery and riotness," he tells Hedda. Having so deeply failed Mrs. Elvsted, he has no future and will "only try and make an end of it all — the sooner the better." "Eilert Lövborg — listen to me," Hedda commands. She takes one of her pistols from its case and hands it to him. "Will you not try to — to do it beautifully?" she whispers. Thrusting the gun into his breast pocket, Lövborg leaves her.

Hedda, once more alone, takes the packet of papers from her desk. Sitting by the stove, she thrusts some pages into the fire. "Now I am burning your child, Thea!" she breathes. Peeling off papers, she hands them, one by one, into the flames until the entire manuscript is consumed. "Your child and Eilert Lövborg's," says Hedda with satisfaction. "I am burning — I am burning your child!"

Analysis

In this act, Hedda has confronted another frustration. Instead of seeing the awaited Lövborg rise to his full stature as a liberated artist victoriously imbued with life's joy, she views a demoralized reveller who ruined the evening in a drunken orgy, facing, in addition, a possible jail sentence for assaulting a police officer.

Now that Thea has left the scene, however, she has one further chance of retaining her influence over Lövborg so that he will provide her with an act of "courage and freedom." Offering him the pistol, Hedda imagines that he will end his life bravely and romantically to accord with her favourite images of beauty enhanced by violence and death. Furthermore, the packet of papers she possesses represents a material hold she still has on Lövborg's destiny. By destroying the manuscript she had no share in creating or realizing, Hedda also kills the child she was unable to bear for Lövborg. By destroying that work of others which she should have accomplished herself, Hedda also destroys those constant reminders of her own inadequacies. Symbolically denying the life works of others, Hedda affirms her own unsatisfied sense of worth.

Summary and Analysis of Act IV

Summary

It is later in the evening. Miss Tesman enters, dressed in mourning. Hedda greets her, expressing regret for Rina's death. Aunt Julia plans to fill the gap in her life by finding someone to care for. Because it is necessary to live for someone, she says, she will seek an occupant for Rina's little room — some invalid in want of nursing.

After Julia leaves, George comes back, asking Hedda for the manuscript; he fears Lövborg might do himself injury before he can return it. Coolly, Hedda tells him she burned the papers. She wanted no one to put her husband "in the shade," she tells the delighted George, who never heard Hedda express her love for him.

Thea suddenly appears, apologizing for the intrusion. Having heard that Lövborg is in the hospital, she asks if they have further news of his condition. Brack, newly arrived, tells them that Lövborg wounded himself in the breast. "Not in the temple?" Hedda quickly inquires.

While Thea makes an effort to control herself, Hedda breaks the silence, declaring that there is beauty in this suicide, for Eilert has made up his account with life. "He has had the courage to do the one right thing," she affirms.

George expresses regret that Lövborg has left the world without bequeathing it "the book that would have immortalized his name." Mrs. Elvsted fumbles in her dress pocket. Producing many scraps of paper — "all the loose notes he used to dictate from" — she suggests that they might reconstruct the book. George is delighted. Having spent his career organizing other people's manuscripts, he is eager to dedicate himself to putting together Lövborg's notes. Forgetful of everything but the papers spread on the table before them, Thea and George begin the task.

Hedda languidly reclines in the armchair, Judge Brack at her side. It gives her a new feeling of freedom, she tells her admirer, to know that a "deed of deliberate courage is still possible in this world — a deed of spontaneous beauty." Brack dispels her illusions, informing her of the true circumstances of Lövborg's death, which he did not disclose to Thea. Lövborg did not die voluntarily, he tells the astonished Hedda. The police discovered the body in Diana's boudoir: Lövborg had forced his way into the singer's apartment, talking wildly about a "lost

child." While they struggled, the pistol in his breast pocket discharged itself, and he died from a bullet wound in his bowels.

Her shocked face is disfigured by an expression of loathing and despair. "Oh, what a curse is it that makes everything I touch turn ludicrous and mean?" she cries out. Brack remains unperturbed. One more disagreeable aspect remains, he says, for Lövborg must have stolen the pistol. Hedda passionately denies this, and Brack nods. He says that if someone were to identify the pistol, she herself would be drawn into the scandal. "So I am in your power, Judge Brack," says Hedda. "You have me at your beck and call from this time forward." Leaning closer, he assures her that he shall not "abuse his advantage."

Hedda stands behind Mrs. Elvsted, passing her hands affectionately through her friend's hair. "Here you are, Thea, sitting with George — just as you used to sit with Eilert Lövborg," and she asks whether she can inspire George as well as she used to inspire Eilert. Intently working, her husband exclaims that he begins to feel inspired by Thea and asks his wife to return to Judge Brack. "Is there nothing I can do to help you two?" asks Hedda. "No, nothing in the world," George answers without looking up.

He suggests to Thea that she rent the room in Aunt Julia's apartment; without disturbing Hedda, they can meet there every evening to work on the manuscript. "But how am I to get through the evenings out here?" Hedda calls from the back room. George assures her that the judge shall look in on her every now and then. Brack gaily adds that he shall visit "every blessed evening," and that "we shall get on capitally together, we two!" Loud and clear, Hedda answers, "Yes, don't you flatter yourself we will, Judge Brack. Now that you are the one cock in the basket — " A shot rings out. George, Mrs. Elvsted, and Brack discover Hedda stretched lifeless on the sofa; she has shot herself in the temple.

Analysis

Going beyond the destruction that Hedda began in the previous acts, circumstances depicted in the final scene destroy the life's work of each other character. Julia's sister dies, leaving the old aunt with no one to care for; George relinquishes his work on medieval Brabant; Thea has definitely lost Lövborg; and Hedda confronts profound disillusion when she learns of Eilert's ignoble death.

The secondary characters, however, all find vocational rebirth as they confront their ruined life purposes. Thea, having saved Lövborg's notes, begins, with George Tesman, to conceive a new "child"; the professor so expert at assembling other people's manuscripts can dedicate his abilities to reconstruct his dead friend's brilliant ideas; and Julia can again care for her beloved nephew now that Hedda is gone.

Hedda alone faces a life without a future. Deprived of her satisfaction at the beauty of Eilert's suicide, she learns that she was in fact responsible for the abhorrent manner of Lövborg's death. Her ideal of freedom, courage, and beauty turns into a loathsome reality. Judge Brack applies the final vulgar touch to a situation that Hedda already finds repulsive; he alone can inform the police of the facts that would implicate her in a shocking scandal. The conventional Hedda must either succumb to Brack's power or face a public inquiry. Now that even her husband has no further need of her, no one depends upon Hedda at this point. On the other

hand, she is unwillingly enthralled by the ruthless Brack. Deprived of freedom, Hedda faces either "boring herself to death" or committing a valiant suicide.

Hedda Gabler: The Historical, Social and Cultural Context

Hedda Gabler is not an easy character to get to know. At first reading she seems a bitter personality portrayed in an old-fashioned script set in an out-outmoded and foreign society. How could a woman in 102-year-old play possibly be understandable or relevant to the late-twentieth-century student? However, upon further examination, Hedda Gabler's fictional reality not only offers us the opportunity to observe the art and social concerns of Ibsen's day, but extends to us a paradigm by which we may compare and evaluate the principles of our day.

In approaching this play, it is important to recall that Hedda was written as a theatrical work in the realm of contemporary realism, not as a historical curio. While the differences of culture and period now put a certain distance between ourselves and the subject, Ibsen was most emphatic that his characters were representative of actual human beings. Hedda marked a return to the theatrical style which we term "realism," a method of playwriting in which the internal motivations of the personalities in the play are explored within a specific social context.

Norway was not so remote that it was unaffected by the feminist debate of the Victorian age. While in 1871 Denmark led the Scandinavian countries in initiating an organization for improving women's status, by the 1880s Norway had established a woman's rights movement of its own. Growing economic pressures made it increasingly difficult for the middle-class family to provide for unmarried daughters in the home, but both prejudice and legislation barred women from either meaningful education or dignified employment. Some change was soon forthcoming; women were admitted to the University of Christiania (Oslo) in 1882, and 1884 saw the founding of Norsk Kvinnesaksforening (Norwegian Women's Movement Association), a pioneering liberation coalition that remains active to this day. That same year Ibsen himself presented a petition to the government demanding that married women be granted the right to earnings and property.

Victorian attitudes were slower to change. While the lower class woman had for some time been allowed to work in the factories, concessions had never been made in the home. Men did not assist with domestic responsibilities, leaving the women their "natural" duties in keeping the house and raising the children. This order of affairs had support in the nineteenth century Darwinian sciences, medical and social experts alike taught that cultural, physiological, and psychological differences between genders were caused by evolutionary forces. The belief was that "women's individual evolution was arrested earlier than men's to permit the conservation of their energies for reproduction" . Women were considered biologically more intuitive, self-sacrificing, and tender then men, and thus naturally disposed to choose marriage and motherhood, any other choice was considered tragic. Even the arts of the day perpetuated this "ideology of domesticity":

The "angel in the house," sexually passive and refined, whose responsibility it was to oversee the provision of a sanctuary of well-ordered comfort and peace, became the literary ideal for

middle-class women. In all classes of society, hearth and home acquired the significance of religious symbolism.

Steven Mintz explains in A Prison of Expectations that a woman was expected to maintain a "walled garden" of a home, a place where her husband could find refuge and be purified from his encounters with the harsh realities of his ruthless business world, and a place where the innocence of her children could be protected. A wife was thought able to maintain this refuge because of her special virtues of femininity…"Women, by their very natures, were intended to purify the sphere of family and home" (Boswell 33).

The realm of womanly affairs, both literary and social, included motherhood. A mother was accountable for the health, manners and morals of her children. She was to be conscientious in training her daughters to assume future angelic duties. In addition to passing along the complex body taboos designed to defend purity from earthly animal passions, the middle-to-upper- class mother was to drill her girls in the niceties of the intricate feminine social duties that marked her place in the pecking order of bourgeois society. An unfortunate error in either discipline could destroy the young woman's reputation, and bar her from the polite circles that were her only outlets. Mothers were not as responsible for the daughters' intellectual education:

Schooling was often seen as of secondary importance to the influence of the home in the education of middle-class girls….The more prosperous families might send their daughters to expensive and select boarding schools for a while; the less wealthy were more likely to patronize small homely "academies" which aimed to foster those same ideals of bourgeois that were nurtured in the middle-class home. An examination of the curriculum (both formal and informal) of the majority of girls' boarding schools of the period will show that social values and objectives took precedence over academic goals: girls were educated with their marriage prospects and the ideal of the "cultivated homemaker" in mind.

Keeping in mind the ultimate goal of a "good marriage," both parents and schools tended to strongly discourage bookishness, vocational aspirations, and other unfeminine behavior. Instead, young women of all classes "expected to look after their families and hoped above all for a 'good' husband; that is, a good provider" (Lewis 11). Such would be the education that Hedda and Thea received both in society and at the school where they were classmates.

Viewed in the context of Ibsen's era, Hedda becomes the embodiment of the identity crisis facing the middle-class woman during that transitional time. Raised by a privileged father in the unlanded Norwegian upper-class, Hedda is seasoned in freedoms more typical of males of the period, including experience with rough horsemanship and guns. Her guns, however, are not tools but mementos and dangerous toys. She has been granted masculine leisure and tastes, but not corresponding responsibilities or a useful education. She can never be the son that the Victorian General would have wanted.

Neither can she be her mother's daughter. Significantly, Hedda's mother is completely absent from the narrative, whether destroyed by the loss of the old values, the coming of the new, or merely by childbirth, the reason is unknown. The system designed to transmit traditional values has broken down. There is no one to teach Hedda the specifics of the feminine codes in behavior or etiquette. The only inheritance which may have come from her mother is a

shabby old piano, a possession she both values and disdains. She will not discard it, but neither will she put it on public display as she will the pistols and the portrait of her father.

Hedda seems reluctant to face either the passing of the old ways or the changes she faces in marrying Tesman. She dislikes the smell of the decaying potpourri, and spends her time reminiscing and re-enacting portions of her past relationship with Lövborg. Having out of necessity achieved her destiny of a respectable marriage, she sees no hope for the future of that union. Sighing over September, she seems to have somehow missed her own summer: "Hedda is not unripe, but rather is like an all-too-early decayed Autumn, as she returns to the narrow perspectives of a child and its playful self-seeking".

Certainly she does not look forward to the birth of the child whose presence in her womb propels her inevitably towards a future of either death in childbed, or life as a mother (which, in her childhood situation, also meant absence or death). She has no alternative. By temperament and upbringing she is as unsuited for Thea's work as she is for Diana's. As a female, she can only covet parasite Judge Brack's male prerogatives. While she professes a desire to control destiny and make some real difference in a life, she sees no value in wife and motherhood, so vicariously participates in the romance of Lövborg's dissipations. Endowed with a taste for the trappings of wealth (such as servants and expensive clothes), and ambitious to make her mark in social circles, she lacks both the social training and the inherited money to advance beyond her bourgeois desires. She clings to the fading glories of her fame as the dashing Miss Gabler and seethes in impotent jealousy.

Discontented as she is, Hedda's suicide is still unexpected. One explanation of the violent act can be discovered in the Ibsen's own pattern of playwriting, shaped in part by the world that shaped the playwright. As Charles Lyons explains in Hedda Gabler: Gender, Role, and World,

The dramatic character, Hedda, is not determined merely by the social restrictions imposed upon the female at the end of the nineteenth century as that world is represented by the social dynamics of the play; the character is also configured by the social dynamics of Ibsen's basic sexual paradigm, a sexual paradigm that voices the male-dominated sexual ideology of Ibsen's moment in history mediated through the idiosyncrasies of his own psyche.

Conscious as he was of the changing world around him, Ibsen could not help be influenced by the literary constructs that in part framed his developing intellect. Hedda, as well as Thea, may be seen as children of those literary constructions. According to the prevailing literature, if a woman was unable to succeed as an angel, she must be dealt with as a monster. And Ibsen not only attacked such a notion, in some ways, he can be seen as perpetuating it.

In Hedda Gabler, wife Hedda becomes just such a death-giving fiend. Masculinized out of her angelhood, she turns her powers to malevolent manipulation, pitching family members against each other, dominating her friends, burning the fruits of Lövborg's labours before driving him to emasculate himself, and finally murdering her own child. Unlike most of Ibsen's heroines, she makes no real self-discovery and achieves no growth. Her suicide accomplishes nothing. Is Thea, therefore, the real heroine of the play? She is the one with the courage to ignore respectability, to change her life and leave her passionless marriage in pursuit of the man she loves. It would seem that Thea is as deserving the death sentence as surely as Hedda. Thea's abandonment of her role as step-mother can be construed as a drive to actually fulfil her destiny as the snow-white angel. It is her purity that h

it is her presence that has so inspired him to write his masterpiece; the book is acknowledged as Lövborg's and Thea's sexless "Brain child." Thea, of course, did none of the actual writing, as the ingrained belief of the Medieval, Romantic, and Victorian eras was in the actual "sonship" of the written text. According to that belief, an author literally fathered, with his female muse, a posterity of "brain children." The power to create was thus exclusively male, and women attempting to write were considered presumptuous, freakish, unnatural, and subject to various health problems.

Thea accomplished her angelic potential while actually in the Elvsted home, surviving in a dual marriage as she kept house and raised one man's children while supporting another man with her love and inspiration. When that double-husband divided, and Thea was forced to divide her devotions and chose to leave the home, disaster ensued. She could neither keep Lövborg from falling back into evil ways, nor protect their literary child. In fact, Lövborg blamed her distrust of him for driving him back to drink. Thea could only redeem herself by offering to sacrifice herself in resurrecting Lövborg's book. The play seems to suggest that she will additionally serve Tesman as a far superior replacement for Hedda. Once Hedda is destroyed, and Thea suitably paired Tesman, literary moral order will once again be restored. Hedda Gabler is not only a fascinating play in itself, but it also serves as a reminder of a blind spot in our own day.

Major Themes

Individual vs. Group: - Hedda is preoccupied with self-determination - the idea that she can dictate the course of her own life, no matter how much societal pressure may try to move her along a different course. And yet, as the play moves on, we see just how much a victim Hedda is of the "group": she married a man she didn't love simply because her "time ran out"; will have children simply because she is supposed to; and ultimately destroys herself because she fears being thrust into the spotlight of a public scandal. What Hedda discovers is that an individual has no power in the face of a group unless they can manipulate that group - something that she continually fails to do.

Self-Liberation vs. Self-Renunciation: - Hedda believes that the power to determine when and how one dies is the ultimate freedom, and is perhaps the only real control that an individual has in life. At first, she attempts to prove this vicariously by encouraging Lovborg to have a "beautiful death" - she gives him one of her pistols, essentially pulling all the strings that might make him veer towards suicide. However, when Lovborg dies from an unintended shot to the groin, Hedda realizes that the beautiful death is still a fantasy - and she can only bring it to life for herself. When she does, Brack exclaims, in the last, highly charged line of the play, "No one does that!"

Anti-tragedy vs. Tragedy: - While *Hedda Gabler* has the structure of a classical tragedy, and perhaps the trappings of it, there is also the argument that Hedda is the anti-tragedy. As Caroline W. Mayerson writes, "Hedda is incapable of making the distinction between an exhibitionistic gesture which inflates the ego, and the tragic death, in which the ego is sublimated in order that the values of life may be extended and reborn. Her inability to perceive the difference between melodrama and tragedy accounts for the disparity between Hedda's presumptive view of her own suicide and our evaluation of its significance." In other words, while Hedda declares that it is a beautiful death that she seeks, and a beautiful death

that offers the individual liberation from the mundane trivialities of society, upon her own death, we see only the futility of it, the *smallness* of it. Ultimately, Hedda's death seems to have served no purpose except as a selfish proclamation of principles pushed too far.

Sex vs. Sterility: - The "notorious" female character in dramatic works of literature is frequently a firebrand, fully in control of her sexuality and conscious of her power over men. Hedda, however, seems terribly afraid of her own sexuality - she nearly kills Lovborg when he gets too close to her, rebuffs Brack's suggestion that she would jump out of her marriage to Tesman, even though she seems to have little interest in her new husband, and ultimately shows little concern for her own soon-to-be-born child. Indeed, as the play goes on, we wonder how Hedda ever got pregnant at all - she's as mystified by her condition as the audience, and refuses to even discuss or acknowledge it. This one possibility of fecundity - of proving her worth as a "woman" - is decisively ignored and thus implicitly refused.

Wild Nature vs. Tamed Assimilation: - One of the more compelling themes in *Hedda Gabler* involves how an individual is groomed to cope with the stifling pressures of society, and whether they maintain the trappings of their "wild" self or succumb completely to a community's norms. Hedda is obviously torn between the two (see "Individual vs. Group"), but right before shooting herself, she plays a "wild piano piece", as if to claim her soul before burying it. Meanwhile, Tesman is at odds with Lovborg: the former can only regurgitate other people's tried-and-tested ideas, while the latter is an untamed genius who simply writes down his thoughts and theories and finds them met with acclaim. Tesman, however, is too afraid to ever indulge his own original thoughts, and so dedicates his life to reconstructing Lovborg's ideas and taking credit for them.

"Old Woman" vs. "New Woman": - At the time Ibsen wrote *Hedda Gabler*, the term "New Woman" had emerged to describe "women who were pushing against the limits which society imposed on women." While the New Woman sought self-determination and freedom, as well as equality with males and a true understanding of female sexuality, the Old Woman believed in self-sacrifice, a woman's duty to her husband, and sexuality only in terms of childbearing. Hedda is a model case of a "New Woman" who ultimately finds no satisfaction in liberation. This is not to say that Ibsen by any stretch of the imagination intends *Hedda Gabler* as a critique of the New Woman; to the contrary, he is offering a critique of the resistance against it.

Motivation vs. Boredom: - One of the great questions of *Hedda Gabler* is whether Hedda's actions are inspired by genuine principles, or whether she is motivated entirely by boredom. If we examine the above theme of Old Woman vs. New Woman, it is possible to interpret her character as a New Woman shoved into Old Woman trappings, and who thus naturally gravitates towards pushing limits, pulling strings, and manipulating others in the hopes of freeing herself. She is a New Woman, then, looking for her place in life. However, Hedda continuously finds that her efforts only leave her even more bored. At one point, she even tells Tesman that her only talent in life is "boring herself to death" - an eerie prophecy of the events to come.

Women in Hedda Gabler

Modern criticism of ***Hedda Gabler*** rests on the idea that a male dominated society repressed and limited Hedda's brilliance. Ibsen studied the repressed conditions of women in many of his plays; however his own view of women was limited by his "celebration of their primary role as the nurturing mothers whose mission is to educate the young." No wonder there is no solution for Hedda but suicide. She clearly would never make a good mother, and there was nothing else for such a woman to do unless she could nurture a man's genius, as Thea did. Nurturing genius, however, was clearly not Hedda's gift. General Gabler's pistols were, finally, the only option for his daughter. ***Hedda Gabler*** is set about thirty years earlier than when it was written. Clurman writes that:

> *It was a period, Ibsen once remarked, when women were not allowed to play any role apart from marriage and motherhood. The "protection" they enjoyed separated them from the realities of life. Hedda shuns everything painful and ugly; she cannot tolerate the sight of sickness or death. She is already pregnant when the play opens, but mention of it is abhorrent to her….Small wonder then that she admits that all she is good for is boring herself to death.*

And yet Thea breaks out of this sheltered life. Hedda is a victim, but she is also a coward. Both George Tesman and Eilert Lövborg develop their identities through their professions. They compete for fame and position through training, effort and intellect. Hedda, however, has no profession, nor does she care about anything. She has no interest in what Eilert writes, only in his potential fame and glamour, and in his rivalry with her husband. She can only compete with Thea for control of a man, not to develop a personal identity. Worse, Hedda's control is destructive, while Thea's is healing and creative. Hedda married George Tesman to establish a social life as the wife of a professor; she wanted to control Eilert Lövborg destructively to rival Thea's constructive control as the inspiring force behind his genius.

Hedda's only stable identity is as General Gabler's daughter. She has no life of her own, no projects of her own. Although she envies Eilert Lövborg's freedom and wildness, she shows no interest at all in the content of his writing, nor is she willing to risk scandal personally. She cooperates, in short, with the extremely limited role offered by her social condition. Both the play and Hedda herself are limited to what can be said and done around a lady.

The respectable Judge Brack is obviously familiar with Mademoiselle Danielle, the prostitute in whose rooms Eilert died. Further, Brack tries to use his knowledge that Eilert used Hedda's revolver to blackmail Hedda into having an adulterous affair with him. Brack has evidently enjoyed a series of such adulterous relationships with other respectable women. Even the respectable, scandal-fearing Hedda, is clearly fascinated by hearing about the disreputable goings-on at Mademoiselle Danielle's.

Hedda's fascination with the forbidden male world of freedom and excess draws her to both Lövborg and Brack, and finally leads to her destruction. Her gender, class, and loathing of everything ugly limit what she is able or willing to hear about the outside world. Events are reported to the house, but only in terms acceptable to Hedda. Such restraint is imposed by society, as well as by Hedda's wishes.

Her lack of knowledge of the outside world probably is a major factor in her romantic idealization of Lövborg's wildness and lack of self-control. She has never

sordid surroundings; she only heard his stories about his escapades and imagines him carousing as a Dionysian god with vine-leaves in his hair instead of as a stumbling drunk frequenting brothels. Hedda does not even understand the concept of Dionysius correctly. She just is aware of the carousing and freedom of the god, not of his creative inspiration and potential for creating social cohesion.

Her questioning of Lövborg years earlier showed her desire for information about this forbidden male world. But, ultimately, Hedda is determined not to break the taboos of her society and when she felt she had to choose between Lövborg and following the rules, she chose the rules and a loveless marriage to Tesman.

Ultimately, Hedda never does understand the creative genius which Thea is able to nurture in Eilert Lövborg. Hedda romanticizes his weaknesses, confusing his lack of self-control with god-like courage. She idealizes his death as noble instead of a sordid accident, and when she is trapped by Brack's blackmail, she chooses the coward's way out—suicide—to escape from a situation largely of her own making.

To conclude, we can say that Hedda is a creature of the nineteenth century, and that her romantic ignorance of what matters and what is real would not occur today. However, it would be foolish to deny that there are plenty of people, now and always, who dislike the petty limitations of real life and take refuge in their fantasies, confusing rebellion with creativity, self-indulgence with freedom and destruction with fulfilment.

Symbolism in Hedda Gabler

Introduction: - Repeated images and symbols are frequently used in dramas to contribute to the development of the themes. The repetition of a certain image in the context of the play attaches metaphorical significance to a physical object. "Hedda Gabler," a play written by Henrik Ibsen contains many such elements, all of which further the critical analysis of the constraint exerted by a patriarchal, bourgeois society of nineteenth century Norway on a woman who "thirsts for life." The resulting struggle between her inner desires for freedom and her own conformist attitudes has corrupted her perception of the meaning of life.

Symbolic importance of Setting: - The setting of "Hedda Gabler," which remains unchanged through the play, is significant symbolically as it demonstrates the domestic cage into which Hedda, as a woman and wife, had been cast. The dark, sombre colours of the drawing room presents the "monotonous landscape" that constitutes her prison, relieved by a glass door that looks out onto "autumn foliage." Through the entire play, the audience is visually reminded of the symbolic representation of the spiritual barrenness of the house, which opens out to deteriorating life - "all yellow and withered," nearing the season of death. This casts ominous overtones on the actions of the characters in this setting.

Origin of the House: - In addition to this effect is the origins of the house itself, revealed through dialogue that it had once belonged to the late Mr Falk, a cabinet minister. This draws the concept of class stratification into the society of the time and the class-consciousness that is ingrained into every member. That the house "reminds one of the departed" symbolises the decline of the power of the aristocracy in the 1890's, taken over by the stoical bourgeoisie. Hedda, once a former member of the higher classes, has been forced to marry down into a lower class, which she speaks contemptibly of. She finds her life to be

one without purpose besides "boring herself to death" and that middle class morality has effectively eliminated whatever social power she once had as General Gabler's daughter - in effect, a "lady."

The Glass Door: - Hedda's frustration at her powerlessness and dependence on an obtuse scholar is best represented by the repeated image of her "looking out the glass door." The glass door, in itself, presents only a tenuous, easily breakable barrier between her entrapment and the outside world. She longs for freedom, to catch a "glimpse of a world that one wasn't allowed to know about" but this transparent barrier confines Hedda. The image of her "walking nervously" across the enclosed, claustrophobic space of the drawing room to look out or "tap nervously" on the glass door stresses that the society in general has imprisoned her due to its restrictive definition of femininity.

General Gabler's Role: - Hedda struggles against the role of subservient wife and loving mother. She received masculine upbringing and the strong father figure that dominates her sub-conscious. Both these are symbolized by the portrait of General Gabler which peers imposingly from the inner room, representative of Hedda's sub-conscious, to dominate the entire stage setting. Though she never once mentions her father, it is obvious that her craving for power and alignment with male desires are stemmed from him. Hence, Hedda's character and life seem to be wholly determined through this strong connection with a military past, which emphasizes conformity and discipline. There lies the chief reason as to her mortal fear of scandal - "I never jump out." She, then, is also a woman trapped by her past.

Pistols: - The pistols, giver to her by her father, are symbols of masculine power and aggression. They give Hedda the power of life and death, one she uses to the detriment of others around her in the selfish desire to give meaning to her life. They inspired momentary fear in Judge Brack in his first visit to Hedda, his unsavoury intentions indicated by his using the back way. More importantly, they are the instruments through which Hedda can exert her control over another "human being's fate," Lovborg's - not to life but to death, which has to "shimmer with spontaneous beauty." The idea of beauty in suicide reveals the distorted ideals that Hedda holds. Ironically, the pistol also brings about her downfall as it was used as the medium through which Brack could bring her under his control.

Committing Suicide: - Towards the end, as the illusion of her power over another is shattered, shown by her disgust in response to Lovborg's accidental death, she reaches out to the final illusion wherein she commits an act, which she deems courageous. In her distorted ideals, shooting herself through the temple with the pistol was necessary for her to gain freedom but it in itself is also an act derived from her past. Committing suicide by shooting oneself through the temple is glorified and deemed the highest form of honour in the military code when all is lost. The act could also be romantically beautified - an idea again taken from her father's influence. Hedda has finally retreated deep into her inner sanctum, where, in the presence of the General, allowed the past to ultimately reclaim her life.

Easy Chair: -Objects in the room presents a host of repeated images, most important of which are the easy chair and the stove. The easy chair connotes a throne, that is, the seat of power. The power play in the interactions of the characters is conveyed through possession of this seat. Originally, Hedda is the one who sits in it, connoting the fact that she holds the power although it is restricted to the domestic sphere. She is the stronger figure in her relationship with Tesman as he serves her like a loyal, admiring subject - "It's so jolly waiting on you, Hedda." Further, when Brack first comes to call in Act 1, her act

reaching out her hand]" seem to indicate her regal aura she held his audience from the throne.

Shifts in power as the play progresses can be demonstrated through the easy chair. On Brack's later visit, Hedda is again sitting on the chair but Brack grasps the back of it, leaning over her to claim proprietorship and hence, control of her. At the end, the stage direction - "[in the easy chair, calling out gaily]" shows that Brack, through manipulative methods, has seized the throne and now holds power over Hedda. Deposed and powerless, Hedda is driven to suicide. The dramatic shift in power leads to her inevitable demise.

Stove: - The other object, the stove, holds fire and is symbolic of destructiveness, a character trait most associated with Hedda. She is most often seen to be incessantly moving and standing by it besides the glass door. Thea's negative to Berte's offer to raise the fire is contrasted with Hedda's desire to refuel it, contrasting creation and destruction which both characters are respective embodiments of. The scene where Hedda maniacally burns the manuscript in the stove shows the true extent of her malice and selfishness. The development of Hedda's somewhat twisted psychology is near completion through the stove as a symbolic device.

Manuscript: - The manuscript is referred to symbolically as a child, the product of creation, love and inspiration between Thea and Lovborg. With the personification of an inanimate object to an innocent child, the last straw of condemnation against Hedda's malignant act is thrown. The deliberate, cold-blooded murder of a child is inexcusable despite the social repression of her independence and sterility of her spirit, which have led her to such a crime.

Burning of Manuscript: - What utterly appals the reader in the burning of the manuscript is that Hedda has destroyed Lovborg's "vision of the future," his hope of spiritual redemption and realization of his Bohemian ideals. Eilert Lövborg, through his words to Hedda, is frantic - "devil knows what hands it's fallen into" as he sees his loss of the manuscript to be worse than killing a child. This is because, with the act of killing, one knows for certain that a child is dead. But with its loss, its fate is uncertain, the future is precarious and all hopes are lost.

Women’s Hair: - Description of the characters' physical appearances present continuous images through the play; notably, the description of the women's' hair. The fact that Hedda's hair is "not noticeably abundant" signifies her lack of spiritual substance, her incapability to experience depth of emotion and her fear of commitment and responsibility, especially such pertaining to motherhood. In this instance, she is revealed to be an unconventional woman who despises her own femaleness. On the other hand, Thea is a woman very much in touch with her feminine side, her hair being "remarkably fair… exceptionally thick and wavy." Her hair highlights her femininity and she is capable of love, serving to inspire Lovborg and to contribute to the creation of their spiritual child.

Basically, these explicit descriptions show that Hedda and Thea are the antithesis of each other. Both characters are composed of contradictions. Though Hedda is obviously the stronger of the two, as she forcefully pushes, pulls and corners Thea into difficult situations, she paradoxically admits that she is a "coward at heart." This indicates that it is because of the fear of scandal that dictates her life, that she has sought to control someone else's life to satiate her need for revenge against society.

Thea on the other hand, though shown to be weaker than Hedda and compliant to the progress of events, has demonstrated great bravery in defying society by leaving a loveless, miserable marriage. In this aspect, she is unconventional in the context of the time. It is in the quality that she is willing to sacrifice a stable and respectable position in society to pursue what Lovborg offers, that the audience is positioned to admire her.

"Vine leaves in the hair": - It is a repeated image made by Hedda in relation to her former lover. It is a symbol of victory, heroism and conquest. Hedda wants this of Lovborg because she desires to vicariously witness his success and empowerment. Her self-centred nature is highlighted as whatever emotion she feels for him is ruthlessly pushed aside in the view that he promises her personal power. The image is also reminiscent of Dionysus, the Greek god of wine, fertility and pleasure. Excessive behaviour is freedom to Hedda's corrupted view, just as beauty exists in death only through suicide.

Conclusion: - Hedda's "passion for life" and "hunger for freedom" have been stunted by conformity to a patriarchal society that marginalises women. Her response to this disempowerment is to seek her sense of power through destructive means. Such a portrait of a woman, her fiendish desires and her somewhat convoluted psychological state cannot be adequately developed without these symbols and repeated images. Each has a set part to play in this tragedy to draw the strings of the protagonist's inevitable death close.

Significance of the Title of the Play

Trace the influences of General Gabler on the life and psychology of Hedda/ the play "Hedda Gabler" is also called "General Gabler's daughter", for what it stands for?/ why Hedda likes to be called Hedda Gabler, while she is Hedda Tesman on the stage?/ 'Hedda perishes in the clash between repressive masculine society of the era and freewill'. Give a satisfying answer./Hedda is the cold, emotionless product of a disapproving and domineering society and father, comment.

Henrik Ibsen's Hedda Gabler is not truly indicative of his vast body of work: the protagonist is female and the play is a character study. Oddly enough, though, Hedda does not evolve or progress throughout the entirety of the work. Rather, she remains a cold and manipulative woman. When this fact is realised, the only task is discovering why Hedda continues as a flat character that is restrained from gaining the status of a hero. Truthfully, there are many variables that shape Hedda's life. Nonetheless, two factors in particular stand out—her father, General Gabler, and the repressive, masculine society of the era.

It is fitting that the title of the play is Hedda's maiden name, Hedda Gabler, for the play is to a large extent about the formerly aristocratic Hedda's inability to adjust to the bourgeois life into which she has married. Her tragedy lies not only in her own suicide but in her desire that Eilert should have a "beautiful" suicide: she hopes that life can be beautiful, can measure up to a certain standard, regardless of practicalities like professional success or failure. She is amused by how much Tesman worries about making a living.

This aristocratic privileging of "aesthetic" matters causes Hedda to feel very unsympathetic to Tesman. She doesn't allow him to use the word "we" to describe the two of them. It also allows her to feel little guilt when "cheating on" him, if only on an emotional level, with Eilert and Judge. Her values, based on an aesthetic standard rather than th

which her husband conforms, are beyond Tasman's control or even his understanding; as a result, he cannot predict her actions. At the same time, however, Hedda's apparent pregnancy draws attention to the tragic nature of her quest. She continually denies the inevitable.

The rest of the male characters are more or less in love with Hedda, perhaps because of her almost decadent sense of beauty. Brack wants to establish a private relationship with her, parallel to her relationship with Tesman, and Eilert dearly hopes that she shares his "passion for life." She finds both of these ideas silly, openly rejecting Eilert's notion and teasing Brack by saying that he wants to be "the cock of the walk. "Even Mrs. Elvsted feels intimidated by Hedda. Because of this popularity, she is the most powerful character. She toys with others because she can find no solace or entertainment in life. Indeed, Hedda's power is so far-reaching that her own self-destruction leads almost inevitably to the destruction of the other characters' lives.

Although Ibsen does not directly address certain influences of surroundings overhead, he succeeds in conveying their critical significance. A common underlying theme in Ibsen's work is the linking of death and music. And, as one might have deduced, this premise is employed in Hedda Gabler. Moreover, the ever-present piano, belonging to the late General Gabler, symbolises Hedda's past freedom, prior to marrying George Tesman, as the "General's daughter." A more obvious example of General Gabler's influence over Hedda is the large portrait of him that dominates the "inner" room. In fact, as Ibsen initially describes the single set, he momentarily focuses on the presence of the portrait of the "handsome, elderly man in a General's uniform".

With this description, the reader is made aware of the General's presence, even after his death. Arguably, the most significant influence the General has over Hedda is the fact that Hedda is unable to rid herself of her "Hedda Gabler" identity. It is extremely odd to be known by a name that is, in effect, a product of the past, as Hedda has recently become "Hedda Tesman." Throughout the play, Hedda is referred to as "Hedda Gabler," or, more simply, "General Gabler's daughter." This fact is also indicative of the kind of "facelessness" that women of the era were often subject to.

Yet another aspect of the General's rearing of Hedda is her unusual fascination with his pistols. This fascination is one of the first given clues that Hedda was raised as a boy would have been. The mere possibility of Hedda being raised as a male is sufficient evidence to explain her underlying disdain at being a woman—unable to express herself as a man would. Instead, Hedda simply "contents herself with negative behaviour instead of constructive action". Since she cannot express herself outright, she amuses herself by manipulating others. The most compelling episode of Hedda's perfected brand of manipulation is the role she plays in the death of Eilert Lövborg, a former love. Despite the fact that Eilert is the only person who can evoke true passion in her, Hedda feels the need to destroy him, purely for the purpose of "having the power to mould a human destiny". Since she is unable to directly control anyone or anything, Hedda chooses to rebel against the society that shapes her and obliterate one of its future leaders.

Needless to say, the Victorian era of literature and society did not offer a profusion of opportunities for young women. This fact is made abundantly clear in Hedda Gabler. Despite the fact that society stifles Hedda, it is not the only factor that restra

independence, as well as expressing herself. In reality, Hedda's own cowardice generously contributes to her inescapable end. But, of course, the root of her cowardice is her former life involving her father, General Gabler.

Even though Hedda takes pleasure in creating scandal, however, she is deathly frightened of being associated with it. One such incidence involves Thea Elvsted, Hedda's long- forgotten schoolmate, explaining to Hedda her current, scandalous situation concerning Eilert Lövborg, who is Thea's stepchildren's tutor. Specifically, Thea is rebelling against the conventions of society and pursuing Lövborg. Hedda, constantly aware of scandal, responds in a predictable manner: "But what do you think people will say of you, Thea?" This scene is the first of many that reveals Hedda's inability to disregard society and scandal and live the life she has never dared to live. Indeed, the sole reason that Hedda marries George Tesman is due to the fact that he is the only one of her suitors that expresses an interest in marriage. Once again, Hedda's fear of society's ideals for women forces her to compromise her thoughts and desires, thereby causing her to feel jealous and trapped.

Ellis Fermor encompasses the real fact when he opines: "It (Hedda's mind) has merely gone round and round the cage she has built for herself, looking for a way to escape". In other words, Hedda has come to the realization that there is no way out of her "place" in society, as well as life. She will never be any man's equal or a "real "person.

Also, much like the rest of society, Tesman views Hedda as an object, a collectible. Finally, due to the circumstances imposed upon her by Norwegian society, Hedda responds with the one act of courage she has managed to muster in her short, meaningless life—she kills herself with her father's pistol. While Hedda is considerably responsible for her cowardice and her failure to sufficiently express herself, the way in which she was raised, as well as the society in which she lives, both play major roles in the shaping of her character. If it were not for her extenuating circumstances, as well as her solitary act of courage, one can only speculate what she might have come to represent in contemporary feminist literature. However, literature is not founded on speculation and guesswork; it is based on visible feelings, emotions, and actions. With this in mind, one is forced to recognize what Hedda truly represents: the cold, emotionless product of a disapproving and domineering society and father.

Major Social Issues in "Hedda Gabler"

"Hedda Gabler" as a social parable / The role and character of women in the play/"Hedda Gabler" exposes the shams and hypocrisy of Victorian age/ Hedda faces the tragedy because of her conceit in social class.

It has been suggested that Hedda Gabler is a drama about the individual psyche – a mere character study. It has even been written that Hedda Gabler "presents no social theme". On the contrary, we find social issues and themes abundant in this work. The character of Hedda Gabler centres on society and social issues. Her high social rank is indicated from the beginning, as Miss Tesman says of Hedda, "General Gabler's daughter. What a life she had in the general's day!" Upon Hedda's first appearance, she makes many snobbish remarks. First, she turns up her nose at George's special handmade slippers. Later she insults Aunt Julie's new hat, pretending to mistake it for the maid's. Hedda seems to abhor everything about George Tesman and his bourgeoisie existence. She demands much more class than he has

been able to provide her, for she was the beautiful, charming daughter of General Gabler and deserved nothing but the finest.

As the character of Hedda Gabler develops, the reader learns that she has only married George Tesman because her father's passing away left her no significant financial resources, nothing but a respectable heritage. She tells Brack of her decision to marry Tesman:

> *"I really had danced myself out, Judge. My time was up. ... And George Tesman-- he is after all a thoroughly acceptable choice. ... There's every chance that in time he could still make a name for himself. ...It was certainly more than my other admirers were willing to do for me, Judge".*

Hedda needed someone to support her financially, and George Tesman was the only decent man to propose to her. She was forced to cross beneath her social class and marry this commoner in the hopes that he would make a name for himself as a professor .As for love everlasting, Hedda disgustedly comments to Judge Brack, "Ugh -- don't use that syrupy word!" Rather than having become a happy newlywed who has found truelove, according to Shipley "Hedda is trapped in a marriage of convenience".

Hedda was raised a lady of the upper class, and as such she regards her beauty with high esteem. This is, in part, the reason she vehemently denies the pregnancy for so long. A pregnancy will force her to gain weight and lose her lovely womanly figure. Hedda has grown accustomed to her many admirers; therefore, Hedda is perturbed and embarrassed when George says to Aunt Julie, "But have you noticed how plump and buxom she's grown? How much she's filled out on the trip?", "I'm exactly as I was when I left," insists an annoyed Hedda. To Hedda, pregnancy is a despicable curse. It will make her unattractive, and she will no longer be the talk of the town. For a lady who has been forced to depend on her beauty to attract a suitable husband after the general's death, this is a crushing threat.

In Act II, Judge Brack gently suggests to Hedda that a child might relieve her from the mundane existence she has been enduring with Tesman. Calling motherhood her "most solemn responsibility," Judge Brack delicately hints that she will be having a child within the year. "Be quiet! You'll never see me like that!" she exclaims. "I have no talent for such things, Judge. I won't have responsibilities!". Judge Brack has reminded Hedda of what she already knew -- the pregnancy. Her fear of becoming undesirable resurfaces, and she explodes in anger and denial.

Even in death, Hedda cherishes beauty. In discussing the planned suicide with Eilert, she instructs him, "Eilert Lovborg -- listen to me. Couldn't you arrange that – that it's done beautifully?". She then reminds him twice more in the following lines to take his life beautifully. Still, upon his death he is shot in the stomach at a brothel, not at all as beautifully as Hedda had intended. In the final lines of the play, Hedda finally gets the beautiful ending she romanticizes. She takes her own life, shooting herself in the temple, as she lies stretched out on the sofa, beautifully.

Further evidence of Hedda's social class is found in her conversation with Mrs. Elvsted. After Mrs. Elvsted reluctantly admits that she has left her husband in search of Eilert Lovborg, the astonished Hedda replies, "But my dearest girl -- that you could dare to do such a thing!" Hedda continues, "But what do you think people will say about you, Th

act is unimaginable. The entire town will be gossiping about Thea Elvsted, the sheriff's wife, and her affair with Eilert Lovborg. Mrs. Elvsted's reputation will be permanently tarnished. For Hedda, this would be a nightmare. She has been highly regarded by everyone and showered with attention from all the men. In fact, as General Gabler's lovely daughter, Hedda has been a major object of interest for the townspeople for quite some time. A renowned modern critic Setterquist opines "Hedda fears scandal above all". She cannot begin to fathom how Thea could risk losing her honour. "Brought up as a 'lady', she was required at all times to conduct herself correctly".

Thea, on the other hand, is of a lower social ranking and hasn't much of a name to lose. She is able to follow her heart, and she explains, "God knows they'll say what they please. I only did what I had to do."

Additional proof that Hedda fears scandal can be found in her private conversation with Judge Brack after Lovborg's suicide. He warns Hedda that if counsel were to discover that the pistol was hers, there would be a scandal. "A scandal, yes - the kind you're so deathly afraid of. Naturally, you'd appear in court... You'll have to answer the question: Why did you give Eilert Lovborg the pistol? And what conclusions will people draw from the fact that you did give it to him?". Her heart sinks, as Hedda realizes that Judge Brack is right. She understands that she is helpless against his blackmailing and no longer free, and in desperation she takes her own life.

Despite the clear distinctions between the social classes of the three women of the play -- Hedda Gabler, Thea Elvsted, and Mademoiselle Diana -- their sexual situations are remarkably similar. As women, they must all flaunt their sexuality to survive in a male dominated society. Hedda is, of course, an upper class lady. She does not strive towards her individual morality for any reason other than to maintain an impeccable reputation. Scandals and rumours are her worst enemy. Rather than allow herself to fall from her high social standing, she accepts the proposal of her only prospect – George Tesman. She marries him and thus must sleep with him, not out of love, but merely out of necessity. Hedda uses her sexuality to attract Tesman who will provide an adequate means of support for her. She remains faithful to him only in order to maintain her reputation, for she feels no moral obligation to be loyal to him.

Similarly, Thea Elvsted was a middle class girl. She accepted a job as a governess to Mr. Elvsted, and when his wife died he married her. There was a large age difference, and she says of him, "I just can't stand him! We haven't a single thought in common. Nothing at all -- he and I". Thea did not love Mr. Elvsted any more than Hedda loved Tesman. She, too, married for financial support. Since Thea did not have such a great reputation to uphold around town, however, she had the freedom to have a sexual affair. That is just what she did with Eilert Lovborg. Eventually, she left Mr. Elvsted in hopes of using her sexuality to secure a loving marriage with a better prospect, Mr. Lovborg. Unfortunately, her plan was unsuccessful and the reader must wonder in what way she will manage to support herself now.

Finally, there is the character Diana, a singer and prostitute. Just as Thea and Hedda, Diana must offer her sexuality as a means of support in a male-dominated world. Rather than finding a husband to support her, Diana has found the most freedom. In becoming a prostitute, she sells her body to men without becoming trapped in a marriage full of regret. While Diana has her freedom, however, she has attained it in a socially unacceptable manner and is thus at the bottom of the social order.

Lastly, the tile itself represents the social theme of the drama. In using the name Hedda Gabler, despite her marriage to George Tesman, Ibsen has conveyed to the reader the importance of social class. Hedda prefers to identify herself as the daughter of General Gabler, not the wife of George Tesman. Throughout the play she rejects Tesman and his middle class lifestyles, clinging to the honourable past with which her father provided her. This identity as the daughter of the noble General Gabler is strongly implied in the title, Hedda Gabler.

In considering the many implications of the social issues as explained above, it cannot be denied that the very theme of Hedda Gabler centres on social issues. "Hedda Gabler is ...indirectly a social parable".

Naturalism in Hedda Gabler

Naturalism is a term applied generally to literature which attempts accurately to imitate nature. Hence, it is often used as synonymous with realism. More commonly, it used to express a specific kind of realism, which is the slavish attempt to produce details from life without selection. Thus, it is sometimes referred to as photographic realism. In French literature, the term 'naturalism' is used for a school of nineteenth-century novelists including Flaubert, Zola, and the brothers Goncourt. They attempted to approach life in a scientific manner, recording external appearances only, but recording them with the all-seeing patience of the scientist. Therefore, they revealed the seamy aspects of life which Victorian England had been studiously ignoring. Henrik Ibsen was a great playwright of the 19th century, and played a large role in the evolution of modern day naturalism/ realism. ***The setting, detailed stage direction and character description are parts of the naturalistic style***. These elements are found greatly in Ibsen's works, especially Hedda Gabler.

Ibsen is Norwegian, so his play is a translated one. He is the father of naturalism. Realism is a close-movement to naturalism. In this play, we have a painting, the hero stands and a forest behind him and a living room, chairs and tables. Everything is common. All of this is the beginning of the naturalistic movement which comes, in the second half of the century. Naturalism takes its roots from earlier drama. It is taken from the Bourgeois drama. In naturalistic drama, there are no soliloquies. The audience should interpret everything in it.

The influence of Ibsen on drama makes him one of the main founders of Naturalism. That is, he changes the whole concept of drama from being escapist to expressing social and psychological problems. Ibsen's interest is in social problems from which thesis plays takes its ideas, but his plays were said to have been written to reinforce the feminine movement. Yet, he did not believe in institutions and any political parties or social campaigns. His main focus was on the individual and presenting real life characters and their psychological depth.. His focus was not on the social environment, but on the individual and its interaction with social life. He had faith in human beings like many naturalists; he was interested in the influence of the environment and heredity and how these two interact to shape the character of individual. He studied psychological motivation and their internal conflict as well as the conflict between what society expects them to do and their inclinations.

The Naturalistic Setting and Stage Direction : - The first element of naturalism that the audience comes across is the setting. The description of the setting is typical of a middle-

class living room. Within this setting, there is the symbolic use of certain Stage props, stage images and metaphors. The stage props are the items which are used as parts of the decoration. They have symbolic significance. They also connote implied meaning which are related to the theme and characters. The stage props are considered to be as element of naturalistic drama which is employed to serve the dramatic idea. One of the stage props is the pistols which belong to her father. Hedda likes practicing shooting because it is related to her social upbringing. She has been brought up by her father who has been a military man. He has taught her to use pistols and ride horses. Thus, she has been brought up to have masculine qualities. She has tendency to rebel against the accepted traditional role of woman. Moreover, the pistols are considered to be an instrument of destruction. She has sadistic nature. Playing with pistols shows her inner desire to be in the world of men. They are symbol of her denied sexuality. The audience has to look at the pistol as a symbol of suicide. She gives a pistol to Lovborg to kill himself. This shows that it is a means of destruction. They symbolize violence as Hedda kills herself by using them in the encl. Another stage prop is her father's portrait which is a symbol of' his masculine and harsh qualities. The picture reminds the reader of the General's strong influence on Hedda's character. Hedda is always seen looking to this picture. He is a military man, so Hedda's upbringing has been affected by his profession. Also, the piano is always associated with the upper classes. It is an item of luxury and not everyone can afford buying it. It belongs to Hedda who is an aristocratic lady. Hedda wants to buy a new one which suits the furniture instead of hers. This tells us about her spending habits; she is spendthrift. There is a reference to a glass-door because she always looks out of it. She looks at life from a directive transparent glass door and this tells us about her character. Hedda always stands beside that door. This reflects her desire to free herself from the chains of her marital life and social rules. She longs for freedom. She wants to get rid of the life of entrapment in Tesman house. The glass door is her only means to look at the outer world. She is not adventurous and she watches life, but she doesn't take the initiative or a step in controlling her life. She is not happy when she looks out of the glass door. The stage figurative image of the autumn and the falling leaves express Hedda's inner feelings. It is like a death wish; she is depressed to the extent that she wishes death. Furthermore, the manuscript has a symbolic significance. It stands for the product of the relationship and cooperation between Lovborg and Mrs Elvsted. Mrs Elvsted has external great effort to help Lovborg in writing this manuscript. Therefore, she considers the manuscript to be her baby. Hedda is jealous of Mrs Elvsted; therefore, she plans to destroy the product of the relationship between Mrs Elvsted and Lovborg. She burns the manuscript. The stove is another stage prop. It represents destruction and danger as it contains fire and heat. Fire is always related to Hedda who has destructive motives. She is' going to burn manuscript of Lovborg in order to destroy the fruit of Lovborg and Thea collaboration. This reflects her jealousy and malice. She is motivated by her jealousy to burn the manuscript. Thus, both fire and Hedda has destructive effects.

Naturalistic Division of Acts: - this play does not follow the classical division of the play into five acts. According to Naturalism, this seems to be artificial because in life things happen naturally. What is important is the complication itself. The first act is the exposition and the complication at the same time. The audience gets hints of financial and psychological conflicts and problems from the very beginning. Here, there are two different life styles. There is a warm, intimate and affable relationship between Berta and Miss Tesman as if they are friends. There is not the servant-mistress relationship. Those who belong to the Bourgeois class can discuss the problems with their servants. There is not this pride and formality. Yet, the

aristocrats do not even express their problems openly in front of their servants. There were barriers between the different social classes.

Psychological Realism: - In Ibsen's plays, there are no moral lessons. His plays are open-ended and developed into psychological realism. This affects the dialogue and the use of language. His late plays, including Hedda Gabler, are characterized by dramatic shorthand. The language is deceptively simple; it hides more than it shows. Ibsen neither comments on the play nor on his characters. His only comment is that this play is not a thesis one, a part of a social propaganda or a study of the psychology of a criminal. There is not any soliloquy, and the audience is always kept in speculations. The audience has to understand the qualities of the character from the way in which he interacts with the others and from his gestures and facial expressions. The audience tries to get clues that can help analysing the psychology of the characters. The character towards the end analyses itself. Thus, readers should not take everything as face value.

Naturalistic Characters: - Ibsen's characters are very real characters. He focuses on character depth, so he emphasizes characterization and motivity of characters. He is concerned about how they are revealed through their actions and contact with objects around them. You can think of naturalism as an extreme form of realism. They are different interpretation of characters. Characters are to hide something to understand. They are very difficult to understand. Characters avoid the topic they talk about. This is called dramatic short hand. It is a dialogue with a lot of missing words and sentences. This is part of realistic speech. The reader has to guess the missing parts. Ibsen is very objective in portraying Hedda's character and this is part of Naturalism. This play is a very objective portrait of Hedda. Ibsen doesn't pass a specific judgment on her. The character of Hedda is a complex one, and there is more demand on the part of the audience to judge her and know her motivations behind the actions she does in the play. The social problems on the social background do not concern the audience, but what concerns them is the study of the character and her psychology and motivation. She seems to have many social problems regarding her identity and her role as a woman.

Tesman is an intellectual and academic person. This appears when he comes on stage carrying a suitcase full of books. He is carelessly dressed; he does not care very much about his appearance. This is not his concern; his major concern is studying, reading and collecting books. This is the only thing he is excited about. He is a book worm and even in his honey moon he used to collect books and read them. This quality has both a positive and a negative side. He is a boring and stuffy person. He is thirty-three years old and has a cheerful round face. He wears spectacles and has fair hair and beard. In literature, the fair haired person, whether a man or a woman, is not sexually or physically attractive and is not passionate as well. He is rather stout and not the stereotype of a sportive person. He kept visiting libraries and doing books even in his honeymoon. This means that he is not affectionate at all.

Naturalistic Conflict: - Ibsen also shows the conflict between the individual inclinations and social obligations which is part of the naturalism ideology. Ibsen reveals social conformity imposes certain life style and confinement on people of different social classes, but Ibsen shows that the individuals are sometimes forced by the society to lead a kind of life that they hate in order to, keep the social appearance or prestige. Hedda has married Tesman because he is respectable a person. She is talking about the social role imposed upon her.

A Critique of Character of Hedda Gabler

Hedda enjoys both masculine and feminine traits in her being, which make her entire personality confusing and enigmatic. How can you explain the view?/Hedda Gabler is unique and rebellious, why does she behave so confusingly?/ In "Hedda Gabler" we have reversal of gender role, what purpose it serves in the plot of the play?/Describe the clash of Victorian moralities in Hedda Gabler's: why Hedda is lusty for power?

Henrik Ibsen portrays a microcosm of nineteenth century Norwegian society in his play Hedda Gabler. Hedda, the protagonist, exhibits a mixture of masculine and feminine traits due to her unique upbringing under General Gabler and the social mores imposed upon her. However, although this society venerates General Gabler because of his military status, his daughter Hedda is not tolerated due to her non-conformity to the accepted gender stereotypes.

Hedda's gender-inverted marriage to Jorgen Tesman, her desire for power and her use of General Gabler's pistols are unacceptable in her society and motif of "One doesn't do such a thing!" that is alluded to during the play and expounded upon Hedda's death that shows that Hedda's uncertain stance between masculine and feminine gender roles and their associated traits is not tolerated by her society. Ibsen employs a reversal of traditional gender roles within Hedda and Jorgen Tesman's marriage to emphasise Hedda's masculine traits. Hedda displays no emotion or affection towards her husband Jorgen. This appearance of indifference is a trait that is usually common to men:

> *Tesman: "My old morning shoes. My slippers look!...I missed them dreadfully. Now you should see them, Hedda."*
> *Hedda: "No thanks, it really doesn't interest me".*

In another gender role reversal, Hedda displays a financial awareness, which her husband, Jorgen does not possess. Although Brack corresponds with Tesman about his honeymoon travels, he corresponds with Hedda concerning the financial matters. This is a role that is usually reserved for men. Hedda does not only display traits, which are definitively masculine, or feminine, she also objects to and often defies the conventions established for her gender by society. She rejects references to her pregnancy as a reminder of her gender:

> *Tesman: "Have you noticed how plump (Hedda's) grown, and how well she is? How much she's filled out on our travels?"*
> *Hedda: "Oh be quiet!"*

Hedda is reminded not only of her feminine role of mother and nurturer here, but also as wife and "appendage" to Tesman: "And to think is was you who carried off Hedda Gabler! The lovely Hedda Gabler! now that you have got the wife your heart was set on." As a woman of the haute bourgeoisie, Hedda is "sought after" and "always had so many admirers" and has been "acquired" by Tesman as hide wife. Hedda resents the gender conventions that dictate that she now "belongs" to the Tesman family - a situation that would not occur were she a man:

> *Tesman: "Only it seems to me now that you belong to the family..."*
> *Hedda: "Well, I really don't know..."*

Although these traits displayed by Hedda are masculine, they are not those, which her society cannot tolerate. To entertain herself in her "boring" marriage she plays with her father's, General Gabler's, pistols:

Hedda: "Sometimes I think I only have a talent for one thing...boring myself to death!" "I still have one thing to kill time with. My pistols, Jorgen. General Gabler's pistols"

> *Jorgen: "For goodness' sake! Hedda darling! Don't touch those dangerous things! For my sake, Hedda!"*

These pistols are a symbol of masculinity and are associated with war, a pastime that women are excluded from other than in the nurturing role of nurses and are thus not tolerated by society. Tesman implores Hedda to cease playing with them, but even his "superior" position, as her husband does not dissuade Hedda, who is found to be playing with them by Brack at the beginning of act two. Brack also reminds Hedda of the inappropriate nature of her "entertainment" and physically takes the pistols away from Hedda.

> *Hedda: "I'm going to shoot you sir!"*
> *Brack: "No, no, no! Now stop this nonsense!" taking the pistol gently out of her hand. If you don't mind, my dear lady.... Because we're not going to play that game anymore today."*

As a parallel to Hedda's masculine game of playing with General Gabler's pistols, Hedda plays the traditionally female role of a "minx" with Brack.

> *Hedda: "Doesn't it feel like a whole eternity since we last talked to each other?"*
> *Brack: "Not like this, between ourselves? Alone together, you mean?"*
> *Hedda: "Yes, more or less that"*
> *Brack: "Here was I, every blessed day, wishing to goodness you were home again"*

Hedda: "And there was I, the whole time, wishing exactly the same" At the beginning of act two, Hedda encourages Brack's flirtation with her by telling him the true nature of her marriage to Tesman that it is a marriage of convenience:

> *Brack: "But, tell me...I don't quite see why, in that case...er..."*
> *Hedda: "Why Jorgen and I ever made a match of it, you mean? "I had simply danced myself out, my dear sir. My time was up."*

Brack is emboldened by Hedda's seeming availability and pursues the notion of a "triangular relationship" with Hedda. Not only does Hedda's "coquettish" behaviour towards Brack exhibits the feminine side of her nature, it also demonstrates that in some instances she conforms to society's expectations of females. Hedda's reference to "(her) time (being) up" shows the socially accepted view that women must marry, because they are not venerated as spinsters.

By conforming to this aspect of her society's mores and marrying before she becomes a socially unacceptable spinster, Hedda demonstrates that she is undeniably female and accepts this. Hedda's constantly seeks power over those people she comes in contact with. As a woman, she has no control over society at large, and thus seeks to infl

she comes into contact with in an emulation of her father's socially venerated role as a general. Hedda pretends to have been friends with Thea in order to solicit her confidence:

> *Thea: "But that's the last thing in the world I wanted to talk about!"*
> *Hedda: "Not to me, dear? After all, we were at school together.*
> *"Thea: "Yes, but you were a class above me. How dreadfully frightened of you I was in those days!"*

Once Hedda learns of Thea's misgivings about Lovborg's newfound resolve, she uses it to destroy their "comradeship”.

> *Hedda: "Now you see for yourself! There's not the slightest need for you to go about in this deadly anxiety..." Lovborg: "So it was deadly anxiety ...on my behalf."*
> *Thea: “Softly and in misery] Oh, Hedda! How could you?”*
> *Lovborg: "So this was my comrade's absolute faith in me."*

Hedda then manipulates Lovborg, by challenging his masculinity, into going to Brack's bachelor party and resuming his drunken ways of old. Hedda's "reward" for this is to find that Lovborg's manuscript, his and Thea's "child" falls into her hands, where she burns it, thus destroying the child and alto the relationship, both of which Hedda was jealous of. Similarly, Hedda seeks to push her husband, Jorgen, into politics: "(I was wondering) whether I could get my husband to go into politics..." This would raise Hedda's social standing and allow her to attain and maintain power. Hedda's manipulation of people in order to attain power is a trait that is stereotypically predominant in men.

The society of nineteenth century Norway venerates the image of submissive, static passive and pure women. Roles of power are normally allocated to men in such a society. The society in Hedda Gabler demonstrates its intolerance of Hedda's masculine behaviour by contributing to her death. Hedda is found to be playing with her pistols in Act II by Brack. After disgracing himself and returning to his "immoral" ways at Hedda's behest, Lovborg is manipulated by Hedda into "taking his life beautifully" and she gives him one of General Gabler's pistols. However Lovborg dies from an accidental wound to the stomach rather than a patrician death from a bullet to the head and Brack, utilising his position of power within the judicial system, sees the pistol that he accidentally killed himself with. Recognising it as being General Gabler's pistol, he returns to Hedda to stake his claim. Hedda refuses to be in the power of Brack, she had been "heartily thankful that (he had) no power over (her)" however, her fear is realised as Brack attempts to force his way into a "triangular relationship" with Hedda (and Tesman)in return for not exposing the scandal that she had provided Lovborg with the instrument of his death. Hedda is "as fearful of scandal as all that" and takes her life, ironically avoiding the scandal surrounding Lovborg's death and yet causing a scandal concerning her own. Hedda's masculine preference for the pistols to any feminine task of housekeeping and her fear of scandal due to not conforming with society's accepted gender roles leads her to kill herself, thus demonstrating that things which "one doesn't do" are not tolerated by her society of nineteenth century Norway.

Mrs Elvsted as a foil to Hedda

Difference of Class and Life: - In Hedda Gabler, both Hedda and Mrs Elvsted represents two distinctive approaches to life and belong to two different social classes. Through the representation of both characters, Ibsen shows a variety of different reactions towards social obligations and conventions. That is, he introduces Mrs Elvsted as a foil to Hedda, putting her attitudes towards life and beliefs in contrast with Hedda's stress their distinguished personal qualities.

Physical Difference: - Physically, Hedda and Mrs Elvsted looks different to some extent. Hedda looks the particular feminine beauty and charm. Her pale and opaque complexion shows that she is introvert. She seems as if she wears a mask which conceals her feelings. Her evasive manner does not really show what lies in her mind. Also, her steel-gray eye expresses a cold, unruffled repose. That is, Hedda is not very affable and impenetrable in sight. Her features, impression and dress shows that she is an aristocratic lady. In contrast with Hedda, Mrs Elvsted has more pretty features than Hedda. Her eyes are attractive, but gives an inquiry expression showing her curiosity. While Hedda hair is neat and attractive without being conspicuous, thus confirming her outwardly as a model of social appropriateness, Mrs Elvsted's hair is excessive in every respect. It has an unusual colour almost flaxen and is unusually abundant and wavy. It is hair of that kind that does not conform to any social norms. Hedda recalls Mrs Elvsted as "the girls with the irritating hair, that she was always showing off." Hedda's envy of her spontaneity and non-conformity finds its clearest expression in her threat to burn her hair off.

Social Stats: - Regarding their social milieu, Hedda is dependent while Mrs Elvsted is independent and capable of work. Hedda has been given upper-class upbringing to be dependent on men, based on the assumption that she will never have to support herself. This is why she accepts Tesman's proposal. On the other hand, Thea enters the scene as a daughter of the lower middle class who is obliged to work to provide her requirement. She has worked as a governess in the house of a magistrate. This is seen through her dress which is not in the latest fashion.

Difference in Behaviour: - Both Hedda and Mrs Elvsted also differ in their degree of formality and subtlety. Hedda is very formal and artificial in her behaviour. She opposes intimacy and informality due to the morals and traditions of her social class. She offends and embarrasses Mrs Tesman when she meets her coldly. She shows that Miss Tesman has visited them very early. When Tesman asks her to come and see the slippers she rejects his demand aloofly. She is indifferent to his hobbies and interests. It has been threatening for her to share a special intimacy with Lovborg, so she breaks off their relationship, and threatens to shoot him with her father's pistols. On the other hand, Mrs Elvsted is spontaneous and emotional. She loves Lovborg and exerts great effort to attract him to her. She pursues him to keep herself close to her lover. While Hedda is reserved and shrewd Mrs Elvsted is spontaneous and simple-minded. Hedda wants to realise the truth of Mrs Elvsted and Lovborg's relationship. She acts the role of an interrogator who questions Mrs Elvsted and manages to extract a confession from her that she is in love with Lovborg. It is clear that Hedda is a smarter than Mrs Elvsted who is easily manipulated by Hedda and submits to her authority.

Influence on Lovborg: - Both Hedda and Mrs Elvsted have different influence on Lovborg. On the one hand, Hedda represents Lovborg's muse, and she likes to be his hidden source of inspiration. When he comes to her house, she manipulates him to prove that she still has authority over him. She offers him a glass of punch, but he refuses. The

manhood in the presence of Thea till he becomes nervous and drinks two glasses. She manages to break the bond of trust between him and Thea. On the other hand, Mrs Elvsted tries to reclaim Lovborg to make him give up his bohemian manner and misconduct. She is worried about his health, conduct and integrity, and encourages him to write his book. The manuscript is the fruit of her cooperation with Lovborg. Hedda considers Lovborg to be her idol of which she is so confident. Yet, Thea is aware of his human weakness and afraid that he may fall into temptation.

Marriage: - The marriages of Thea and Hedda have an obvious parallel, but the contrast is in the methods they take to dissolve them. Like Hedda, Thea has made a loveless marriage, a marriage of convenience. Both are fed up with their husband's neglect. However, Thea asserts her individuality, renounces a distasteful marriage, and gain freedom. Unlike Hedda, she has no fear of gossip and scandal. "I have done nothing, but what I had to do," she says simply when speaking of having left her husband. Any struggle between these two women, one simple but action-minded, the other intelligent but incapable of action, must result in defeat for Hedda. Thea is labelled by Lovborg as "stupid", but she recognizes her individual rights and acts accordingly.

Conclusion: - Mrs Elvsted is set up, thematically and descriptively, in contrast to Hedda. Thea has abundant, curly golden hair versus Hedda's sparse brown hair. She has willingness to ignore conventional standard for the man she loves versus Hedda's inability either to love or to ignore conventions. Thea is conspicuously successful in the areas where Hedda fails. Generally, she is seen as the "good woman" opposed to Hedda's evil.

Role and Character of Judge Brack

To what extant Judge Brack is responsible for the tragedy of Hedda?

Brack is a judge of relatively inferior rank. He is a friend of both Tesman and Hedda, and he visits their house regularly. He has connections around the city, and is often the first to give Tesman information about alterations in the possibility of his professorship. He seems to enjoy meddling in other people's affairs. He is a worldly and cynical man. On certain occasions he seems to represent the whole society of the time, his opportunism, meanness, and blackmailing and lusty love aspiration make him an epitome of society.

Brack strikes as a very immoral man from the very beginning, due to the aplenty advances he made towards Hedda. He had always subtlety hinted that he thought that Hedda might like “a new responsibility” and most importantly, that he will “fight for the end, for the “triangle” to be “fortified and defended by mutual consent.”

To flirt with an unwed lady is one thing. But to be thoroughly suggestive of certain immoral acts to a legally wed lady would seem to be a moral crime. A crime, which would deem Brack as an immoral judge, which is juxtaposition in the phrase itself. The depraved misdeed was too much to expect from a judge, much less to say the way that he had insinuated himself into the household of a married couple.

Brack’s manipulative nature can perhaps be considered the most powerful tool that he has, to be able to control people at his beck and call. The way he withholds his information, only to

disseminate it at an 'appropriate' time, when it will hit the victim the hardest, shows how well he can play the psychological game. He was apparently so good at calculating his steps that he was able to have Hedda exclaim with pain that she is "in your powers, Mr. Brack. From now on, I'm at your mercy." He played his last hand of the pack very well, henceforth gaining control over Hedda almost at once, after we have seen her authoritative throughout the plot. The unexpected twist of events, definitely illustrates an element of surprise for the reader.

Nothing much can be mentioned or commented about Brack, except that he seems to be a guru at the game at which both he and Hedda seemed to be indulged in. His callous ways together with his tricky language have caused the one all mighty Hedda to fall prey to him, exposing the extent of his scheming nature to the reader. It certainly allows the reader to realize his true nature and to confirm the suspicions of Brack's ulterior motives.

The presence of Brack alone is enough to allow Tesman appear trivial and ridiculous. His language as compared to Tesman seemed to have many underlying meanings, while Tesman's, for an academic, seems rather superficial. Tesman, being a worrywart, starts to fret like a young lady when informed that his appointment might not come. He "clasps his hands together" and "flings his arms about" asking his "dearest Hedda, how can you (she) take it all so calmly." Brack on the other hand, being the surely and confident self tries to comfort him by telling him that he will "most probably get it" but "only after a bit of competition". Brack's calm composure and surely words certainly outweigh Tesman's unnecessary gestures and fretful language. The vulnerability of Tesman and Hedda's marriage has also clearly been brought out by the intrusion of Brack. The fact that Hedda would "clasp her hand at the back of her neck, lean back in the chair and look at him" indicates how comfortable she feels with Brack. The stichomythia in their speeches also brings out the level of intimacy the both of them share as seen by the quote "Brack: A trusted and sympathetic friend…Hedda: …who can converse on all manners of lively topics… Brack:… and who's not in the least academic" It shows how well they complement each other, finishing each other's thoughts as though they were in a relationship themselves. As Hedda could easily pour out her woes to a man other than her husband gives an indication of how sterile her marriage with Tesman was. So unfruitful that they had absolutely no proper communications between husband and wife that Hedda was glad to have a friend who could converse with her.

Hedda Gabler: A Modern Tragedy

Henrik Ibsen's Hedda Gabler is a definitive look at social conditions involving women at the turn of the Century. His title character is a complex individual who is driven to destruction by her great desires. Hedda epitomizes women of that time period by their dependency on social convention, and she is motivated to do so many things but unfortunately is without the courage to act upon them.

There are many elements used by Ibsen to depict a tragic hero, and therefore a tragic play. For example, the reader sees a specific worldview, a main character of noble birth, and both concepts of the hamartia and peripetia which are vital to the tragic plot. This raises the question of whether this work can be considered a tragedy. Critics have continuously debated this issue, even since it was written in 1890. Many thought the character of Hedda to be too unrealistic, thus the play melodramatic rather than tragic. However, through the elements

mentioned above and by using literary techniques such as symbolism and irony, Ibsen succeeds in creating this timeless tragedy.

Dependency between Genders: - Firstly, Ibsen creates a specific worldview to his audience, and he does this by suggesting a mirror dependency between genders. The male characters in this play are dependent on women, and the women are dependent on social conventions. Jorgen Tesman, Hedda's vacant minded husband is dependent on his Aunt Juliane whereas Hedda is constantly restrained by her reliance on her 'what would other think/say' mentality. The female characters of this play are dependent on the fact that others depend on them, and Rina is a striking symbol of this very fact. She symbolizes the vulnerability of everyman being the invalid that she is thus projecting Ibsen's idea that everybody is dependant in some way. This viewpoint is extremely accurate in describing women's roles in European society in both the 1800's and present day. Men are generally viewed as the bread winners, who come home after a hard day at work expecting to be taken care of by their wives. Women on the other hand, are expected to be seen and not heard, keeping both the house and family name intact.

The Character of Hedda: - Secondly, the author has created a character of noble birth, another important characteristic of a tragic play. Evidence of Hedda's nobility is found in the conversation between Aunt Julie and the servant Bertha. Julie is reminiscing about Hedda riding by with her father, obviously an important general of some kind. There is a portrait of General Gabler that hangs above the sofa, and the reference to the guns that he has left his daughter represent something with a much deeper meaning. The guns are kept in the back room along with the piano and writing desk, every outlet of energy for her. This symbolizes the entrapment that Hedda feels in marrying a man that is perhaps in a lower social class, and it is this background that leads directly to her hamartia, rather the decision that leads her to a tragic end and perhaps one of the more important factors in categorizing this play as a tragedy.

Hedda's Rash Judgments: - Hedda makes quite a few rash judgments throughout the course of this play so it is difficult to pinpoint which one to be the most detrimental. There is her decision to hold on to Eilert Lövborg's manuscript, to give him the gun that would be the cause of his accidental death, and the final, fatal choice to end her life. However, none of these errors in judgment seem as harsh as one that the audience doesn't even witness, that being her marriage to Tesman. Hedda was nearing her thirtieth birthday and felt pressured to get married, so she entered into a union with a man she didn't love. She thought he was destined for greatness in his becoming a professor, but has merely set herself up for disappointment when she sees his true nature. As a result we see the entrapment that Hedda feels, a feeling that leads to her demise.

Use of Peripetia: - Lastly, the audience sees the use of peripetia, the concept that suggests that the progression of a tragic character will lead them to a reversal: that they get what they want, but what they want is destructive. This is perhaps central to this play, for it is this that truly defines Hedda Gabler as a tragic character. Hedda's motivation in this play is to control somebody's destiny, and preferably male. Hedda wants to live vicariously through Lövborg, and so to some extent she does get what she wants, but the outcome is disastrous. The moment that Hedda has control of Eilert is when she gives him the gun encouraging him to kill himself, without coming out and saying so. This is what clinches Lövborg for he feels that he is no longer useful, exemplifying his dependence on women. Th

obvious when Brack tells her that Eilert has been accidentally killed and the audience sees that Hedda truly is a destructive character. This reversal is extremely ironic in terms that she wanted Lövborg to be a real man (as opposed to her husband who behaves according to his infantile dependency) and at the end we discover that Lövborg dies due to an injury that robs him of his every manliness.

Conclusion: - The complexities of Hedda and the rest of characters in this play are all puppets of Ibsen's view and mentality. He creates a vivid picture of a woman who is socially tortured beyond her control, and she eventually is led to the tragic end of what was presumably a tragic life. Through his literary techniques and tragic elements, Ibsen creates a tragic masterpiece of his time, and one that could well be applied to this time. She portrays women in society so afraid of social scandal, and she was willing to avoid one at all costs. This is another example of irony because during that time women like Hedda did not commit suicide, and therefore in choosing to end her life she creates something to talk about. This is ironic for the simple fact that her death arose out of a situation that she so desperately tried to avoid.

Hedda Gabler: Reversal of Traditional Gender Roles

"The play Hedda Gabler is the product of a mind deeply preoccupied with the nature of power, particularly the power of one mind to influence and impose itself upon others".

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Hedda is reminded not only of her feminine role of mother and nurturer here, but also as wife and "appendage" to Tesman. As a woman of the haute bourgeoisie, Hedda is "sought after" and "always had so many admirers" and has been "acquired" by Tesman as his wife. Hedda resents the gender conventions that dictate that she now "belongs" to the Tesman family – a situation that would not occur were she a man.

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Hedda constantly seeks power over those people she comes in contact with. As a woman, she has no control over society at large, and thus seeks to influence the characters she comes into contact with in an emulation of her father's socially venerated role as a general. Hedda pretends to have been friends with Thea in order to solicit her confidence:

Thea: But that's the last thing in the world I wanted to talk about!

Hedda: Not to me, dear? After all, we were at school together.

Thea: Yes, but you were a class above me. How dreadfully frightened of you I was in those days!

Once Hedda learns of Thea's misgivings about Lövborg's newfound resolve, she uses it to destroy their "comradeship".

Hedda: Now you see for yourself! There's not the slightest need for you to go about in this deadly anxiety…

Lövborg: So it was deadly anxiety …on my behalf.

Thea: (softly and in misery) Oh, Hedda! How could you!

Lövborg: So this was my comrade's absolute faith in me.

Hedda then manipulates Lövborg, by challenging his masculinity, into going to Brack's bachelor party and resuming his drunken ways. Hedda's "reward" for this is to find that Lövborg's manuscript, his and Thea's "child" falls into her hands, where she burns it, thus destroying the child and also the relationship, both of which Hedda was jealous of.

Similarly, Hedda seeks to push her husband, Jorgen, into politics: "(I was wondering) whether I could get my husband to go into politics…" This would raise Hedda's social standing and allow her to attain and maintain power. Hedda's manipulation of people in order to attain power is a trait that is stereotypically predominant in men. The society of nineteenth century Norway venerates the image of submissive, static passive and pure women. Roles of power are normally allocated to men in such a society.

The society in Hedda Gabler demonstrates its intolerance of Hedda's masculine behavior by contributing to her death. Hedda is found to be playing with her pistols in act two by Brack. After disgracing himself and returning to his "immoral" ways at Hedda'

manipulated by Hedda into "taking his life beautifully" and she gives him one of General Gabler's pistols. However Lövborg dies from an accidental wound to the stomach rather than a patrician death from a bullet to the head and Brack, utilizing his position of power within the judicial system, sees the pistol that he accidentally killed himself with. Recognizing it as being General Gabler's pistol, he returns to Hedda to stake his claim. Hedda refuses to be in the power of Brack, she had been "heartily thankful that (he had) no power over (her)" however, her fear is realized as Brack attempts to force his way into a "triangular relationship" with Hedda (and Tesman) in return for not exposing the scandal that she had provided Lövborg with the instrument of his death. Hedda is "as fearful of scandal as all that" and takes her life, ironically avoiding the scandal surrounding Lövborg's death and yet causing a scandal concerning her own. Hedda's masculine preference for the pistols to any feminine task of housekeeping and her fear of scandal due to not conforming with society's accepted gender roles leads her to kill herself, thus demonstrating that things which "one doesn't do" are not tolerated by her society of nineteenth century Norway.

Hedda's Suicide : A Reasonable Act?

In the late nineteenth century, the forces of capitalism and colonialism that shaped European society were veiled in doubt by the evolution of several new ways of thinking. In France, the beginnings of the impressionist movement reformed art, drama and literature by questioning the long-standing tradition of realism.

In central Europe, Sigmund Freud's revolutionary science of psychoanalysis gained momentum; changing the way people related to each other and paving the way for surrealist art and progress of alternative thinking. Finally, Karl Marx's promotion of social systems which were alternative to the dominant capitalism of the time raised peoples' awareness of the severe injustices their new way of living had created.

It was in this social milieu that Henrik Ibsen turned for a final time to write a play with a particular social agenda. In his effort to comment on events around him and assess the impact of society's new ideologies on a specific echelon of society, Hedda Gabler was born.

The title of the play is the maiden name of its protagonist. The audience is invited into Hedda's new home in Norway shortly after she has returned from honeymoon with George Tesman, a scholar of Middle Ages history. In the introductory conversation between George and their maid, Bertha, we are introduced to Hedda's upbringing which is to play a crucial role in events to come. With the renowned General Gabler as a parent, Hedda was conditioned for a life of independence, entertainment and decadence. After her father dies and her life of horseback riding comes to an end, Hedda slowly realises that her society will not let her live in the way she would like.

As a bourgeoisie woman, taking up a job is both awkward and very difficult for Hedda. Hedda has little choice: she must marry if she wants to have any chance of supporting the extravagant way of living to which she had become accustomed.

In George Tesman, Hedda found both the perfect solution of her situation and the inevitable curse of boredom and discontentment. George, brought up by his Aunts, is as conventional and colourless as his name suggests. His conversation is trite, and he is completely oblivious

to the subtlety; failing to notice Aunt Julie's suggestive questions about Hedda's pregnancy. He is dedicated to his studies, having spent his honeymoon researching "marvellous old documents that nobody knew existed".

It would have been very dangerous for Hedda to pass up George's offer of marriage. With Lövborg and Brack, two men with whom she had relationships in the past, indisposed, doing so would have squandered her opportunity to live comfortably in marriage. Hedda realizes the merit in marrying a man who is to soon become a professor, and feels scared of approaching age and loneliness. Her decision, however, is guided predominantly by the structure of her patriarchal society which dictates that she must depend completely on men and on marriage for her future happiness.

It is with her marriage to George that Hedda's life of monotony and boredom increasingly strains her personality and livelihood. She declares: "Sometimes I think I only have a talent for one thing… boring myself to death!" and becomes obsessed with the task of finding interest and beauty in her life. The tragedy of Hedda Gabler begins when Hedda is unable to discover these qualities in her own life. She cannot have the fulfilment of a profession - the interest in another world of studies, colleagues and relationships. As an uninfluential member of society, she is not challenged intellectually or socially. Living under a monarch and as a woman in a patriarchal society, she can have no influence on the future of her community. With European countries establishing colonies throughout the world, Hedda realizes the inexorable domination of her society and feels a helpless victim of its hegemony.

To find the interest and beauty she desires, Hedda must turn to others. In her earlier life, she made use of Lövborg to satisfy herself. Often described as Hedda's alter ego, Lövborg had an intense relationship with Hedda during childhood. Hedda was attracted by the "style and Romantic secrecy" and ended the relationship when it threatened to become physical. In a revealing dialogue with Lövborg, Hedda exposes her profound desire for fascination and intrigue in an otherwise uninteresting life:

The reasons for Hedda's suicide are fairly clear, she realised she could not live in a middle-class environment under the threat of Brack revealing the fact that she gave the pistol to Lovborg whilst her husband is wrapped up in a project which does not involve her and it is clear that he is not going to provide her with the attention or standard of living which she was hoping for. Her first environment, materialistic and prestigious, led her to choose her second environment purely on material values. She soon found that she could not move from one environment to the other, and with the added problem of people within her environment who reminded her of her own failings, she simply found she could not cope. It is clear that in another environment, probably a more wealthy one and one in which she received more attention, she could have been happier.

Hedda Gabler: Triangulations between Characters

Relationships are developed throughout the play and it is the breakdown in the relationships with Hedda that lead to the dramatic closure of the play. Hedda initiates one of the triangulations in an attempt to "have power over a human being's fate". Judge Brack creates the second an unsuccessful parallel to Hedda's own power advancing creation. Jorgen Tesman and Thea Elvsted form the last triangulation in an attempt to rebirth Eilert's manuscript.

The first triangular relationship is between Hedda Gabler, Eilert Lövborg and Thea Elvsted. Hedda created this relationship, controlling it by relying heavily on her influence over Eilert. Hedda's power over Eilert are hinted at when Hedda says ***"So I, poor thing have no power over you at all?"*** and Eilert replies ***"Not where that's concerned***" Suggesting that Hedda does have power over him in other areas. Tension arises when Hedda becomes jealous of his newfound success without her, she also wishes she was his inspiration.

The relationship between Hedda and Thea is hostile on Hedda's part because Hedda is jealous of Thea, wishing to be the Red headed, pistol wielding "woman standing between Eilert Lövborg and me (Thea)." Hedda is jealous of Thea's beauty, threatening to "... burn it off (Thea's hair)", and her influence over Eilert and his work. The only way Hedda can control Thea is by controlling Eilert and due to Thea's loyalty and devotion consequently control Thea. Thea and Eilert appear to be the perfect combination but tension arises between them as a result of Hedda burning their 'child'.

The second triangulation is created by Judge Brack. It involves Hedda, Jorgen Tesman and Judge Brack. In this triangle, Brack tries unsuccessfully to play a role parallel to Hedda's in the previous triangle. Brack and Hedda are from the same social circle, giving Brack an advantage over Jorgen with Hedda, making him acceptable to her more readily as a result. Jorgen is indebted to Brack but no conflict occurs between these two characters for two reasons: Brack is not looking for a commitment to Hedda and Jorgen is blinded by naiveté. The relationship Brack is working towards is purely plutonic, Hedda tempts him but is unwilling to commit to this relationship. Hedda keeps the sexual tension high and doesn't end her relationship with Brack completely because she believes that as long as she can keep him interested, and at the same time not submit to him, she can stay on top of the power struggle with Brack and manipulate him as well.

The final triangle was mutually formed between Jorgen and Thea to rebirth the 'child' of Eilert and Thea. This triangle includes Jorgen, Thea and Hedda. Hedda is jealous of Thea's Influence over Jorgen and is angry because she is gradually losing her power over Jorgen because of Thea's influence. Hedda and Jorgen obviously had a marriage purely for convenience. Jorgen is not intimate; on his honeymoon he was "rummaging in libraries" and "copying out old parchments". Hedda also denies any feelings for Jorgen refusing the word love saying "don't use that sentimental word", and telling Aunt Juille to "be Quiet" when she mentions anything referring to the baby that links Jorgen and Hedda.

Up until Act Four all of these triangles were controlled by Hedda. Hedda controls the first triangle by controlling Eilert and using alcohol on him to maintain superiority over Thea by lowering Eilert's social standing. Hedda controls the second triangle by not allowing Brack the relationship he yearns for. The third relationship is not active until the end of Act Four. The dramatic closure of the play is not caused by the triangles themselves but the breakdown of Hedda's power base as a result of the conflicts between Hedda and the other characters. After Hedda's prompting "do it beautifully"

Eilert commits suicide. Immediately Hedda is unable to control the first triangle, Eilert is dead and Thea is released from the power hold Hedda had over her. Without the first triangle, Hedda turns to the second for her control, but is shocked when she discovers that Brack knows it was her gun that killed Eilert. Brack abuses his power and uses the information to try to blackmail Hedda into the relationship he has been pushing for. Hed

sexual relationship, nor can she refuse, Brack has won the fight for power supremacy in his triangle. Thea and Jorgen decide to recreate the manuscript together, Hedda loses power over Jorgen and the third triangle.

Hedda decides to solve her problem of no power by shooting herself in the temple. Hedda says "I want, for once in my life, to have power over a human being's fate." Hedda still has control over her unborn child's life. Ironically, by killing herself, Hedda destroys the baby and her potential power over it. By killing the baby Hedda, also destroys the link between herself and Jorgen the only person who could/would have saved her. In the destruction of her baby she destroys her future; people will remember Eilert because of his 'child' but there is nothing left to remember Hedda by. The dramatic closure is caused by the destruction of Hedda's power base in the form of triangular relationships; this destruction is caused by her own manipulation of the triangles.

Do you find it so incredible that a young girl, given the chance in secret, should want to be allowed a glimpse into a forbidden world of whose existence she is supposed to be ignorant?

Society demands that Hedda be ignorant of the forbidden world she so desires, and it is because of this suffocation that Hedda's actions become perverted. One outlet for her new boredom is playing with her father's guns – one of few pastimes that seem to give her any satisfaction. After George remarks that they will be unable to afford a riding horse or a butler, Hedda confirms: "…***at least I have one thing left to amuse myself with… my pistols, George."***

After George and Brack vehemently try to dissuade Hedda from playing with the pistols, we realize that their society considers it inappropriate for a woman to indulge in interests of this nature. Ibsen highlights Hedda's perversion by reversing the gender roles of the married couple. Hedda's horse riding and playing with guns are seen as masculine activities; and she speaks of the financial situation of the family, a role usually reserved for men. Most significantly, she scorns at the thought of being pregnant and rejects the role of childbearing that women would traditionally embrace. "Be quiet! You'll never see me like that!"

Instead, Hedda embraces opportunities to find gratification through people around her. When Brack asks if she could not find a goal to work towards in her life, she responds by suggesting she could get Tesman into politics. At that point, we realise that her idea of finding fulfilment has become completely misguided. Hedda considers the contest between Lövborg and George for the professorship "like a kind of championship match." To Thea Elvsted, she comments: "For once in my life, I want to have power over a human being."

When Judge Brack comes to hold power over Hedda through his knowledge of the burnt manuscript, her quest appears a complete failure. The reality is that, in her society, it is impossible for a woman to hold power over anyone else except through the manipulation of others.

In Lövborg, Hedda sees the opportunity to witness beauty. She envisages Lövborg dying beautifully, "with a crown of vine leaves in his hair, burning and unashamed." She encourages his suicide, handing him a pistol with which to commit the act. Jealous of Lövborg's relationship with Thea and anxious to ensure he will carry out the "beautiful" act, Hedda burns Lövborg's manuscript, the symbol of his relationship with Thea and the product of Thea's inspiration of Lövborg that Hedda envies.

When carrying out these acts, Hedda is continually afraid of scandal. She worries enormously about how society will perceive her actions; an additional pressure with which she has to cope. Her fear of public scrutiny is demonstrated when she questions Thea: "But what do you think people will say?"

Ibsen makes use of the set in Hedda Gabler to illustrate the sum of these pressures on the protagonist. The Tesman's residence is "decorated in dark colours" to create a sombre, melancholy mood. It is full of heavy wood furniture, and is covered with thick carpets. The set is symbolic of the life to which Hedda has committed herself – the death of her extravagant way of living and the start of a life of boredom. In the first two acts, the set is full of sinister bouquets of flowers which Hedda considers oppressive rather than refreshing as we would expect: ***"The room needs some fresh air. All these flowers!"***

Judge Brack describes the smell of the residence as "a bequest from the late Mrs. Falk" – the smell of death already hangs over the characters, and, as the motif of death continues with the passing away of Aunt Rina and the obscure death of Lövborg, we realize that a climax as a result of the pressures placed on the protagonist is inevitable.

It is a culmination of these pressures that forces Hedda to suicide. In the final acts of the play, each one of these pressures grows to new proportions – the ungraceful death of Eilert and George's plan to dedicate his life to the restoration of Lövborg's book place added stress on Hedda. The event which finally impels Hedda to take her own life, though, is the thought of Brack having power over her through his blackmail involving the manuscript and the added grievance of knowing that she would have to spend every evening with the man. Brack ironically remarks: ***"We'll have great times here together, the two of us!"***

Hedda plays a wild tune which is almost as out of place in a household that is mourning as she is out of place in society, and ends her life beautifully with a shot to the temple.

Judge Brack's concluding comment, "***But good God! People don't do such things!"*** establishes the conventionality and rigidity of his contemporary society. In the context of a society which placed significant pressures on women by denying them the life they desired, the outcome is not predictable. In Hedda's case, a combination of pressures from her society and circumstances surrounding her upbringing lead to a perversion of her every action. Her suicide, then, is reasonable because the alternative would have been for Hedda to lead an unsatisfying life, continually restraining her behavior in fear of scandal.

In the late twentieth century, Hedda's life may have been very different. The rise of materialism, technology and a culture of instant satisfaction have contributed to make contemporary society very different from that of the late nineteenth century. Hedda would have been able to develop a career, have a say in the future of her community and would have had suitable channels through which she could satisfy her desire fo

in life. Hedda Gabler is an outstanding example of the power of drama to illustrate the relationship between society and its members. Ibsen's timeless reminder of how ordinary lives can be tainted by outside influences makes Hedda Gabler's reasonable suicide a significant one in the study of literature.

Waiting for Godot

Life and Works of Samuel Beckett

Samuel Beckett was born near Dublin, Ireland, on April 13, 1906 into a Protestant, middle class home. His father was a quantity surveyor and his mother worked as a nurse. At the age of 14, he was sent to the same school that Oscar Wilde attended.

Beckett is known to have commented, "I had little talent for happiness." This was evidenced by his frequent bouts of depression, even as a young man. He often stayed in bed until late in the afternoon and hated long conversations. As a young poet, he apparently rejected he advances of James Joyce's daughter and then commented that he did not have feelings that were human. This sense of depression would show up in much of his writing, especially in Waiting for Godot where it is a struggle to get through life.

Samuel Beckett moved to Paris in 1926 and met James Joyce. He soon respected the older writer so much that at the age of 23, he wrote an essay defending Joyce's magnum opus to the public. In 1927, one year later, he won his first literary prize for his poem entitled "Whoroscope." The essay was about the philosopher Descartes meditating on the subject of time and about the transience of life. Beckett then completed a study of Proust that eventually led him to believe that habit was the "cancer of time." At this point Beckett left his post at Trinity College and travelled.

Beckett journeyed through Ireland, France, England, and Germany and continued to write poems and stories. It is likely that he met up with many of the tramps and vagabonds who later emerged in his writing, such as the two tramps Estragon and Vladimir in Waiting for Godot. On his travels through Paris Beckett would always visit with Joyce for long periods.

Beckett permanently made Paris his home in 1937. Shortly after moving there, he was stabbed in the street by a man who had begged him for money. He had to recover from a perforated lung in the hospital. Beckett then went to visit his assailant, who remained in prison. When Beckett demanded to know why the man had attacked him, he replied "Je ne sais pas, Monsieur." This attitude about life comes across in several of the author's later writings.

During World War II, Beckett joined the underground movement in Paris to resist the Germans. He remained in the resistance until 1942 when several members of his group were arrested. Beckett was forced to flee with his French-born wife to the unoccupied zone. He only returned in 1945 after Paris was liberated from the Germans. He soon reached the pinnacle of his writing career, producing Waiting for Godot, Eleutheria, Endgame, the novels Malloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable, and Mercier et Camier, two books of short stories, and a book of criticism.

Samuel Beckett's first play was Eleutheria, it involved a young man's efforts to cut himself loose from his family and social obligations. This has often been compared to Beckett's own search for freedom. Beckett's great success came on January 5,1953, when Waiting for Godot premiered at the Theatre de Babylon. Although critics labelled the play "the strange little play in which 'nothing happens," it gradually became a success as reports of it spread through word of mouth. It eventually ran for four hundred performances at the Theatre de Babylone and was heralded with critical praise from dramatists such as Tennessee Williams, Jean Anouilh, Thornton Wilder, and William

Saroyan. Saroyan even remarked that, "It will make it easier for me and everyone else to write freely in the theatre". An interesting production of "Waiting for Godot" took place when some actors from the San Francisco Actor's Workshop performed the play at the San Quentin penitentiary for over fourteen hundred convicts in 1957. The prisoners immediately identified with both Vladimir and Estragon about the pains of waiting for life to end, and the struggle of the daily existence. The production was perhaps the most Royal Court Theatre in London.

All of Beckett's major works were written in French. He believed that French forced him to be more disciplined and to use the language more wisely. However, Waiting for Godot was eventually translated into the English by Beckett himself.

Samuel Beckett also became one of the first Absurdist playwrights to win international fame. His works have been translated into over twenty languages. In 1969 he received the Nobel Prize for Literature, one of the few times this century that almost everyone agreed the recipient deserved it. He continued to write until his death in 1989, but towards the end he remarked that each word seemed to him "an unnecessary stain on silence and nothingness.

The Theatre of the Absurd

Absurdity is the condition or state in which human beings exist in a meaningless, irrational universe wherein people's lives have no purpose or meaning. 'The Theatre of the Absurd' is a term coined by the critic Martin Esslin for the work of a number of playwrights, mostly written in the 1950s and 1960s. The term is derived from an essay by the French philosopher Albert Camus. In his 'Myth of Sisyphus', written in 1942, he first defined the human situation as basically meaningless and absurd. The 'absurd' plays by Samuel Beckett, Arthur Adamov, Eugene Ionesco, Jean Genet, Harold Pinter and others all share the view that man inhabits a universe with which he is out of key. Its meaning is indecipherable and his place within it is without purpose. He is bewildered, troubled and obscurely threatened.

The origins of the Theatre of the Absurd are rooted in the avant-garde experiments in art of the 1920s and 1930s. At the same time, it was undoubtedly strongly influenced by the traumatic experience of the horrors of the Second World War, which showed the total impermanence of any values, shook the validity of any conventions and highlighted the precariousness of human life and its fundamental meaninglessness and arbitrariness. The trauma of living from 1945 under threat of nuclear annihilation also seems to have been an important factor in the rise of the new theatre.

At the same time, the Theatre of the Absurd also seems to have been a reaction to the disappearance of the religious dimension form contemporary life. The Absurd Theatre can be seen as an attempt to restore the importance of myth and ritual to our age, by making man aware of the ultimate realities of his condition, by instilling in him again the lost sense of cosmic wonder and primeval anguish. The Absurd Theatre hopes to achieve this by shocking man out of an existence that has become trite, mechanical and complacent. It is felt that there is mystical experience in confronting the limits of human condition.

As a result, absurd plays assumed a highly unusual, innovative form, directly aiming to startle the viewer, shaking him out of this comfortable, conventional life of everyday concerns. In the meaningless and Godless post-Second-World-War world, it was no longer possible to keep using such traditional art forms and standards that had ceased being convincing and lost their validity. The Theatre of the Absurd openly rebelled against conventional theatre. Indeed, it was anti-theatre. It was surreal, illogical, conflictless and plotless. The dialogue seemed total gobbledygook. Not unexpectedly, the Theatre of the Absurd first met with incomprehension and rejection.

One of the most important aspects of absurd drama was its distrust of language as a means of communication. Language had become a vehicle of conventionalised, stereotyped, meaningless exchanges. Words failed to express the essence of human experience, not being able to penetrate beyond its surface. The Theatre of the Absurd constituted first and foremost an onslaught on language, showing it as a very unreliable and insufficient tool of communication. Absurd drama uses conventionalised speech, clichés, slogans and technical jargon, which is distorts, parodies and breaks down. By ridiculing conventionalised and stereotyped speech patterns, the Theatre of the Absurd tries to make people aware of the possibility of going beyond everyday speech conventions and communicating more authentically. Conventionalised speech acts as a barrier between ourselves and what the world is really about: in order to come into direct contact with natural reality, it is necessary to discredit and discard the false crutches of conventionalised language. Objects are much more important than language in absurd theatre: what happens transcends what is being said about it. It is the hidden, implied meaning of words that assume primary importance in absurd theatre, over and above what is being actually said. The Theatre of the Absurd strove to communicate an undissolved totality of perception - hence it had to go beyond language.

Absurd drama subverts logic. It relishes the unexpected and the logically impossible. According to Sigmund Freud, there is a feeling of freedom we can enjoy when we are able to abandon the straitjacket of logic. In trying to burst the bounds of logic and language the absurd theatre is trying to shatter the enclosing walls of the human condition itself. Our individual identity is defined by language, having a name is the source of our separateness - the loss of logical language brings us towards a unity with living things. In being illogical, the absurd theatre is anti-rationalist: it negates rationalism because it feels that rationalist thought, like language, only deals with the superficial aspects of things. Nonsense, on the other hand, opens up a glimpse of the infinite. It offers intoxicating freedom brings one into contact with the essence of life and is a source of marvellous comedy.

There is no dramatic conflict in the absurd plays. Dramatic conflicts, clashes of personalities and powers belong to a world where a rigid, accepted hierarchy of values forms a permanent establishment. Such conflicts, however, lose their meaning in a situation where the establishment and outward reality have become meaningless. However

perform, this only underlines the fact that nothing happens to change their existence. Absurd dramas are lyrical statements, very much like music: they communicate an atmosphere, an experience of archetypal human situations. The Absurd Theatre is a theatre of situation, as against the more conventional theatre of sequential events. It presents a pattern of poetic images. In doing this, it uses visual elements, movement, light. Unlike conventional theatre, where language rules supreme, in the Absurd Theatre language is only one of many components of its multidimensional poetic imagery.

Existentialism

Existentialism is "the philosophy that is centered upon the analysis of existence and of the way human beings find themselves existing in the world". Existentialism ponders the questions: Why do we exist? Why is there suffering? Why do we die?

It is the "dilemma of modern humanity" -"What do I know about man's destiny? I could tell you more about radishes." The Theatre of the Absurd presents an existentialist point of view of the world and reality, and forces the audience to "consider the meaning of their existence in a world where there appears to be no true order or meaning". Driven by the basis of existentialism, it expands the role of philosophy and metaphor in theatrical drama.

Existentialism sprung out directly after the Great Depression and World War Two, a period of despair and hopelessness. It seeks to find and define meaning and identity in a world of chaos and meaninglessness. Existentialism became popular during the Second World War in France, and just after it. French playwrights have often used the stage to express their views, and these views came to surface even during a Nazi occupation. Bernard Shaw got his play Saint Joan past the German censors because it appeared to be very Anti-British. French audiences however immediately understood the real meaning of the play, and replaced the British with the Germans. Those sorts of hidden meanings were common throughout the period so that plays would be able to pass censorship.

Waiting for Godot : Character List

Estragon: - Estragon is one of the two protagonists. He is a bum and sleeps in a ditch where he is beaten each night. He has no memory beyond what is immediately said to him, and relies on Vladimir to remember for him. Estragon is impatient and constantly wants to leave Vladimir, but is restrained from leaving by the fact that he needs Vladimir. It is Estragon's idea for the bums to pass their time by hanging themselves. Estragon has been compared to a body without an intellect, which therefore needs Vladimir to provide the intellect.

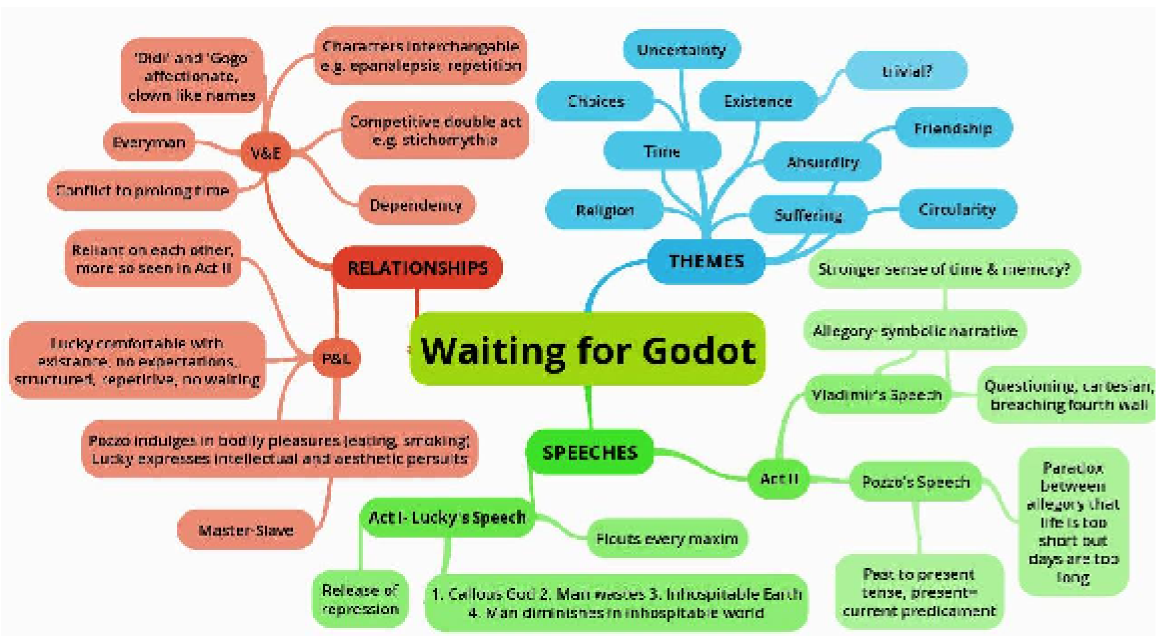
Vladimir: - Vladimir is one of the two protagonists. He is a bum like Estragon, but retains a memory of most events. However, he is often unsure whether his memory is playing tricks on him. Vladimir is friends with Estragon because Estragon provides him with the chance to remember past events. Vladimir is the one who makes Estragon wait with him for Mr. Godot's imminent arrival throughout the play. Vladimir has been compared to the intellect which provides for the body, represented by Estragon.

Lucky: - Lucky is the slave of Pozzo. He is tied to Pozzo via a rope around his neck and he carries Pozzo's bags. Lucky is only allowed to speak twice during the entire play, but his long monologue is filled with incomplete ideas. He is silenced only by the other characters who fight with him to take of his hat. Lucky appears as a mute in the second act.

Pozzo: - Pozzo is the master who rules over Lucky. He stops and talks to the two bums in order to have some company. In the second act Pozzo is blind and requires their help. He, like Estragon, cannot remember people he has met. His transformation between the acts may represent the passage of time.

The boy: - The boy is a servant of Mr. Godot. He plays an identical role in both acts by coming to inform Vladimir and Estragon the Mr. Godot will not be able to make it that night, but will surely come the next day. The boy never remembers having met Vladimir and Estragon before. He has a brother who is mentioned but who never appears.

Godot: - The man for whom Vladimir and Estragon wait unendingly. Godot never appears in the play. His name and character are often thought to refer to God.



Waiting for Godot : Summary

Act I

The setting is in the evening on a country road with a single tree present. Estragon is trying to pull off his boot, but without success. Vladimir enters and greets Estragon, who informs him that he has spent the night in a ditch where he was beaten. With supreme effort Estragon succeeds in pulling off his boot. He then looks inside it to see if there is anything there while Vladimir does the same with his hat.

Vladimir mentions the two thieves who were crucified next to Christ. He asks Estragon if he knows the Gospels. Estragon gives a short description of the maps of the Holy Land at which point Vladimir tells him he should have been a poet. Estragon points to his tattered clothes and says he was. Vladimir continues with his narrative about the two thieves in order to pass the time.

Estragon wants to leave but Vladimir forces him to stay because they are both waiting for Godot to arrive. Neither of the two bums knows when Godot will appear, or even if they are at the right place. Later it is revealed that they do not even know what they originally asked Godot for.

Estragon gets bored of waiting and suggests that they pass the time by hanging themselves from the tree. They both like the idea but cannot decide who should go first. They are afraid that if one of them dies the other might be left alone. In the end they decide it is safer to wait until Godot arrives.

Estragon asks Vladimir whether they still have rights. Vladimir indicates that they got rid of them. He then fears that he hears something, but it turns out to be imaginary noises. Vladimir soon gives Estragon a carrot to eat.

Pozzo and Lucky arrive. Lucky has a rope tied around his neck and is carrying a stool, a basket, a bag and a greatcoat. Pozzo carries a whip which he uses to control Lucky. Estragon immediately confuses Pozzo with Godot which gets Pozzo upset.

Pozzo spends several minutes ordering Lucky around. Lucky is completely silent and obeys like a machine. Pozzo has Lucky put down the stool and open the basket of food which contains chicken. Pozzo then eats the chicken and throws away the bones. Lucky stands in a stooped posture holding the bags after each command has been completed and appears to be falling asleep.

Estragon and Vladimir go to inspect Lucky who intrigues them. They ask why he never puts his bags down. Pozzo will not tell them, so Estragon proceeds to ask if he can have the chicken bones that Pozzo has been throwing away. Pozzo tells him that they technically belong to Lucky. When they ask Lucky if he wants them, he does not reply, so Estragon is given the bones.

Pozzo eventually tells them why Lucky hold the bags the entire time. He thinks it is because Lucky is afraid of being given away. While Pozzo tells them why Lucky continues to carry his bags, Lucky starts to weep. Estragon goes to wipe away the tears but receives a terrible kick in the shin.

Pozzo then tells them that he and Lucky have been together nearly sixty years. Vladimir is appalled at the treatment of Lucky who appears to be such a faithful servant. Pozzo explains that he cannot bear it any longer because Lucky is such a burden. Later Vladimir yells at Lucky that it is appalling the way he treats such a good master.

Pozzo then gives an oratory about the night sky. He asks them how it was and they tell him it was quite a good speech. Pozzo is ecstatic at the encouragement and offers to do something

for them. Estragon immediately asks for ten francs but Vladimir tells him to be silent. Pozzo offers to have Lucky dance and then think for them.

Lucky dances for them and when asked for an encore repeats the entire dance step for step. Estragon is unimpressed but almost falls trying to imitate it. They then make Lucky think. What follows is an outpouring of religious and political doctrine which always starts ideas but never brings them to completion. The three men finally wrestle Lucky to the ground and yank off his hat at which point he stops speaking. His last word is, "unfinished."

The men then spend some effort trying to get Lucky to wake up again. He finally reawakens when the bags are placed in his hand. Pozzo gets up to leave and he and Lucky depart the scene. Vladimir and Estragon return to their seats and continue waiting for Godot.

A young boy arrives having been sent by Mr. Godot. Estragon is outraged that it took him so long to arrive and scares him. Vladimir cut him off and asks the boy if he remembers him. The boy says this is his first time coming to meet them and that Mr. Godot will not be able to come today but perhaps tomorrow. The boy is sent away with the instructions to tell Mr. Godot that he has seen them. Both Estragon and Vladimir discuss past events and then decide to depart for the night. Neither of them moves from his seat.

Act II

The setting is the next day at the same time. Estragon's boots and Lucky's hat are still on the stage. Vladimir enters and starts to sing until Estragon shows up barefoot. Estragon is upset that Vladimir was singing and happy even though he was not there. Both admit that they feel better when alone but convince themselves they are happy when together. They are still waiting for Godot.

Estragon and Vladimir poetically talk about "all the dead voices" they hear. They are haunted by voices in the sounds of nature, especially of the leaves rustling. Vladimir shouts at Estragon to help him not hear the voices anymore. Estragon tries and finally decides that they should ask each other questions. They manage to talk for a short while.

Estragon has forgotten everything that took place the day before. He has forgotten all about Pozzo and Lucky as well as the fact that he wanted to hang himself from the tree. He cannot remember his boots and thinks they must be someone else's. For some reason they fit him now when he tries them on. The tree has sprouted leaves since the night before and Estragon comments that it must be spring. But when Vladimir looks at Estragon's shin, it is still pussy and bleeding from where Lucky kicked him.

Soon they are done talking and try to find another topic for discussion. Vladimir finds Lucky's hat and tries it on. He and Estragon spend a while trading hats until Vladimir throws his own hat on the ground and asks how he looks. They then decide to play at being Pozzo and Lucky, but to no avail. Estragon leaves only to immediately return panting. He says that they are coming. Vladimir thinks that it must be Godot who is coming to save them. He then becomes afraid and tries to hide Estragon behind the tree, which is too small to hide him.

The conversation then degenerates into abusive phrases. Estragon says, "That's the idea, let's abuse each other." They continue to hurl insults at one another until Estragon calls Vladimir a critic. They embrace and continue waiting.

Pozzo and Lucky enter but this time Pozzo is blind and Lucky is mute. Lucky stops when he sees the two men. Pozzo crashes into him and they both fall helplessly in a heap on the ground. Vladimir is overjoyed that reinforcements have arrived to help with the waiting. Estragon again thinks that Godot has arrived.

Vladimir and Estragon discuss the merits of helping Pozzo get off the ground where he has fallen. When Vladimir asks how many other men spend their time in waiting, Estragon replies that it is billions. Pozzo in desperation offers to pay for help by offering a hundred francs. Estragon says that it is not enough. Vladimir does not want to pick up Pozzo because then he and Estragon would be alone again. Finally he goes over and tries to pick him up but is unable to. Estragon decides to leave but decides to stay when Vladimir convinces him to help first and then leave.

While trying to help Pozzo, both Vladimir and Estragon fall and cannot get up. When Pozzo talks again Vladimir kicks him violently to make him shut up. Vladimir and Estragon finally get up, and Pozzo resumes calling for help. They go and help him up. Pozzo asks who they are and what time it is. They cannot answer his questions.

Estragon goes to wake up Lucky. He kicks him and starts hurling abuses until he again hurts his foot. Estragon sits back down and tries to take off his boot. Vladimir tells Pozzo his friend is hurt.

Vladimir then asks Pozzo to make Lucky dance or think for them again. Pozzo tells him that Lucky is mute. When Vladimir asks since when, Pozzo gets into a rage. He tells them to stop harassing him with their time questions since he has no notion of it. He then helps Lucky up and they leave.

Vladimir reflects upon the fact that there is no truth and that by tomorrow he will know nothing of what has just passed. There is no way of confirming his memories since Estragon always forgets everything that happens to him.

The boy arrives again but does not remember meeting Estragon or Vladimir. He tells them it is his first time coming to meet them. The conversation is identical in that Mr. Godot will once again not be able to come but will be sure to arrive tomorrow. Vladimir demands that the boy be sure to remember that he saw him. Vladimir yells, "You're sure you saw me, you won't come and tell me to-morrow that you never saw me!"

The two bums decide to leave but cannot go far since they need to wait for Godot. They look at the tree and contemplate hanging themselves. Estragon takes off his belt but it breaks when they pull on it. His trousers fall down. Vladimir says that they will hang themselves tomorrow unless Godot comes to save them. He tells Estragon to put on his trousers. They decide to leave but again do not move.

Waiting For Godot : Analysis

If there is an absurdity play that has caught the imagination and the admiration of people all over the world then it "Waiting For Godot" written by Samuel Beckett. Beckett had written this in French and he translated it into English as well. It is considered as an important play in the English language. Since there are many loose ends there are many interpretations, the most famous being that he adapted Sigmund Freud's theory into this play. There are two main characters Vladimir and Estragon and they are joined by another two Pozzo and Lucky. Then little boys come in as messengers.

Pozzo and Lucky

All through the play Vladimir and Estragon wait for Godot. Why they wait for him or who he is, is never revealed. The audience has the liberty to come to any kind of conclusion or interpretation. The conversation and action of these two friends are unrelated for most part. There is no rhyme or reason for what is happening; a play that is completely different. Vladimir and Estragon seem to be inseparable friends and they together wait for Godot. While they wait they discuss thieves in the Gospel, they suddenly doubt if they are waiting at the correct place and the correct time.

Suddenly they hear a sound and they huddle together waiting for something to happen. Pozzo and Lucky come on to the stage and Vladimir and Estragon think it is Godot but Pozzo says he is not Godot and then witness how Pozzo treats Lucky, his servant. He is leashed and is treated as an animal. Vladimir reacts strongly to this but soon retreats. He changes his opinion very fast. Estragon eyes the chicken Pozzo is eating and wants the bone but does not get it because Lucky always gets to eat the bone.

First Day Comes To an End

Pozzo, they realize is going to the market to sell Lucky and hearing this Lucky cries as he does not want to leave his master. They then get to see Lucky dance and think. Vladimir and Estragon is not impressed with the dance and to think Lucky has to put the thinking hat. Once the hat is put on Lucky who was silent till then goes to speak gibberish and it goes on non-stop. All the three push him down, take off his hat and trample it to get him to stop talking. Then Pozzo decides to leave but he cannot. So like a runner he goes to the other end of the stage and kick starts from and dashes along the stage driving Lucky also out of the stage.

After they depart Vladimir and Estragon remember that they are waiting for Godot. A boy enters and tells them that Godot asked to pass on the information that he would be coming tomorrow to the same place. They try to get some information about Godot from the boy but they get to know nothing. It becomes dark. Estragon does not want to go but Vladimir thinks each should go separately but finally they go together.

The Wait Continues

The second act opens to the next day but there are trees on the leaves and Vladimir is singing happily. Both are happier without each other but cannot part ways and go. When Vladimir says that things have changed from the previous day, Estragon does not remember the previous day. Vladimir talks about Pozzo and Lucky but Estragon cannot recollect what happened the previous day. He even forgets that had left his boots behind and Vladimir has

to show him where his boots were kept. Vladimir confirms that they are in the right place by seeing Lucky's hat.

So many absurd things happen on stage and they are still waiting for Godot and they hear a sound again. It is Pozzo and Lucky again, but this time Pozzo is blind and after some interaction they leave. Pozzo also does not remember having met the previous day. When they request Lucky to sing or recite Pozzo tells Lucky is dumb and they leave the stage. A boy appears and tells them that Godot will come the next day and again the two are left waiting for Godot.

Imagery a Plenty

The 'waiting' which is shown throughout the play is likened to man's perennial waiting for one or the other desired object. Estragon is complaining and sleeping most of the time; Vladimir is also complaining. Man is always complaining and most of the time there is no action on his part to better the situation. Many have likened this drama to Freudian theory of Id, ego and super ego. Estragon represents id, Vladimir ego and Godot super ego.

Id which is the baser nature in man only thinks of physical pleasures and Estragon desires to eat the bone, the carrot; is sleeping all the time and complaining of pains. Ego is slightly elevated but thinks he is the one who is in control of the situation. Vladimir is the one who directs Estragon and he is completely dependent on Vladimir. The super ego control both and that is Godot. Godot is not perceived, yet, all the while they are waiting for Godot and are invisibly controlled by him, the super ego.

All through the play one cannot bring in one sequence of thought. Everything is unrelated and even seems crazy. It can be this style of writing that has made this play so popular. The language is crisp and there are no sermons or value additions to it. This play has touched people interested in theatre all over the world and many small theatre groups have experimented with this play. Stage direction is very simple as it is the same scene in both the acts, the props are simple. Sound and light effects are also to the minimum and this makes this play an easy one to stage. The simplicity in the stage direction coupled with the absurdity of the play must have made this play very popular with theatre lovers.

The Circular Structure of Waiting for Godot

"But what does it all mean?" is the most frequent statement heard after one has seen or finished reading a play from the Theatre of the Absurd movement. Beckett's plays were among the earliest and, therefore, created a great deal of confusion among the early critics.

No definite conclusion or resolution can ever be offered to Waiting for Godot because the play is essentially circular and repetitive in nature. A traditional play, has an introduction of' the characters and the exposition; then, there is a statement of the problem of the play in relationship to its settings and characters. (In Waiting for Godot, we never know where the play takes place, except that it is set on "a country road.") Furthermore, in a traditional play, the characters are developed, and gradually we come to see the dramatist's world view; the play then rises to a climax, and there is a conclusion. This type of development is called a linear development. In the plays of the Theatre of the Absurd, the structure is often exactly

the opposite. We have, instead, a circular structure, and most aspects of this drama support this circular structure in one way or another.

The setting is the same, and the time is the same in both acts. Each act begins early in the morning, just as the tramps are awakening, and both acts close with the moon having risen. The action takes place in exactly the same landscape — a lonely, isolated road with one single tree. (In the second act, there are some leaves on the tree, but from the viewpoint of the audience, the setting is exactly the same.) We are never told where this road is located; all we know is that the action of the play unfolds on this lonely road. Thus, from Act I to Act II, there is no difference in either the setting or in the time and, thus, instead of a progression of time within an identifiable setting, we have a repetition in the second act of the same things that we saw and heard in the first act.

More important than the repetition of setting and time, however, is the repetition of the actions. To repeat, in addition to the basic structure of actions indicated earlier — that is:

Vladimir and Estragon Alone
Arrival of Pozzo and Lucky
Vladimir and Estragon Alone
Arrival of Boy Messenger
Vladimir and Estragon Alone

there are many lesser actions that are repeated in both acts. At the beginning of each act, for example, several identical concerns should be noted. Among these is the emphasis on Estragon's boots. Also, too, Vladimir, when first noticing Estragon, uses virtually the same words: "So there you are again" in Act I and "There you are again" in Act II. At the beginning of both acts, the first discussion concerns a beating that Estragon received just prior to their meeting. At the beginning of both acts, Vladimir and Estragon emphasize repeatedly that they are there to wait for Godot. In the endings of both acts, Vladimir and Estragon discuss the possibility of hanging themselves, and in both endings they decide to bring some good strong rope with them the next day so that they can indeed hang themselves. In addition, both acts end with the same words, voiced differently:

ACT I:
Estragon: Well, shall we go?
Vladimir: Yes, let's go.
ACT II:
Vladimir: Well? Shall we go?
Estragon: Yes, let's go.

And the stage directions following these lines are exactly the same in each case: "They do not move."

With the arrival of Pozzo and Lucky in each act, we notice that even though their physical appearance has theoretically changed, outwardly they seem the same; they are still tied together on an endless journey to an unknown place to rendezvous with a nameless person.

Likewise, the Boy Messenger, while theoretically different, brings the exact same message: Mr. Godot will not come today, but he will surely come tomorrow.

Vladimir's difficulties with urination and his suffering are discussed in each act as a contrast to the suffering of Estragon because of' his boots. In addition, the subject of eating, involving carrots, radishes, and turnips, becomes a central image in each act, and the tramps' involvement with hats, their multiple insults, and their reconciling embraces — these and many more lesser matters are found repeatedly in both acts.

Finally, and most important, there are the larger concepts: first, the suffering of the tramps; second, their attempts, however futile, to pass time; third, their attempts to part, and, ultimately, their incessant waiting for Godot — all these make the two acts clearly repetitive, circular in structure, and the fact that these repetitions are so obvious in the play is Beckett's manner of breaking away from the traditional play and of asserting the uniqueness of his own circular structure.

Lucky's Dance and Speech

Lucky's dance is merely a clumsy shuffling, which is a complete disappointment to Vladimir and Estragon. Thus they decide to have Lucky think. They give him his hat, and after protesting Pozzo's brutality, they arrange themselves for Lucky's performance of thinking. It takes the form of a long, seemingly incoherent speech. The speech is delivered as a set piece, yet it is anything but a set piece. Under different directors, this scene can be variously played. For example, Lucky most often speaks directly to the audience with the other characters at his back, while Vladimir and Estragon become more and more agitated as the speech progresses. Often Vladimir and Estragon run forward and try to stop Lucky from continuing his speech. As they try to stop Lucky, he delivers his oration in rapid-fire shouts. At times, Pozzo pulls on Lucky's rope, making it even more difficult for him to continue with his speech. The frenzied activity on the stage, the rapid delivery of the speech, and the jerking of the rope make it virtually impossible to tell anything at all about the speech and, consequently, emphasize the metaphysical absurdity of the entire performance. Lucky's speech is an incoherent jumble of words which seems to upset Vladimir and Estragon, for sporadically both rise to protest some element of the speech. Therefore, the speech does communicate something to the two tramps or else they would not know to protest. The form of the speech is that of a scholarly, theological address, beginning "Given the existence . . . of a personal God," but it is actually a parody of this kind of address since the nonsensical and the absurd elements are in the foreground and the meaningful aspects of it are totally obscured, as is the God whom Lucky discusses. Here, we have a combination of the use of scholastic, theological terminology along with the absurd and the nonsensical. For example, the use of qua (a Latin term meaning "in the function or capacity of") is common in such scholarly addresses, but Lucky's repetition of the term as quaquaquaqua creates an absurd, derisive sound, as though God is being ridiculed by a quacking or squawking sound. Furthermore, the speech is filled with various academic sounding words, some real words like aphasia (a loss of speech; here it refers to the fact that God from his divine heights now has divine aphasia or a divine silence) and some words like apathia or athambia which do not exist (even though apathia is closely aligned to apathy and thus becomes another oblique comment on the apathy of God in the universe). Other absurd terms are used throughout the speech, and there is also a frequent use of words which sound obscene, interspersed throughout the speech. As an example, the names of the scholars Fartov and Belcher are obviously created for their vulgarity.

Therefore, the speech is filled with more nonsense than sense — more that is illogical than that which is logical. If, however, we remove the illogical modifiers, irrelevancies, and

incomprehensible statements and place them to the side, the essence of the speech is as follows:

The Essence of Lucky's Speech

"***Given [acknowledging] the existence . . .***
of a personal God ...
[who exists] outside [of]
time . . .

[and] who . . .
loves us dearly . . .
and [who] suffers . . .
with those who . . .
are plunged in torment . . .
it is established beyond all doubt . . .
that man . . .
that man . . .
for reasons unknown . . .
for reasons unknown . . .
for reasons unknown . . .
[our] labors abandoned left unfinished . . .
abandoned unfinished . . .

Lucky's speech is an attempt, however futile, to make a statement about man and God. Reduced to its essence, the speech is basically as follows:

acknowledging the existence of a personal God, one who exists outside of time and who loves us dearly and who suffers with those who are plunged into torment, it is established beyond all doubt that man, for reasons unknown, has left his labours abandoned, unfinished.

It is significant that the speech ends at this point because man can make certain assumptions about God and create certain hypotheses about God, but man can never come to a logical conclusion about God. One must finish a discourse about God, as Lucky did, by repeating "for reasons unknown . . . for reasons unknown . . . for reasons unknown . . . ." And equally important is the fact that any statement made about God is, by its nature, lost in a maze of irrelevance, absurdity, and incoherence — without an ending. Therefore, man's final comment about God can amount to nothing more than a bit of garbled noise which contains no coherent statement and no conclusion. Furthermore, Lucky's utterances are stopped only after he is physically overpowered by the others.

After the speech, Pozzo tiles to revive Lucky, who is emotionally exhausted, completely enervated by his speech. After great difficulty, Pozzo gets Lucky up, and amid protracted adieus, he begins to go, albeit he begins to go the wrong way. Pozzo's inability to leave suggests man's reliance upon others and his natural instinct to cling to someone else. But with one final adieu, Pozzo and Lucky depart.

Waiting for Godot : Various Interpretations

A Puzzling Play: - Waiting for Godot is a very puzzling play. Its essential meaning is not quite clear, with the result that different critics have approached it differently and interpreted it in various ways. Unfortunately Beckett himself did not throw much light on the meaning of the play. Under the circumstances each one of us is left to respond to the play in his own way. Each member of the audience is free to pick up the echoes to which he is most attuned. It is noteworthy also that the play has had a widespread appeal and has found acceptance with not only intellectuals but also with average theatre-goers. There is something in the play for almost everybody.

A Picture of Human Attempts to Fiddle through Life: - According to one interpretation of the play, the two tramps are two parts of a person or of a community seen subjectively, with Vladimir representing the more spiritual part and Estragon the animal; and Pozzo and Lucky make up a person or a community viewed objectively, Pozzo being the exploiter and the user of ideas, Lucky the exploited and the creator of ideas. In other words, we suffer with Estragon and Vladimir, their fears, their hopes, their hatreds, and their loves; but we view Pozzo and Lucky through the eyes of the tramps and therefore see in them only the social surface of life. Thus these four characters add up to a picture of humanity at large, and the play is, more than anything else, about the attempts of human beings to fiddle their way through life, setting up a wall of hopes and pretences between themselves and despair. Godot symbolises the greatest of these hopes, namely that there is some point to existence, that we are keeping some mysterious appointment on earth, and are therefore not random scraps of life. It does not matter much who Godot is because the play is not about Godot but, as its title states, about the waiting for him. The play is about life on earth, not hereafter.

A Picture of the Pointlessness of Human Life: - Different from this somewhat positive approach is another which is entirely negative. According to this other interpretation, the play is a fable about a kind of life that has no longer any point. The dramatist wishes to convey to us that life is devoid of action and that human beings have been pulled out of the world and have no longer anything to do with it. The two heroes, or anti-heroes, are merely alive, but no longer living in the world. The world has become empty for them. Where a world no longer exists, there can no longer be a possibility of a collision with the world. In our world today many people have begun increasingly to feel that they live in a world in which they do not or cannot act but are simply acted upon. The play seeks to capture the mood of such people and has therefore a more or less general application. The two tramps are dimly aware of the want of action in their lives and of the pointlessness of their existence. It is another matter that they still want to go on in life. The majority of people in today's world do not after all give up living when their life becomes pointless. The tramps are waiting for nothing in particular. They have even to remind each other of the fact that they are waiting and of what they are waiting for. Thus actually they are not waiting for anything. We need not make much fuss about who or what the expected Godot is. Godot is nothing but a name for the fact that the life which goes on pointlessly is wrongly interpreted to mean waiting for something. May be, the tramps are totally unaware of the pointlessness of their existence, though there are indications to show at least a dim awareness.

A Presentation of the Ordeal of Waiting, Ignorance, Impotence & Boredom: - A more convincing interpretation of the play is that it presents the l

futile waiting, the act of waiting as an essential, characteristic aspect of the human condition. Most often people wait for something which does not materialise just as Godot does not materialise. A man may vainly wait for a job, or promotion, or the return of a long-lost child or friend, or a love-letter, or a reunion with a divorced wife, and so on. Vladimir and Estragon by their waiting indefinitely and without any tangible result thus symbolise the millions of human beings who wait for something or other without attaining it. In this sense to the play has a general validity. But the ordeal of waiting is not the only subject of the play. The two tramps do not know who or what Godot is; nor are they sure that they are waiting at the right place or on the right day, or what could happen if they stopped waiting. In other words, the two tramps are lacking in the essential knowledge; they are ignorant. Being ignorant they cannot act and so they are impotent also. Thus the tramps produce in us a sense of baffled helplessness which we experience when forced to remain in a situation which we do not understand and over which we have no control. All that they do is to seek ways to pass the time in the situation in which they find themselves. They tell stories, sing songs, play verbal games, and pretend to be Pozzo and Lucky, do physical exercises. But all these activities are mere stop-gaps serving only to pass the time. Here then we have the very essence of boredom. Thus the play represents not just waiting but also ignorance, impotence, and boredom. Vladimir and Estragon have travelled far towards total nihilism, though they have not fully achieved it. They are in a place and in a mental state in which nothing happens and time stands still. If Godot comes, a new factor may be introduced into their existence, whereas if they leave they will certainly miss him. Their waiting therefore contains an element of vague hope.

The Problem of How to Get through Life: - Beckett had the habit of repeating the same themes and images and even characters from work to work in order perhaps to emphasise the nature of the world as he saw it. In his works, whoever the characters and whatever the situations, there is nothing beyond habit, boredom, forgetfulness and suffering. This is why the many and elaborate interpretations that have been offered of this play seem superfluous. Pozzo and Lucky, for instance, have variously been described as body and intellect, master and slave, capitalist and proletarian, coloniser and colonised, Cain and Abel, sadist and masochist, even Joyce and Beckett. But essentially and more simply, they represent one way of getting through life with someone else, just as Vladimir and Estragon more sympathetically represent another way of doing so. The mysterious Godot is just some diminutive god like all the other little gods—some divine, some political, some intellectual, some personal—for whom men wait, hopefully and in fear, to solve their problems and bring point to their pointless lives, and for whose sake they sacrifice the only real gift they have, namely their free will. When Estragon asks whether he and Vladimir have lost their rights, Vladimir replies that they have got rid of them (the rights). Waiting for Godot is thus the fullest statement of the problem that troubled Beckett. The problem is: how do you get through life? Beckett's answer is simple and depressing: we get through life by force of habit, by going on inspite of boredom and pain, by talking, by not listening to the "silence", absurdly and without hope. The two tramps in this play, with their boredom, their fear of pain, their shreds of love and hate, are a surprisingly effective version of the whole human condition—a condition for which action is no answer, chiefly because there is no obvious action to be taken: "Nothing to be done." In other words Beckett comes to a nihilistic conclusion. The play also conveys the idea that our everyday existence is nothing but playing of games, clown-like, without real consequence, springing solely from the vain hope that it will make time pass. Our

daily activities are similar to Estragon's meaningless action in taking off his shoes and putting them on.

The Religious Theme: - Some critics have found a religious meaning in the play and it is not difficult to see why. Vladimir raises, and seriously too, the issue of human salvation early in the play. He feels worried at the thought that one of the two thieves was damned. Estragon has all his life compared himself to Christ and says rather enviously that "they crucified (him) quickly." The tramps wait for Godot who may represent God, and their persistence in waiting for Godot shows their faith in God. The mutual attachment of the two tramps Vladimir and Estragon and Vladimir's protective attitude towards his friend have been interpreted as Christian virtues. Pozzo is being mistaken for Godot to begin with may also be linked with this religious interpretation. However, it is difficult to read in the play a consistent and elaborate religious allegory.

Disintegration and Regression of Man: - Among the depressing interpretations of the play is yet another. According to this interpretation, the play represents a disintegration of human beings, the climax in the play occurring when all the four characters fall to the ground upon one another, creating a formless mass from which Vladimir's voice emerges, saying: "We are men!" Nothing escapes the destructive force of this regression: neither speech—torn to pieces in the rhetoric of Pozzo's monologue on twilight—nor thought, which is undermined and destroyed by a whole series of absurd reasonings as well as by such passages as the incoherent speech delivered by Lucky. Lucky's speech effectively represents the regression of man's thinking intelligence.

The Nullity of Human Achievement: - One critic urges us not to feel perplexed by the play's meaning. Beckett, he tells us, is no didactic writer concerned to communicate a "message" in dramatic form. Even the many Christian echoes in the play do not add up to any coherent religions statement, but rather to a meditation upon a world governed by no other divinity than some sort of malignant fate, a world in which man waits and hopes for something to give value to his life and distract him from the absurdity of his death. Waiting for Godot is a meditative rhapsody on the nullity of human attainment.

A Suggestion of the German Occupation of France: - According to yet another view, the world represented in this play resembles France occupied by the Germans during World War II when Beckett lived first in the occupied zone and then escaped to the unoccupied region. Thus viewed, the play reminds us of the French Resistance organized by underground workers. How much waiting must have gone on in that bleak world! How many times must Resistance organisers have kept appointments with many who did not turn up and who may have had good reasons for not turning up ! We can imagine why the arrival of Pozzo would have an unnerving effect on those who waited. Pozzo could be a Gestapo official clumsily disguised. The German occupation of France should not of course be regarded as the "key" to the play; the play simply suggests the German occupation and thus acquires a certain historical value.

Minor Themes: - Into this wonderfully suggestive and subtle play, Beckett incorporates such minor themes as the inadequacy of human language as a means of communication and the illusory nature of such concepts as past and future.

Different Meanings for Different People: - In approaching Beckett we must give up asking what any of his plays is intended to mean. Beckett himself, when asked what a play of his meant, replied: "If I could tell you in a sentence I wouldn't have written the play." Waiting for Godot means different things for different people.

"Waiting for Godot" : An Absurd Play

Absurdist Drama: - Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot is thought to initiate a theatrical tradition called absurd drama. But like any other artistic puzzles, the theatre of the absurd cannot be reduced to a single bottom line. It cannot be defined in a single word or by a particular theory. In order to understand the rise, characteristics and popularity of the absurd drama we must look back to the events that took place during the first half of the 20th century in the worlds of politics, literature, philosophy and religion. The early 20th century witnessed two World Wars. In literature it gave birth to two recognizable literary styles: ***modernism and post-modernism***. In philosophy ***the rise of existentialism*** was the most important event and the world also saw the decline of men's faith in religion. All these happenings paved the way for the theatrical tradition the absurd drama which in fact was a reflection the age.

The term was coined by the critic Martin Esslin, who made it the title of a 1962 book on the subject. Esslin saw the work of these playwrights as giving artistic articulation to Albert Camus' philosophy that ***life is inherently without meaning***, as illustrated in his work The Myth of Sisyphus. The group of the playwrights whose works came to be known as the absurd plays include Samuel Beckett, Eugene Ionescoe, Jean Genet, Edward Albee and Harold Pinter. These writers flout all the standards by which drama has been judged for many centuries. As playwrights they share some theatrical techniques and philosophic ideas. In their plays there is no particular attention spent developing a recognizable plot, no detailed characterization, and no readily definable theme. This bizarre rejection of any recognizable pattern or development gave birth to the term Literature of the Absurd. Philosophically almost all of them share the existentialist philosophy of absurdity and nothingness.

Beckett's Waiting for Godot largely deals with the absurd tradition. The play is without any plot, character, dialogue and setting in the traditional sense.

Absurd Setting: - The setting of the play creates the absurdist mood. A desolate country road, a ditch, and a leafless tree make up the barren, otherworldly landscape whose only occupants are two homeless men who bumble and shuffle in a vaudevillian manner. They are in rags, bowler hats, and apparently oversized boots--a very comic introduction to a very bizarre play. There is a surplus of symbolism and thematic suggestion in this setting. The landscape is a symbol of a barren and fruitless civilization or life. There is nothing to be done and there appears to be no place better to depart. The tree, usually a symbol of life with its blossoms and fruit or its suggestion of spring, is apparently dead and lifeless. But it is also the place to which they believe this Godot has asked them to come. This could mean Godot wants the men to feel the infertility of their life. At the same time, it could simply mean they have found the wrong tree.

The setting of the play reminds us the post-war condition of the world which brought about uncertainties, despair, and new challenges to the all of mankind. A pess

with sadism and tangible violence, as a rich dividend of the aftermath of wars. It is as if the poignancy and calamities of the wars found sharp reflections in Beckett's Waiting for Godot.

Absurd Plot: -. In the traditional sense a plot should concentrate on a single motivated action and is also expected to have a beginning, a middle and a neatly tied-up ending. But it's almost impossible to provide a conventional plot summary of Waiting for Godot, which has often been described as a play in which nothing happens. It is formless and not constructed on any structural principles. It has no Aristotelian beginning, middle and end. It starts at an arbitrary point and seem to end just as arbitrarily. Beckett, like other dramatists working in this mode, is not trying to "tell a story." He's not offering any easily identifiable solutions to carefully observed problems; there's little by way of moralizing and no obvious "message." The pattern of the play might best be described as circular. The circularity of Waiting for Godot is highly unconventional.

Absurd Characters: - As per as the portrayal of characters is concerned the play also fits into the absurd tradition. A well-made play is expected to present characters that are well-observed and convincingly motivated. But in the play we five characters who are not very recognizable human beings and don't engage themselves in a motivated action. Two tramps, Vladimir (Didi) and Estragon (Gogo), are waiting by a tree on a country road for Godot, whom they have never met and who may not even exist. They argue, make up, contemplate suicide, discuss passages from the Bible, and encounter Pozzo and Lucky, a master and slave. Near the end of the first act, a young boy comes with a message from Mr. Godot that he will not come today but will come tomorrow. In the second act, the action of the first act is essentially repeated, with a few changes: the tree now has leaves, Pozzo is blind and has Lucky on a shorter leash. Once again the boy comes and tells them Mr. Godot will not come today; he insists he has never met them before. The play concludes with a famous exchange:

Vladimir: Well, shall we go?
Estragon: Yes, let's go.
They do not move,

Absurd Dialogue: - In the traditional play is expected to entertain the audience with logically built, witty dialogue. But in this play, like any other absurd play, the dialogue seems to have degenerated into meaningless babble. The dialogues the characters exchange are meaningless banalities. They use language to feel the emptiness between them, to conceal the fact that they have no desire to talk to each other anything at all.

Theme of Absurdity: - The absurd plays deal with the themes of existentialism, especially the existentialist theme of absurdity. The absurd playwrights tried to translate the contemporary existentialist philosophy into the drama. The absurd playwrights also tried to portray the distressful condition of the humans. In Waiting for Godot the human condition is shown as a dismal and distressful state. The derelict man struggles to live or rather exist, in a hostile and uncaring world. A sense of stagnancy and bareness captivates man, and whenever he tries to assert himself, he is curbed. In Beckett's words, human life is the endurance and tolerance to "the boredom of living" "replaced by the suffering of being." These phrases speak volumes of a philosophy born out of the harsh human realities. Vladimir and Estragon are blissfully and painfully oblivious to their own condition. They go about repeating their actions every day unmindful of the monotony and captivity. They also do not a

question or brood over their own actions and the motives underlying their actions. The "compressed vacuum" in their lives is constantly disregarded. The idea that God or fate or some Supreme Being with control toys with the lives of men is startlingly clear. Every moment of every day, mankind waits for some sign from God that his suffering will end. And every day, God does not arrive.

So many times in the play, a possibility is suggested then immediately undercut by its unhappy opposite. This technique is used by Beckett to relay his theme that life is uncertain and unpredictable at its best, unfortunate and unending at its worst. To further state this theme, Estragon asserts that "There's no lack of void" in life. It is actually of little importance where they were the previous day, as everywhere every day the same empty vacuum envelops them. Absence, emptiness, nothingness, and unresolved mysteries are central features in the play.

Thus the play “Waiting for Godot” contains almost all the elements of an absurd play. The play depicts the irrationalism of life in a grotesquely comic and non-consequential fashion with the element of "metaphysical alienation and tragic anguish." It was first written in French and called En attendant Godot. The author himself translated the play into English in 1954. The uniqueness of the play compelled the audiences to flock to the theatres for a spectacularly continuous four hundred performances. At the time, there were two distinct opinions about the play; some called it a hoax and others called it a masterpiece. Nevertheless, Waiting for Godot has claimed its place in literary history as a masterpiece that changed the face of twentieth century drama.

"Waiting For Godot": Existentialism

Samuel Beckett’s Waiting for Godot is a play that presents conflict between living by religious and spiritual beliefs, and living by ***an existential philosophy, which asserts that it is up to the individual to discover the meaning of life through personal experience in the earthly world***.

Waiting for Godot is a comprehensive study in existentialism. The play in its own right contains many existentialist themes and concepts which are relayed to the audience through the actions and thoughts of the main characters. The main existentialist theme which Beckett deals with is that death is the only eventual possibility. He uses the almost religious action of waiting and turns it on its head. He does this by reducing the action to a fruitless exercise. Vladimir and Estragon are in fact waiting for nothing. I think that Beckett strongly questions the notion of religion in “Waiting for Godot”. He uses certain religious symbols such as the tree, which is one of the very few props visible on the stage.

The tree is very religious. It is believed that the tree represents life and death in a cyclical fashion. Also waiting is a central part of the play. Waiting can be interpreted as a religious activity. Waiting can be directly linked to faith. Many people of the catholic faith believe that they are on this earth waiting to go to heaven i.e. the afterlife. I think that Beckett hits out at this notion. He does this by showing that nothing happens at the end of Vladimir and Estragon’s waiting. The title, waiting for Godot, is very clever. It can be, and has been read as waiting for god. It would appear, on first glance that Vladimir and Estragon are indeed waiting for god, or a godlike figure.

> ***"But that is not the question. Why are we here, that is the question. And we are blessed in this, that we happen to know the answer. Yes, in this immense confusion one thing alone is clear. We are waiting for Godot to come."***

We are never made aware as to whom Godot actually is. Is his character cloaked in mystery or, does Godot simply not exist? We the audience, along with the central characters, have never seen Godot. We are too simply to believe in this mysterious figure. I think that Beckett plays on the concept of faith excellently here. He demands faith from everybody and in the last scene he destroys this faith. He strongly communicates his message, there is no afterlife and we are merely waiting on this earth for one thing only, death. Beckett, as an existentialist writer, is very aware of his mortality and this echoes throughout his works, especially waiting for Godot. The title can also be read as waiting for nothing, as the elusive Godot does not make an appearance.

Beckett, as an existentialist writer, is not overly religious. It would be a mistake in opinion to relate his writing to religion. I feel that Beckett is criticising people's blind faith. Vladimir and Estragon are waiting for nothing in the play. I feel that Beckett is trying to convey this message in his drama. He is ambiguous in his writing. I think he does this to be more accessible so he can spread his core existentialist concepts. He inserts false religious symbols and metaphors in waiting for Godot and once he has baited the religious readers he bombards them with existentialist concepts. This in my opinion is a de-conversion of religion as he tries to strip the reader's faith away. Beckett sees God to be a joke just as Godot is a joke. The waiting is nothing more than the delayed inevitability that they are waiting for nothing, but their own inevitable death. Godot is nothing, and thus god is nothing. This ties in with the existentialist view that death is the only inevitable outcome in life.

> ***"Let us not waste our time in idle discourse! Let us do something, while we have the chance! It is not every day that we are needed. But at this place, at this moment of time, all mankind is us, whether we like it or not. Let us make the most of it, before it is too late!"***

Beckett writing exists freshly in the wake of the world war. Morality is a key concept in Waiting for Godot. In life, morality is passed down from god. Beckett questions morality. Can morality exist without god? It is clear war and its destructive capability caused many people to question their morality. The losing of Pozzo's watch is a very significant scene to the play. We see how one character, Pozzo, is bound to the constraints and rules of time. Time itself can be seen as a great symbol and a metaphor for death. Beckett refers to time through the character of Pozzo. He shows the audience how they are mortal and that everyone's days are numbered. Pozzo's fear of time may be linked to the existentialist themes of this play. Pozzo is well aware of his mortality. The watch marks his ageing and with each tic he is moving closer to his death. He is bound to this and it is a faith he cannot escape. The watch is a constant reminder of this. When the watch is lost Pozzo is free from all anxieties. He no longer is bound to time or no longer recognises his own mortality, even though it still exists and is ever present. When the watch is lost time becomes redundant. Time becomes nothing, just as Godot is nothing. This is another test of faith laid down by Beckett. It is an experiment to see if something which is not present can still exist. Through the on stage characters, he shows us that this is not entirely possible. Time is banished from the physical world of which they inhabit. The banishment of time is an important symbol. Beckett shows us that it is

possible to remove a belief system, even one as controlling as time. We see that even time is just another concept thought up by somebody else.

In conclusion we can say that Godot has some physical presence in the play. Godot is the tree. The tree is the central prop in the play. But it could be would argue that Godot is the central prop. Vladimir and Estragon were not waiting by the tree for Godot, but were waiting alongside Godot unknown's to themselves. Godot is in front of everyone from the start. The tree on stage is dead. Godot is also dead. Godot in my opinion is faith. Estragon and Vladimir have faith throughout the play even though they are waiting by a symbol which declares faith to be dead. This is great irony. Beckett is trying to say that people will always have faith even when they are bombarded with signs that there is no God. This may relate to the World War. Beckett fought in the war and witnessed the devastation caused by it. The war copper-fastened Beckett's belief that there is no god as there was no divine intervention to stop the bloodshed. The war itself was a great symbol, like the tree in waiting for Godot, to show that faith is dead and god does not exist. But people are blind to the obvious.

"Waiting for Godot" : Significance of the Title

Wailing for Godot is a multi-sided play with significant title. Its meanings and implications are complex. It is possible to look upon it as a clever farce or view it as a tragic exposition of human predicament. Its themes have certain topicality but at the same time, they possess a timeless validity and universality. It is an existentialistic play but at the same time mocks at the attitude of existentialism. It seems to have some religious implications even though it seems of be questioning profoundly the Christian concept of salvation and grace.

The title "Waiting for Godot," suggests waiting for a mysterious stranger who has obvious symbolic dimensions and implication. Godot may be a representative, in Beckett's contemporary term of some authority, who has promised protection to the tramps. He may be regarded as a symbol of the hope of the ordinary French citizen in French under German occupation or he may be considered as the link in Resistance French Movement with Estragon and Vladimir two resistance workers who have been told to contact him. Obviously their men can come only when the coast is absolutely clear, or waiting for Godot may be a symbol of waiting for a Divine Saviour.

The significance of the title can also be explored in another way, as the fundamental imagery of "Waiting for Godot" is Christian for the depth of experience which Backett is probing; there is no other source of imagery for him to draw on. His heroes are two tramps who have come from nowhere in particular and have nowhere particular to go, their life is in a state of apparently fruitless expectation. They receive messages, through a little boy, from local landowner, Godot, who always is going to come in person tomorrow, but never do come, Their attitude towards Godot is partly one of hope, partly of fear, The orthodoxy of this symbolism from a Christian point of view is obvious, The tramps with their rags and misery represent the fallen state of marl The squalor of their Surrounding, their lock of a state in the world represents the idea that there in this world we can build no conducive state to live in.

The ambiguity of their attitude towards Godot Their mingled hope and fear and the doubtful tone of the boy's messages represent the state of tension and uncertainty in which

an average Christian must live in this world, avoiding presumption and also avoiding despair, Yet the two tramps Didi and Gogo, as they call each other, represent something far higher than the other two characters in the play, the masterful and ridiculous Pozzo and his terrifying slave Lucky, Didi and Gogo stand for the contemplative life and Lucky and Pozzo stand for the life of practical action taken mistakenly, as an end in it.

As for as view of Godot as a Divine Saviour is concerned, it is strengthened by they did not request Godot to do anything definite for them, all they did, was to make a sort of vague or supplication to him. Vladimir says more than once that if Godot comes they would be saved, The resemblance of "God" is too clear to be missed, Moreover, they are also afraid of him, when Estragon suggests that they might drop Godot, Vladimir reminds him that he would punish them if they do that.

Thus Godot may be God, terrible and white beard, as conceived in the Old Testament The tramps waiting for him may thus be the representatives of human beings who must keep each other's company, quarrelling and foolish talking, until they find a rope to hang themselves, or until final night make the act of waiting unnecessary. Being poor and unprovided they are typical specimens of common, anti-hemic humanity. The tramps like Pozzo and Lucky also seem to symbolize human regression, that is to say, the deterioration or "backward evolution" in human. In this way the title "Waiting for Godot" is applicable to act of Christianity.

As regards the relevance of the title of the play to the German occupation of France, we observe two men waiting for another name, which may not be his real name. A ravaged and blasted landscape, a world that was once ampler and more open, but it is permeated with pointlessness now, mysterious dispensers of beating and tile anxiety of the two who wait their anxiety to be as inconspicuous as possible in a strange environment. All this reminds the reader and the audience of France occupied by the Gennens, in which its author spent the war years. It indicates how much useless waiting must have gone on that bleak world. As such the monotonous waiting is likely to create uncertainty and loss of hope. The tramps in the play are sitting in a similar condition of mind.

This view suggests that "Waiting for Godot" is a play about a mysterious world where two men wait. Only a fraction of human race had experienced the German occupation of France and only of fraction of that fraction waited for some Godot.

Nevertheless, the title of the play is also suggestive of the meaninglessness of life. The way the two tramps pass time his real name is indicative of the boredom and triviality of human activities, the lack of significance in life and the constant suffering which are the results of this existence. It also brings out the hollowness and insincerity of most social intercourse. Estragon and Vladimir question each other, contradict each other abuse each other and reconcile each other without any serious meanings or intention. All these devices are employed to one end - to the end of making their waiting for Godot less unbearable. Estragon takes off his boots, gropes inside them, and shakes them out expecting something to fall out of them, but nothing happens. Vladimir does the same with hat with the same result. The very essence of boredom and triviality is concentrated in the scene in which Estragon and Vladimir repeatedly put on and take off the three hats their own and Lucky. It is utter lack of meanings which derives Estragon and Vladimir to the thoughts of suicide but the world of the play is one in which no significant action is permitted, ther

not within their reach. "Waiting for Godot" is so to speak, a play about the philosophy, which underscores that. Man feels upon being confronted with the fact of existence; thereby confirming the suitability of the title.

The Breakdown of Language as a Theme

The Breakdown of Language: - Beckett's plays are concerned with expressing the difficulty of finding meaning in a world subject to change. His use of language probes the limitations of language both as a means of communication and as a vehicle for the expression of valid statements, an instrument of thought.

His use of the dramatic medium shows that he has tried to find means of expression beyond language. On the stage one can dispense with words altogether (for instance, in his mime-plays), or at least one can reveal the reality behind the words, as when the actions of the characters contradict their verbal expression. "Let's go", say the two tramps at the end of each Act of Waiting for Godot, but the stage directions inform us that "they don't move". On the stage language can be put into such a relationship with action that facts behind the language can be revealed. Hence the importance of mine, knockabout comedy, and silence in Beckett's plays—Krapp's eating of bananas, the pratfalls of Vladimir and Estragon, the variety turn with Lucky's hat, Clov's immobility at the close of Endgame, which puts his verbally expressed desire to leave in question. Beckett's use of the stage is an attempt to reduce the gap between the limitations of language and the sense of the human situation he seeks to express in spite of his strong feeling that words are inadequate to formulate it. The concreteness and three dimensional nature of the stage can be used to add new resources to language as an instrument of thought and exploration of being. Language in Beckett's plays serves to express the break-down of language. Where there is no certainty, there can be no definite meanings—and the impossibility of ever attaining certainty is one of the main themes of Beckett's plays. Godot's promises are vague and uncertain. In Endgame, Hamm asks, "We're not beginning to mean something?" Clov merely laughs and says: "Mean something! You and I mean something!"

Language Ineffective as a Means of Communication: - Ten different modes of the breakdown (or disintegration) of language have been noted in Waiting for Godot. They range from simple misunderstandings and double-entendres to monologues (as signs of inability to communicate), cliches, repetitions of synonyms, inability to find the right words, and telegraphic style (loss of grammatical structure, communication by shouted commands) to Lucky's farrago of chaotic nonsense and the dropping of punctuation marks, such as question marks, as an indication that language has lost its function as a means of communication, that questions have turned into statements not really requiring an answer. A whole list of passages drawn up by a critic from Waiting for Godot shows that the assertions made by one of the characters are gradually qualified, weakened, and hedged in with reservations until they are completely taken back. In a meaningless universe, it is always foolhardy to make a positive statement.

The Breakdown of Dialogue: - But more important than any merely formal signs of the disintegration of language and meaning in Beckett's plays is the nature of the dialogue itself, which again and again breaks down because no truly logical discussion or exchange of thoughts occurs in it either through loss of meaning of single words or th

characters to remember what has just been said. In a purposeless world that has lost its ultimate objectives, dialogue, like all action, becomes a mere game to pass the time.

Devaluation of Language: - Beckett's use of language is thus designed to devalue language as a vehicle of conceptual thought or as an instrument for the communication of ready-made answers to the problems of the human condition. And yet his continued use of language must, paradoxically, be regarded as an attempt to communicate the incommunicable. Such an undertaking attacks the cheap, and facile complacency of the view that to name a problem is to solve it or that the world can be mastered by neat classification and formulations.

Beckett, a Great Master of Language: - Beckett's entire work can be seen as a search for the reality that lies behind mere reasoning in conceptual terms. He may have devalued language as an instrument for the communication of ultimate truths, but he has shown himself a great master of language as an artistic medium. He has moulded words into a superb instrument for his purpose. In the theatre he has been able to add a new dimension to language—the counterpoint of action, concrete, many-faceted, not to be explained away, but making a direct impact on an audience. In Beckett's theatre it is possible to bypass the stage of conceptual thinking altogether, as an abstract painting bypasses the stage of the recognition of natural objects. In Waiting for Godot and Endgame, plays drained of character, plot, and meaningful dialogue, Beckett has shown that such a seemingly impossible feat can in fact be accomplished.

Waiting for Godot : Religious Significance

St. Augustine's Remark

When asked about the theme of *Waiting for Godot,* Beckett is reported to have referred to the following sentence in the writings of St. Augustine "Do not despair: one of the thieves was saved. Do not presume: one of the thieves was damned."

Theme of the Uncertainty of Salvation: - The theme of the two thieves on the cross, the theme of the uncertainty of the hope of salvation and the chance bestowal of divine grace, does indeed pervade the whole play. Vladimir states it right at the beginnings, when he says: "One of the thieves was saved. It's a reasonable percentage." Later he enlarges on the subject. One of the two thieves is supposed to have been saved and the other damned, says Vladimir. But he asks why only one of the four Evangelists speaks of a thief being saved. Of the other three Evangelists, two do not mention any thieves at all, and the third says that both of them abused Christ. In other words, there is a fifty-fifty chance of salvation but, as only one out of four witnesses (the Evangelists) reports it, the chances are considerably reduced. As Vladimir points out, it is a curious fact that everybody seems to believe that one witness: "It is the only version they know." Estragon, whose attitude has been one of scepticism throughout, merely comments "People are bloody ignorant apes."

The Chance Remarks Made By the Two Thieves: - It is the shape of the idea that fascinated Beckett. Out of all the evildoers, out of all the millions and millions of criminals that have been, executed in the course of history, only two had the chance of salvation in so unique a manner. One happened to make a hostile remark; he was

happened to contradict that hostile remark; and he was saved. How easily could the roles have been reversed! These, after all, were not well-considered judgments, but chance exclamations uttered at a moment of supreme suffering and stress. As Pozzo says about Lucky:

"Remark that I might easily have been in his shoes and he in mine.
If chance had not willed it otherwise.
To each one his due."

Godot's Unpredictability in Bestowing Grace: - Godot himself is unpredictable in bestowing kindness and punishment. The boy who is his messenger looks after the goats, and Godot treats him well. But the boy's brother, who looks after the sheep, is beaten by Godot. "And why doesn't he beat you?" asks Vladimir. "I don't know, sir," the boy replies. The parallel to Cain and Abel is evident: there too the Lord's grace fell on one rather than on the other without any rational explanation. Here Godot also acts contrary to Jesus Christ at the Last Judgment: "And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left." But if Godot's kindness is bestowed as a matter of pure chance, his coming is not a source of pure joy; it can also mean damnation. When in Act II Estragon believes Godot to be approaching, his first thought is that he is accursed and as Vladimir triumphantly exclaims:

"It's Godot! At last! Let's go and meet him,"

Estragon runs away, shouting:

"I'm in hell."

Two Divisions of Mankind: - The chance bestowal of grace, which human beings cannot comprehend, divides mankind into those who will be saved and those who will be damned. When in Act II, Pozzo and Lucky return, and the two tramps try to identify them, Estragon calls out: "Abel! Abel!" Pozzo immediately responds. But when Estragon calls out: "Cain! Cain!" Pozzo responds again. "He's all humanity," concludes Estragon.

Pozzo's Effort to Attain Salvation: - There is even a suggestion that Pozzo's activity is concerned with his frantic attempt to draw that fifty-fifty chance of salvation upon himself. In Act I, Pozzo is on his way to sell Lucky at the fair. The French version of the play, however, specifies that it is the Market of the Holy Saviour to which he is taking Lucky. Is Pozzo trying to sell Lucky to redeem himself? Is he trying to divert the fifty-fifty chance of redemption from Lucky to Pozzo? He certainly complains that Lucky is causing him great pain, that he is killing him with his mere presence—perhaps because his mere presence reminds Pozzo that it might be Lucky who will be redeemed. When Lucky gives his famous demonstration of his thinking, the thin thread of sense that underlies the opening lines seems to be concerned with the accidental nature of salvation: "Given the existence of a personal God outside time without extension who from the heights of divine apathia, divine athambia, divine aphasia, loves us dearly with some exception for reasons unknown and suffers with those who are plunged in torment…." Here we have a description of a personal God, with his divine apathy, his speechlessness ("aphasia"), and his lack of the capacity for terror or amazement ("athambia"), in other words, a God who does not communicate with us, cannot feel for us, and condemns us for reasons unknown.

Pozzo's Failure: - When Pozzo and Lucky reappear the next day, Pozzo blind and Lucky dumb, no more is heard of the fair. Pozzo has failed to sell Lucky; his blindness in thinking that he could thus influence the action of grace has been made evident in concrete physical form.

A Religious or Christian Play: - *Waiting for Godot* then seems to be concerned with the hope of salvation through the workings of grace. And this view supports the belief that it is a Christian or a religious play. Vladimir's and Estragon's "waiting" might be explained as signifying their steadfast faith and hope, while Vladimir's kindness to his friend, and the two tramps' mutual interdependence might be seen as symbols of Christian charity.

Evidence Against this Conclusion: - But these religious interpretations overlook a number of essential features of the play. These features arc the play's constant stress on the uncertainty of the appointment with Godot; Godot's unreliability and irrationality, and the repeated demonstration of the futility of the hopes pinned on him. The act of waiting for Godot is shown as essentially absurd and therefore devoid of any religious significance.

Thought of Suicide: - There is one feature of the play that leads us to assume that there is a better solution to the tramps' predicament, a solution which the tramps themselves consider preferable to waiting for Godot. That solution is suicide. "We should have thought of it when the world was young, in the nineties", says Vladimir at the outset. Suicide remains their favourite solution, unattainable owing to their own incompetence and their lack of the practical tools to achieve it.

Not Tied to Godot: - Estragon, far less convinced of Godot's promises than Vladimir, is anxious to reassure himself that they are not "tied" to Godot. Vladimir gives him the necessary assurance: "Tied to Godot! What an idea! No question of it. For the moment". When, later, Vladimir falls into a sort of complacency about their waiting, Estragon immediately punctures it. And Vladimir is quite ready to admit that they are waiting only from irrational habit.

The Tramps' Faith: - In support of the Christian interpretation, it might be argued that Vladimir and Estragon, who are waiting for Godot, are shown as clearly superior to Pozzo and Lucky, who have no appointment, no objective, and are wholly egocentric, wholly wrapped up in their sado-masochistic relationship. It is their faith that puts the two tramps on a higher plane. It is evident that Pozzo is overconfident and self-centred. "Do I look like a man that can be made to suffer"? he boasts. Even when he gives a melancholy and moving description of the sunset and the sudden failings of the night, we know he does not believe the night will ever fall on him; he is not concerned with the meaning of what he recites, but only with its effect on his listeners. Hence he is taken completely unawares when night does fall on him and he goes blind. Likewise Lucky, in accepting Pozzo as his master and in teaching him his ideas, seems to have been naively convinced of the power of reason, beauty, and truth. Estragon and Vladimir are clearly superior to both Pozzo and Lucky—not because they pin their faith on Godot but because they are less naive. They do not believe in action, wealth, or reason. They are aware that all we do in this life is as nothing when seen against the senseless action of time, which is in itself an illusion. They are aware that suicide would be the best solution. They are thus superior to Pozzo and Lucky because they are less self-centred and have fewer illusions. The hope, the habit of hoping, that Go

all is the last illusion that keeps Vladimir and Estragon from facing the human condition in the harsh light of fully conscious awareness. For a brief moment, Vladimir is aware of the full horror of the human condition: "The air is full of our cries……At me too someone is looking……" But the routine of waiting, which has become a habit, prevents an awareness of the full reality of being.

The Dead Voices: - Vladimir's and Estragon's pastimes are designed to stop them from thinking. "We're in no danger of thinking any more….Thinking is not the worst……What is terrible is to have thought", says Vladimir. Vladimir and Estragon talk incessantly because they wish to hear the "dead voices" which explore the mysteries of being and the self to the limits of anguish and suffering. The long silence that follows the cross-talk about those voices is broken by Vladimir in "anguish", with the cry "Say anything at all!"

Conclusion: - The hope of salvation may be merely an evasion of the suffering and anguish that spring from facing the reality of the human condition. But this does not invalidate the religious implications of the play. It is possible, however, to believe *either* that the play visualizes the possibility of salvation or that it negates such a possibility. Which alternative a reader adopts will depend upon his mental make-up because each reader will respond to the play in his own way.

"Waiting for Godot": Realism

"Waiting for Godot" occupies a prominent place in the annals of English literature for highlighting the basic truths of human beings belonging to any age or religion. The play can be interpreted by various ways. It is a play in which fact and fancy, illusion and reality are mingled together. In "Waiting for Godot" man's sufferings, whether physical or metaphysical, are shown in such a way that we feel them as our own suffering. The play is a mirror of our age because it shows the inner hollowness, helplessness and meaninglessness of modern man's life. The theme of the play has a universal appeal. The tramps represent all humanity. Their sufferings are the sufferings of all human beings; no matter in which country they live in or what religious beliefs they have. They reflect modern man's loneliness, absurdity, forgetfulness, and illusions, waiting condition, deferred hope, physical suffering, mental anguish, death wish and isolation. The main subject of the play is waiting and the act of waiting is an essential aspect of the human condition. Vladimir says:

We're waiting for Godot.

And the sentence is repeated in the course of the play like a refrain. It is not clear in the play who or what Godot is. The tramps themselves have only a vague idea of who Godot is. They wait for him in a state of ignorance or helplessness. The play thus depicts waiting, ignorance and boredom and all these things are directly experienced by us in life, wait is essential – the offer of a job, the possibility of promotion, the return of a long-lost friend, a love letter etc. Thus we discover a common ground between ourselves and the two tramps who are waiting for Godot.

The play highlights the theme of habit, boredom and "the suffering of being". The play is a fable about a kind of life that has no longer any point. Godot may stand for God. Or for a mythical human being or for a meaning of life or for death but the play i

stagnant life. The heroes or anti-heroes are merely alive but a life without action and purpose. In our world millions of people do not act but are acted. The tramps, in spite of their inaction and pointlessness of their existence, still want to go on. The millions of people today do not give up living when their life becomes pointless. Thus the plight of two tramps is no different than that of an average man and that's why people are able to respond to the play. It is not without reason that Estragon suggests hanging as a remedy. Under the condition in which we live, most of us have subconsciously thought of hanging ourselves. The mood of despair is not limited but has become a general attitude of the people.

Lucky and Pozzo represent master slave relationship through centuries. The pathetic and miserable condition of Lucky represents the exploited class of all ages and Pozzo the exploiter. Pozzo is a capitalist of our times who suck the blood of the poor and then throw them away like the peel of banana. But even then both the classes are interdependent upon each other.

The play is valid for all those who can assimilate the general anguish into their particular experience and thus translate it into their own terms. "Nothing to be done" is the main dilemma of our life. In spite of having got marvellous progress in all fields of life, man is still in confusion and perplexity of mind. His moral scruples prevent him doing something wrong but at the same time his worldly lust incites him to do the same wrong. Beckett makes us realize that man is the main cause of the sufferings of man. The contrast between the relationships of the two pairs of characters becomes an important clue for the understanding of the play and produces certain echoes in us.

In nutshell we may say "Waiting for Godot" is a mirror in which everyone can see his own face because Vladimir and Estragon's problems of everyman. We are all waiting for the reality of our existence. Every day we turn the page of our life with this hope that perhaps today the reality will out but in the end we still remain unknown. That's why the play touches the apex of appreciation by an audience of prisoners at San Quentin in the USA because they were confronted with their own experience of time, waiting, hope and despair. Thus the play is a mirror of our times and there is enough in the play, which can be called the echo of our own mind and heart.

Waiting For Godot : A Tragi-Comedy

Tragic-comedy is a play which claims a plot apt for tragedy but which ends happily like a comedy. The action is serious in theme and subject matter and tone also sometimes but it seems to be a tragic catastrophe until an unexpected turn in events brings out the happy ending. The characters of a tragic-comedy are noble but they are involved in improbabilities. In such a play tragic and comic elements are mixed up together. Fletcher, in his **"Preface to the Faithful Shepherdess",** defines a tragic-comedy as:

> ***"A tragic-comedy is not so called in respect to mirth and killing, but in respect it wants death which is enough to make it no tragedy. Shakespeare's 'Cymbeline' and 'The Winter's Tale' may also be categorized as tragic-comedy."***

The English edition of **"Waiting for Godot"**, published in 1956 describes the play as a **"tragic-comedy"** in two acts. There are many dialogues, gestures, situations and actions that are stuff of pure comedy. All musical devices are employed to create laughter in such a tragic situation of waiting. The total atmosphere of the play is very akin to dark-comedy. For example, Vladimir is determined not to hear Estragon's nightmare. The latter pleads with him in vain to hear him, saying that there is nobody else to whom he may communicate his private nightmares.

The audience burst out in laughter when they see Estragon putting off and on his boots. Vladimir's game with his hat appears as if this is happening in a circus. Vladimir is suffering from prostrate problem. Vladimir's way of walking with stiff and short strides is as funny as Estragon's limping on the stage. Estragon's gestures of encouraging Vladimir to urinate off-stage are farcical. The comedy in this play at certain times gives the impression of Vaudeville. There are many dialogues:

Estragon: Let's go.
Vladimir: We can not.
Estragon: Why not?
Vladimir: We are waiting for Godot.
(They do not move.)

These dialogues occur like a comic paradigm in the play.

Estragon and Vladimir put on and take off each other's hat as well as that of lucky again and again. It shows that in the world of tramps, there is no place of significant actions. The most farcical situation in the play is the one where the tramps are testing the strength of the cord with which they wish to hang themselves. The cord breaks under the strain. One cannot have an uninhabited laugh at the situation for there is also something deeply uncomfortable.

"Waiting for Godot" has several moments of anguish and despair. Someone beats Estragon daily.

Estragon: Beat me? Certainly they beat me.

Estragon's feet and Vladimir's kidneys are also taken to be granted. The tramps resent that they should be asked whether it still hurts. It goes without saying that it hurts all the time. When Vladimir asks Estragon whether his boots are hurting him, he responds:

"Hurts! He wants to know if it hurts!"

A little later Estragon asks Vladimir about his kidney trouble and the latter replies in the same words:

"Hurts! He wants to know if it hurts!"

In fact his trouble is so bad that it does not even permit him to laugh. Life lies all bleak and barren before them and that only valid comment on it is the one with which the play opens, **"Nothing to be done"**. Theirs is a world of negation in which inactivity is the safest course; as Estragon says:

"Do not let us do anything, it's safer".

The tramps are living at the barest level of existence. Carrot, turnips and radishes are all they have to eat. Estragon's remarks show tragedy and helplessness:

"Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful."

The situation of Lucky is quite pathetic, especially in view of his glorious past, as Pozzo describes it. His speech tells us that in his sonar moments Lucky must have brooded deeply over the anguish of the human situation. The anguish breaks in his incoherent harangue:

> ***"… the flames, the tears the stones so blue so calm alas alas on on the skull the skull the skull the skull in Connemara in spite of the tennis the labours abandoned left unfinished graver still abode of stones in a word I resume alas alas abandoned unfinished the skull the skull in Connemara in spite of the tennis the skull alas the stones Cunard (melee, final vociferations) tennis … the stones … so calm …Cunard … unfinished …"***

The comedy in **"Waiting for Godot"** at once turns into tragedy when the audience thinks about the helplessness of tramps. Estragon and Vladimir are waiting for someone who never comes. In order to pass time they indulge in irrelevant, meaningless activity. The element of force fades away and miserable condition of man looms large in our imagination. Their life can be compared with that of a prisoner for whom there is no escape, even suicide is impossible. Every activity is a mockery of human existence.

The changing of farce into absurdity brings a lot of tragic sentiment in the play. Estragon's nakedness is a picture of 'man's miserable condition'. The absurd living is a major source of tragedy. The source is the situation of pointless waiting of Estragon and Vladimir. They do not know who Godot is. They are sure neither about the time nor about the place of their appointment. They even do not know what will happen if they stop waiting? Lack of essential knowledge makes them totally impotent and powerless. They are glued to a situation. Nothing is certain all they can say is **"Nothing to be done".**

The total effect of this co-mingling of tragic and comic suggests that Samuel Beckett's is a realistic dramatist who looks at life from a position of a pessimist and an optimist. The form of tragic-comedy is highly suitable to this vision of life. The climax of Beckett's tragic-comedy is the role of Lucky. He is wearing servant's vest while holding his master's overcoat, a basket and a stool. His neck is tied with one end of the rope. His appearance is not only fantastic but grotesque also. The moment we realize that he is a half-wit; he becomes an image of man's misery. We are all the more sorry for Lucky when it is revealed that Pozzo has learnt all the beautiful things of life from lucky. But now Pozzo is taking the same person to sell in a fair. The relationship of a ringmaster and his trained animal, changes into a relationship of an owner and a slave. It is an exploitation of a man by a man who stops the audience from bursting out into laughter. Comedy has been checked by tragic element or sentiments, while the effect of tragedy has been mitigated by farce created through characters, dialogues, gestures and actions.

We can sum up with the remarks of Sean O' Casey,

> ***"Beckett is a clever writer, for within him there is no hazard of hope; no desire for it; nothing in it but a lust for despair and a crying of woe, not in a wilderness, but in a garden."***

Waiting for Godot as a Christian religious play

Samuel Beckett speaks little in Waiting for Godot, yet manages to invites colossal critical discourses. Meaning in its traditional sense dissolves gaseously in Beckett's works, yet each performance or reading of the play gives birth to a new meaning. As William Mueller has observed:

> ***"The human predicament described in Beckett's first play is that of man living on the Saturday after the Friday of the crucifixion, and not really knowing if all hope is dead or if the next day will bring the life which has been promised."***

Sixty years have passed since the first production of En Attendant Godot in Théâtre de Babylone, but the various attempts so far made to analyse Waiting for Godot as a Christian drama with biblical allegory somewhat relied on the Mueller motif.

Biblical allusions, allegories and images in Waiting for Godot

Waiting for Godot abounds in religious allusions. Christianity is introduced as early in the play as Vladimir asks whether Estragon have read the Bible or not. The nondescript tree too can have multiple interpretations, but ecclesiastical scholars love to see it as an image of the Cross. Moreover, notwithstanding Beckett's refusal of any godliness in Godot, we thoroughly feel that the absent protagonist appears to be a messiah for the two tramps.

Yet another religious interpretation of Waiting for Godot is encouraged by the correlation of Lucky's idea of God having white beard, and the boy's identical description of Godot. The never ending waiting also reflects the basic biblical idea of Christ's return on the Doomsday, putting an end to all sufferings, the sufferings of Vladimir and Estragon. In fact, what helps Didi and Gogo sustain their existence amidst eternal barrenness is their faith, that Godot will surely come, tomorrow if not today, and harmonize all the disorders.

Once, Gogo compared himself to Christ. It seems more than a distant coincidence the he ironically mirrors the last few days of Christ. Estragon spent the night in a ditch, so did Christ in a cave after his death. Also, having heard about Estragon being beaten up, Vladimir reaches out to embrace him like loving Veronica. Also, Pozzo examines the cuts on Estragon's leg as he wakes up, thus re-enacting the Apostle's examination of Christ's wounds after his rising.

The most prominent biblical reference in Samuel Beckett's play, however, is the crucifixion myth. Vladimir ambiguously reminds Estragon that one of the two thieves was saved; and later when the Boy says that Godot spares him but beats his brother we immediately recall the crucifixion discourse. Only, there is a reversal of the biblical allegory of the sheep being rewarded and the goats damned. Crucifixion is also conveyed through the tree, the tramps' attempt to hang themselves from it, the skull in Lucky's speech and so fo

Act Two is yet another symbol of crucifixion. Vladimir's feeding Estragon on carrot is reminiscent of Jesus feeding a crowd of five thousand on meagre foods. The tree for Estragon seems "more like a bush", thus invoking Exodus's picture of Moses on Mount Sinai. These references are apparently disconnected, but the overall tone they create tempts the recipient more and more into a religious interpretation.

Beckett's problematization of religious elements in Waiting for Godot

Beckett, nevertheless, problematizes whatever religious element exists in the Waiting for Godot. We never find an answer to Vladimir's shocking question that why the other thief was not saved and why only one of the four saints narrated the incident. Our faith is at once destabilized; we calculate like Vladimir the percentage of redemption in a divine gambling. Just as religious bias has often slowed down human civilisation, and bigotry hindered human liberation, here the tramps' faith on Godot stops the linear timeline and prevents them from going away. It is religious faith once again that led the entire mankind to inaction:

"Estragon: Don't let's do anything. It's safer.
Vladimir: Let's wait and see what he says."

Faith is once again undermined as Estragon and Vladimir talk over the certainty of Godot's offerings:

"Estragon: A kind of prayer.
Vladimir: Precisely.
Estragon: A vague supplication.
Vladimir: Exactly.
Estragon: And what did he reply?
Vladimir: That he'd see."

There are also oblique hints to the Christian practice of confession. Estragon is least interested in Vladimir's discourse on crucifixion; and when Estragon wants to share a nightmare and thus get relief, Vladimir adamantly refuses to hear him.

In his first appearance Pozzo enters with all the embellishments of a false prophet, and initially Vladimir and Estragon mistake him as Godot. Can he be seen as Godot's alter ego, the religious oppressiveness? Pozzo whips Lucky, burdens him with sandbags, leads him by a rope and tells him when to act. At the extreme, Lucky can speak only when Pozzo gives him his hat and allows him to. Was Beckett suggesting through this the controlling nature of the Church?

The importance of messengers does not end with Pozzo and Lucky. Godot's errand-boy resembles Christ as God's messenger, and both meet similar mistreatment at their recipients. The Boy reinforces this allusion by telling that his master spares him but beats his brother, a relationship recalling Cain, Abel and their Lord. Ironically, the names Cain and Abel are later explicitly mentioned in the text.

Waiting for Godot thus abounds in biblical allegories, advocating more and more for a religious interpretation. Still, considering it only as a dramatised Christian allegory will be an oversimplification. Like Beckett, his play as well as his characters are n

specific theory or interpretation. Viewing Waiting for Godot as a Christian play may be a way to approach it, but surely not the only one.

"Waiting for Godot" : Significance of Time

"Waiting For Godot" is dramatization of modern enigmas in a comical way.

"Waiting for Godot" appears as depthless play, "Nothing happens, no one comes, No one goes, and it is awful". However beneath its surface absurdity, there lie layer of meanings, presenting a coarse picture of human life. The play is composed of multiple themes. It has become a classic and provides the critics much to speculate on, when Beckett was asked who is Godot,? He replied, "If I knew, I would have said so in the play".

"Waiting for Godot", concerned with the hope of salvation through the working of grace has been considered as Christian or religious play. G.S. Erase is of the opinion that this is a modern morality play on permanent Christian theme; he mentions the play in the same breath as every man and the Pilgrim's progress. The tramps wait for Godot who may represent God and their persistence in waiting for Godot shows their faith in God. The mutual attachment of two tramps and Vladimir's protective attitude towards his friend has been interpreted as Christian virtue. When Beckett was asked about the theme of Waiting for Godot, he sometimes referred to a passage in the writing of St Augustine, "Do not despair-one of the thieves was saved. 00 not presume-one of the thieves was damned".

However the theme of two thieves on the cross, the theme of uncertainty of hope of salvation and the fortuitousness of the bestowal of grace do indeed seems to be an insignificant observation. Godot is nothing but a name for the fact that the life which goes on pointlessly is wrongly interpreted to mean "Waiting for Godot".

Disintegration and regression of man is another depressing interpretation of the paly. The play represents the disintegration of human beings, the climax in the play occurs when all the four characters fall to the ground upon one another, creating of formless mass from which Vladimir's voice emerges saying, "we are men". Nothing escapes the destructive force of this regression neither speech- torn to piece in the rhetoric of Pizza's monologue on twilight-nor thought-which is undetermined and destroyed by a whole series of absurd reasoning as well as by such passages as the incoherent speech delivered by Lucky. Luck's speech effectively represents the regression of man's thinking intelligence.

According to yet another view, the world represented in this play resembles France occupied by German during World War Il, when Beckett lived first in the occupied zone and then escaped to the unoccupied region, The play reminds us of the French Resistance organized by underground workers. How much waiting have gone in that bleak world. How many times must Resistance organizers have kept appointments with many who did not turn up? We can imagine why the arrival of Pozzo would have an unnerving effect on those who waited. Pozzo could be a Gestapo official clumsily disguised. The German occupation of France pervades the whole play. Godot himself is unpredictable on bestowing kindness and punishment. The parallel to Lane and Abel is evid

bestowal of grace, which passes human, understanding, divides mankind into those that will be saved and those that will be damned.

But these interpretations, says Martin Esslin seem to overlook a number of essential features of the play- its constant stress on the essential uncertainty and the repeated demonstration of the futility of hopes pinned on him. According to this, whether Godot is meant to suggest his intervention as supernatural or whether he stands for a mythical human being, his exact nature is of secondary importance. So "the subject of the play is not Godot but waiting ... and Godot simply represents the objectives of our, waiting-and event, a thing, a person death". The play is a picture of the antics of man as he tries to distract himself until Godot comes. The two tramps, thus, while away their time in a succession of never ending games. In the very opening of the play, Estragon and Vladimir agree "Nothing to be alone". The only alternative left is, therefore, to wait for Godot Estragon, as time and again to be reminded of this fact:

"***Let's go we can't Why not***
We, re waiting for Godot
Ah"

Having nothing to do they childishly engage in playing games? Both of them take off shake and peer inside their boot and hat.

Waiting is to experience the action of time, which is constant change. Yet the ceaseless activity of time is self-defeating, purposeless and therefore null and void. The more things change, the more they are the same. Pozzo exclaims in his final great outburst, "Have you not done formatting me with your accursed time?" They give birth astride to grave, the light gleams an instant, then its night once again.

Still Vladimir and Estragon live in hope and wait for Godot whose coming will bring the flow of lime to a stop. Towards the end of the play when Vladimir is about to realize, he has been dreaming and must wake up and face the world as it is, Godot's messenger arrives, kinds his hopes and plunges him back into the passivity to waiting.

The play is also considered to be a fable about a kind of life that has no longer any hope that is the meaninglessness of life. The way by, the two tramps pass time is indicative of the boredom and triviality of human activities. The lack of significance in life and the constant suffering which existence is, the two tramps are dimly aware of the want of action in their lives but they still want to go on. Majority of people in today's world do not give up living when their life becomes pointless. The tramps are waiting for nothing in particular. They have even to remind each other of the fact that they are waiting and of what they are waiting for. Thus actually they are not waiting for anything. It should not of course be regarded as the "Key to the play".

Another theme is that, suffering is an inseparable part of human condition. Vladimir cannot even laugh without suffering. Estragon's feet make life a long torture for him. They have nowhere to rest their heads. This suffering pervades the episode of Lucky and Pozzo 100. Lucky gives expression to the human condition by dancing what he styles the "Dance of the Net". In Act-II both Lucky and Pozzo have suffered great physical affliction. The most is that suffering is both purposeless and without the co

the end.

The theme of exploitation is only implicit in the main story but it is explicit in the episode of Pozzo and Lucky. The Net, in whim Lucky believes himself to be caught, is an economic one. The exploited become so demoralized that are unable to offer any resistance to the exploiters. Pozzo states that it was just once that Lucky failed to obey his command. Even when Pozzo has become blinded, Lucky does not have the guts to free himself from his enslavement.

Into this wonderfully suggestive and subtle play Beckett incorporates such minor themes as the inadequacy of human language as a mean of communication and the illusory nature of such concepts as part and future.

It is thus peculiar richness of a play like "Waiting for Godot" that it opens vistas to so many perspectives. It is an existentialist play at the same time, it also mocks at the attitudes of existentialism. It seems to have some religious implications even though it seems to question profoundly the Christian conception of salvation and grace. It is open to philosophical religious and psychological interpretation, yet about all, it is a poem on time, and the mysteries of existence. It is the paradox of change and stability.

"Who is Godot in " Waiting for Godot"

Ever since its first production "Godot" has been a puzzle for critics. In 1958 Beckett was asked to explain Godot's character. The dramatist promptly replied, "If I know I would have said so in the play". This is to say in other words that Godot could be interpreted in many ways. To whatever extent we stretch our imagination it is never clear who he is? The majority of the critics are, however, of the view that Godot is God whom human being asks for help when they are helpless and miserable.

What we learn from the play is that Godot has made a promise to Vladimir that he would see him and Estragon near a tree on a country road. In compliance Vladimir and Estragon are waiting for Godot's arrival. They have a faint hope that Godot might bring same change in their lives. It is ironic that they do not know exactly what they would ask him for? Vladimir says, "Too nothing definite". Godot did not promise anything to him.

He is in absurd situation. The question arises, when the tramps know that Godot will not bring any change in their lives, then why do they wait for him? The answer is simple, Estragon and Vladimir wait for him as a mother of habit exactly in the manner as human beings think that some superpower can rescue them from the terrible situation in which the,' find themselves.

The play clearly shows that Godot has his own limitations. Before making a firm promise to the tramps, he has to consult his family, friends, agents, correspondents, books and bank accounts. From these details, the impression, which we get, is that Godot is either a bureaucrat or a minister. If Godot is God, then he is a bureaucrat God that is quite whimsical. Moreover, he has no sense of justice. He beats the shepherd boy for nothing. Lucky in his famous speech refers to personal God of men who is, of course, incapable of fairness. It means that God is not a time judge, because he rewards one with grace but

punishes the other for nothing. If this interpretation is true, one thing becomes clear that "Waiting for Godot" is a satire on Christian concept of hope and salvation, But this critical judgment cannot be supported by further proof. Thus, the connection between God and Godot is immaterial, Certainly there is little resemblance between the two. Another interpretation of Godot is that he is a symbol of power and authority.

This can be confirmed from the dialogues of Vladimir and Estragon when Pozzo appears on the scene with a whip in his hand, they take him for Godot later on, and they themselves reject their assumption. At this point in the play another description makes us to imagine 'Godot' as God. The boy informs that Godot has white beard and has mastery over goats and sheep. According to biblical connotation human beings are the flock of God to whom people normally turn when they are in trouble. But the play is a tragedy in which no one comes to their rescue.

Godot can be interpreted in still another way, His arrival can be identified with prosperity and happiness. As no change occurs and nobody comes, this interpretation is also undependable. Psychologically, Godot could be unconscious of man. He is as inaccessible as the sub-conscious of man, But the physical descriptions with clear-cur features such as white beard do not support this meaning. Of course, it is highly illogical to gather our impression of Godot and show him to have any similarity or resemblance.

According to some critics, Godot's failure to come is bitter comment of the second coming of Christ. This meaning is also purely fanciful because the act of waiting is essentially an obscure act. The purpose of waiting has never been defined by Beckett.

In finale, we can reassert our first contention that Godot is an enigma, a mystery, and a puzzle.

Waiting for Godot : Nothing Happens Twice

There is nothing done in it; no development is to be found: and there is no beginning and no end." Discuss this view.

When Waiting for Godot was first presented on the stage, it offered to theatre audiences an experience unknown before. It was a new kind of play, a play which broke entirely fresh ground. It was a wholly unconventional dramatic composition. It was unconventional in respect of its character-portrayal as well as its plot-construction. It was unconventional also in not depicting any dramatic conflict in the accepted sense of the word. In fact, there was an all-round deficiency of action, characterization and emotion in this play. And yet the play proved immensely popular, and its popularity has never declined.

The critic who said that Waiting for Godot was play in which "nothing happens, twice", was not far wrong. The keynote to this play is to be found in the memorable words which Estragon utters with regard to his life and the life of his friend, Vladimir, Those words are: "nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful!" Because of the strange paucity of action and situation in the play, a critic in sheer desperation has remarked that practically nothing happens in it:

"There is nothing done in it; no development is to be formed; and there is no beginning and no end." Indeed, the entire action boils down to this.

On a country road, near a tree, two tramps, Estragon and Vladimir, idle away their time waiting for Godot. One takes off his boots, and the other talks of the Gospels. One eats carrot with the other offers. They have nothing substantial to say each other. They address each other by two diminutives, Gogo and Didi. They cannot go away because they are waiting for someone called Godot. Eventually a boy arrives with a message that Godot will not come this evening but surely tomorrow. The two trams decide to go way and come back again the next day. But they do not move and the curtain falls. Earlier, two other characters, a cruel master called Pozzo and his half- crazy slave called Lucky, incomprehensible speech made up of disconnected fragments. In Act II the waiting goes on; Pozzo and Lucky pass by once more, but the master I now blind and the slave is dumb. The master and the slave stumble and fall and are helped on their way by the tramps. The same boy comes back with the same message-namely that Godot will not come this evening but that he will come on the following day. Everything remains as it was in the beginning. The two tramps would like to hang themselves, but they have not got a suitable rope. They decide to go away and come back again the next day. But they do not move and the curtain falls.

Waiting for Godot is a play made up out of nothingness. The spectator or the reader is fascinated by the strangeness of what he witnesses, hoping for a turn in the situation or a solution, which never comes. They paly holds the audience from the beginning to the end, and that audience remains riveted to the two tramps who do nothing and say practically nothing. The two tramps are incapable of anything more than mere beginnings of impulses, desires, thoughts, moods, memories, and impressions. Everything that arises in them sinks back into forgetfulness before it arrives anywhere. They both live, to a large extent, in a twilight-state and though one of them, Vladimir, is more aware than his companion, complete physical listlessness prevails throughout. Their incapacity to live or to end life (and this is the opening and concluding theme of the play) is intimately linked with their love of helplessness and of which-dreams. They are full of frustrations and resentments, and they cling to each other with a mixture of inter-dependence and affection.

There had been in the pasts some attempts to do away with theatrical conventions regarding action on the stage. But this play marks a sort of climax. No dramatist had ever taken so great a risk before, because what this play deals with is the essential, without any beating about the bush, the means employed to deal with it being the minimum conceivable.

Waiting for Godot does not tell a story; it explores a static situation. Act II precisely repeats the pattern of Act I. Act I ends thus:

Estragon: ***Well, shall we go?***
Vladimir: ***Yes, let's go***
(They do not move)

Act II ends with the same lines of dialogue, but spoken by the same characters in reversed order. No dramatist had ever taken such an extreme position. Not only have conventions been done away with, but even some necessary information

form the reader. According to the conventional view, a play was to have a certain plot necessitating certain situations and actions, and characters who performed those actions and who were caught up in the tangles of the plot. But Waiting for Godot hardly offers a plot. It is as if we were watching a sort of regression beyond nothing. The little we are given to begin with soon disintegrates like Pozzo, who comes back bereft of sight, dragged by Lucky bereft of speech. "This is becoming really insignificant," says one of the two tramps at this point. ""' Not enough," replies the other. This answer is followed by a long silence. From beginning to end the dialogue seems to be dying.

At various stages one or the other of the two tramps suggests something to pass the time-making conversation, repenting, hanging themselves, telling stories, abusing one another, playing at Pozzo and Lucky. But each time the attempt fails; after a few uncertain exchanges they peter out, give up, admit failure. The words "we're waiting for Godot" occur again and again like a refrain But it is a senseless and tiresome refrain; it has no theatrical values; it represents neither hope nor longing. A typical situation in the play is Pozzo and Lucky falling down, followed by the two tramps, and all of them lying or the ground in a helpless heap, from which one tramp's face emerges to pronounce: "we are men."

Waiting for Godot is based on Beckett's dual obsession with journey and stasis. No doubt a number of adjustments are made during the interval between the two Acts: Pozzo goes blind and Lucky becomes dumb; the tree puts forth some leaves, Estragon's boots are changed, and Lucky gets a new hat. These changes serve to show that something is still taking its course in time. The tree's movement from winter to spring apparently in a Single night is not something believable. The tree moves fast in relation to the tramps, reminding us that objective time proceeds, indifferent to their anguish. But otherwise there is very little movement. Sentences remain unfinished: stories are interrupted (for example, that of the English man in the brothel); Lucky is not allowed to complete his terrible speech; thoughts, like the speculation on the two thieves, do not reach a conclusion; actions, like the two attempts of the tramps to hang themselves, do not take complete shape; indeed thoughts and actions fade... into a helpless uncertainty, contusion and silence. All the devices of the tramps to pass their time eventually collapse into nothing.

No one in the theatre had, before Beckett, dealt with the experience of ignorance and impotence. Nor could anyone do so as long as the dramatist and the public thought along the traditional lines of a well-made play with a strong story involving conflict, character-development, and a final solution. Impotence cannot produce action, and without action there can be neither conflict nor solution. Movement would, therefore, be clearly impossible under these circumstances. But, according to the traditional view, a static drama was a contradiction in terms. Beckett solved the difficulty by substituting situation for story, and direct impact of logical, indirect description. But he did more than solve on particular artistic problem, He created in effect the whole new concept of drama much as the Impressionists created a whole new concept of painting.

Thus, to a very large extent, Beckett has stripped down action, situation, emotion, and characterization. It may be noted, however, that the stripping down process can go much further as Beckett himself went on to prove in Endgame and Happy Days. The extreme, in this respect, is reached in Beckett's play. How It Is in

characters crawl painfully along face downward in the mud and communicate by jabs with a tin-opener. Compared to any of these, Vladimir and Estragon are highly articulate persons possessing a sharp sensitivity. It is to be noted, also that despite the .paucity of incident, the play achieves, with conspicuous success, Its purpose of communicating the experience of waiting, of boredom, of helplessness, of impotence, and of ignorance to the audience.

Human Relationships in Waiting for Godot

In 'Waiting for Godot' we have the two major relationships which mainly constitute the central theme of the drama. Inspite of Vladimir-Estragon relationship and Puzzo-Lucky relationship we have in this play the absent Godot's relationship with these characters and with his servant boy. We have to judge how these relationships form the fabric of the drama.

Vladimir and Estragon are the two main figures of the play. Estragon seems to be a cowardly person who suffers from nightmarish visions. So he needs the care and guardianship of his friend and really cannot do anything without him. Vladimir on the other hand is certainly more intelligent and more alert than Estragon. But inspite of that he is more or less a pathetic character finding himself quite himself and feeling compelled indefinitely to wait for Godot who is likely to bring about a change in the present situation but whose arrival seems to be very doubtful. Both Estragon and Vladimir represent the ordeal of waiting. They also represent ignorance, helplessness, impotence and boredom. They do not have the essential knowledge; they do not know who exactly Godot is; they do not know what Godot will do for them; they do not know what would happen if they stopped waiting for Godot. They are forced to resort to various devices to pass time but each attempt sizzles out. This passing of the time is a mutual obsession with the two men. Nothingness is what these tramps are fighting against, and nothingness is the reason why they keep talking. The condition of the two helpless individuals is the condition of everyman.

Vladimir-Estragon relationship symbolizes a relationship of naturalistic. Occasionally the two tramps talk of parting but never take the suggestion seriously. They illustrate the bond of understanding. They are full of frustration and resentment, but they cling to each other with a mixture of interdependence and affection deriving comfort from calling each other by the childish names 'Gogo' and 'Didi'. Again they are incapable of anything more than mere beginnings of impulse, desires, thoughts, moods, memories and impressions. Vladimir compares their proud past with their gloomy present now and then.

Vladimir and Estragon are the distinct individuals and Estragon are the distinct individuals having different characters, attitudes and temperaments. They are alive in a non-world. In spite of their inaction and pointlessness of their existence these two men still want to go on like millions of people who want to go even when their life becomes pointless.

The theme of the disintegration and regression is mainly symbolized by Puzzo-Lucky relationship. Puzzo and Lucky symbolize the relationship between capital and labour or between wealth and the artist. Some critics tell us that Puzzo is no other than Godot himself. According to this view Godot is God and Puzzo is, therefore, God. Some critics also are of the view that while Puzzo and Lucky may be body and intellect, master and slave, capitalist and proletariat, colonizer and colonized, cain and Abel, sadist and inasochist

they represent essentially and more simply one way of getting through life with someone else. Just as Vladimir and Estragon, more sympathically another way of doing so.

The relationship between Pozzo and Lucky is reflected in the physical bond that holds them together—the link of the rope. The relationship between them is that of dominant and the dominating, though in the second act it takes on the aspect that of the dumb leading the blind. The relationship also represents the exploitation of the social life where Pozzo is one of the haves, dinning on chicken and wine, while Lucky is the have-not to whom he throws the gnawed bones. The drudgery and inhuman treatment have reduced Lucky to the level of an animal. Lucky has to bear all sorts of bags and baggage. But he is not treated as a man. So he is below the level of animals, rather a mere machine in some respect.

Lucky and Puzzo create a metaphor of society. Although Pozzo and Lucky present an obvious and sharp contrast to each other. They have one thing in common—They are both driven by a desperate attempt to avoid panic which would ruin them if they lost their belief. It becomes more and more evident in the course of the play that Lucky believes that his safety his only with the pattern of a mutual sadomasochistic relationship between them. Moreover, Pozzo-Lucky pair may be compared to the collective pseudo-ego.

One critic is of the view that Pozzo represents mankind and Lucky represents Christ. If this view is accepted what takes place before the tramps is the reacting of the Redemption. Another possible interpretation is that Pozzo represents the psychological aspect of human personality and Lucky the spiritual which is in time brutalized by the treatment.

Moreover, Godot seems to be some sort of medieval land-lord. He has agents and correspondents working for him; he has a shepherd who rears the sheep and a goatherd who rears the goats. Actually Godot is capricious in his relationship, he beats the one but loves the other. The tramps are afraid of Godot, so is the boy. Thus Godot rules through fear.

Thus, these three inter-relationships are very much significant from the dramatic point of view. The tramps' waiting symbolizes humanity's vain hope of salvation. Moreover, the meaninglessness and the helplessness which are the main issues of the drama are focused by these relations.

Waiting for Godot : Theme of Waiting

A Situation Having a General Human Application: - The two key words in the title are "waiting" and "Godot". What Godot exactly means has been the subject of much controversy. It has been suggested that Godot is a weakened or diminutive form of the word "God." Godot may therefore suggest the intervention of a supernatural agency. Or perhaps Godot stands for a mythical human being whose arrival is expected to change the situation. We may presume, too, that both these possibilities (a supernatural agency and a supposed human being) may be implied through the use of the name "Godot". Furthermore, although Godot fails to appear in the play, he is as real a character as any of those whom we actually see. However, the subject of the play is not Godot; the subject is "waiting", the act of waiting as an essential characteristic aspect of the human condition. Throughout their lives, human beings always wait for something; and Godot simply represents the objective of their

waiting—an event, a thing, a person, death. Beckett has thus depicted in this play a situation which has a general human application.

A Direct Presentation of Waiting, Ignorance, Impotence and Boredom: - At first sight this play does not appear to have any particular relationship with the human predicament. For instance, we feel hardly any inclination to identify ourselves with the two garrulous tramps who are indifferent to all the concerns of civilised life. Godot sounds as if he might have some significance; but he does not even appear on the stage. However, soon we are made to realise that Vladimir and Estragon are waiting and that their waiting is of a particular kind. Although they may say that they are waiting for Godot, they cannot say who or what Godot is, nor can they be sure that they are waiting at the right place or on the right day, or what would happen when Godot comes, or what would happen if they stopped waiting. They have no watches, no time-tables, and there is no one from whom they can get much information. They cannot get the essential knowledge, and they are ignorant. Without the essential knowledge they cannot act, and so they are impotent. They produce in us a sense of baffled helplessness which we experience when forced to remain in a situation which we do not understand and over which we have no control. All that they do is to seek ways to pass the time in the situation in which they find themselves. They tell stories, sing songs, play verbal games, and pretend to be Pozzo and Lucky, do physical exercises. But all these activities are mere stop-gaps serving only to pass the time. They understand this perfectly. "Come on, Gogo," pleads Didi, breaking off a rejection on the two thieves crucified with Christ, "return the ball, can't you, once in a way?" and Estragon does. As Estragon says later, "We don't manage too badly, eh Didi, between, the two of us…….We always find something, eh Didi, to give us the impression we exist" Here we have the very essence of boredom—actions repeated long after the reason for them has been forgotten, and talk purposeless in itself but valuable as a way to kill time. We could appropriately say that the play is not about Godot or even about waiting; the play puts "waiting" on the stage. The play is waiting, ignorance, impotence, boredom, all these having been made visible on the stage before us. As a critic says, Beckett in his dramas does not write about things but presents the things themselves. In other words, a play by Beckett is a direct expression or presentation of the thing itself as distinct from any description of it or statement about it. In the waiting of the two tramps we, the audience, recognise our own experience. We may never have waited by a tree on a deserted country road for a distant acquaintance to keep his appointment, but we have certainly experienced other situations in which we have waited and waited. We may have waited and waited for a communication offering a job, or for the arrival of a train, or for a love-letter, or for something to turn up. In other words we can discover a common ground between ourselves and the two tramps who are waiting for Godot. We feel with them and with millions of others who have known ignorance, impotence, and boredom. Here is then the recognisable significance of the play and it is this which accounts for the play's widespread appeal.

The Mood of Vain Expectancy: - Vladimir and Estragon have travelled far towards total nihilism, but they have not fully achieved it. They still retain enough remnants of hope to be tormented by despair. And in place of hope as a dynamic, they have expectancy. This is the main motif of the play, spelt out in the title which in an earlier version was implied: Waiting. The two tramps are in a place and in a mental state in which nothing happened and time stands still. Their main preoccupation is to pass the time as well as they can until night comes and they can go. They realise the futility of their exercises and

filling up the hours with pointless activity. In this sense their waiting is mechanical; it is the same thing as not moving. In another sense, it is an obligation. They have to remain where they are, though they resent doing so and would like to leave. This might be called a moral obligation, since it involves the possibilities of punishment and reward. If Godot comes, a new factor may be introduced into their existence, whereas if they leave they will certainly miss him. Their waiting therefore contains a certain element of hope, no matter how cynical they may be about it. This mood of expectancy has also a universal validity, because whenever we wait we are expectant even though we are almost certain that our waiting will not be rewarded.

"Waiting" and The Flow of Time: - It is in the act of waiting that we experience the flow of time in its purest, most evident form. When we are active, we tend to forget the passage of time; but if we are waiting passively, we are confronted with the action of time itself. Being subject to the flux of time, human beings are, at no single moment, identical with themselves. We can never be sure that the human beings we meet are the same today as they were yesterday. When Pozzo and Lucky first appear, neither Vladimir nor Estragon seems to recognise them; Estragon even takes Pozzo for Godot. But after they have gone, Vladimir comments that they have changed since their last appearance. Estragon insists that he did not know them while Vladimir insists: "We know them, I tell you. You forget everything." In Act II, when Pozzo and Lucky re-appear, cruelly deformed by the action of time, the tramps again have their doubts whether these are the same people whom they met on the previous day. Nor does Pozzo remember them. Here, then, is another aspect of "waiting" which is conveyed to us: the act of waiting makes us experience the flow of time. To wait means to experience the action of time, which is constant change. And yet, as nothing real ever happens, that change is in itself an illusion. The more things change, the more they are the same. That is the terrible stability of the world. "The tears of the world are a constant quantity," says Pozzo, "For each one who begins to weep somewhere else another stops." One day is like another, and when we die, we might never have existed. As Pozzo exclaims in his great final outburst:

> ***"Have you not done tormenting me with your accursed time? They give birth astride of a grave, the light gleams an instant, then it's night once more."***

Still Vladimir and Estragon live in hope: they wait for Godot whose coming will bring the flow of time to a stop. Godot represents to the two tramps, peace and rest from waiting. They are hoping to be saved from the fleetingness and instability of the illusion of time, and to find peace and permanence outside it. Then they will no longer be tramps or homeless wanderers, but will have arrived home.

Themes of Habit and "The Suffering of Being" : - Waiting for Godot is a dramatization of the themes of habit, boredom, and "the suffering of being". Habit is a great deadener, says Vladimir; and, by the time he says so, he and Estragon have had about ninety, minutes on the stage to prove it. It is the sound of their own voices that re-assures the two tramps of their own existence, of which they are not otherwise always certain because the evidence of their senses is so dubious. The tramps have another reason also to keep talking. They are drowning out those voices that assail them in the silence, just as they assailed nearly all Beckett's heroes in the novels.

The Pointlessness of Existence: - This play is a parable, Godot may stand for God, or for a mythical human being, or for the meaning of life, or for death, or for something else. The play is a fable about a kind of life that has no longer any point. This fable is a representation of stagnant life. It is a fable that suffers from a lack of cohesion because a lack of cohesion is its very subject-matter. This fable does not relate an action because the action it relates is life without action. This fable offers no story, because it describes man eliminated from, and deprived of history. The characters in this play have been pulled out of the world, and they no longer have anything to do with it. The world has become empty for them. The two heroes, or anti-heroes, are merely alive, but no longer living in a world. And this concept is carried through with a merciless consequence. Where a world no longer exists, there can no longer be a possibility of a collision with the world. In our world today millions of people have begun increasingly to feel that they live in a world in which they do not act but are acted upon. The two tramps, inspite of their inaction and the pointlessness of their existence, still want to go on. The millions of people today do not after all give up living when their life becomes pointless. The tramps are waiting for nothing in particular. They even have to remind each other of the very fact that they are waiting and of what they are waiting for. Thus, actually they are not waiting for anything. But, exposed as they are to the daily continuation of their existence, they cannot help concluding that they must be waiting. And, exposed to their continued waiting, they cannot help assuming that they are waiting for something. It is meaningless to ask who or what the expected Godot is. Godot is nothing but the name for the fact that the life which goes on pointlessly is wrongly interpreted to mean waiting, or as waiting for something. What appears to be a positive attitude of the two tramps amounts to a double negation: their existence is pointless and they are incapable of recognising the pointlessness of their existence. (Beckett himself said that he was not so much concerned with Godot as with waiting).

Waiting for Godot : Man's Battle with Himself

Although it appears on the surface that Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot is a tragicomedy about two rather pitiful vagrants and their brief encounter with another pair of sad and confused men. In fact Beckett was writing about man's battle with himself.

Estragon, whose main concern is releasing his sore feet from the constraints of their smelly, tight boots, takes life on the chin. He seems to believe that all one needs to do is go passively along with whatever life happens to put in our way and it will all sort itself out eventually. Why waste our time trying to mould life to the way we would like it to be? Why fight the inevitable? If 'they' are intent on giving us a beating, we might as well let them. It will come to an end and we may get away with less of a beating if we don't fight back: we can then relax again - until the next time. If, while allowing life to do its worst we die, that's okay too.

Vladimir, on the other hand, wants more. He keeps hoping something will happen to make his life more agreeable. He hopes Godot will provide an answer; any answer. Vladimir can't understand why Estragon is so carefree acute; about allowing himself to be beaten and humiliated.

Vladimir is the side of us that expects life to provide our answers. The side that looks to others for help in recognising the treasures we are sure are there just waiting for us to embrace them.

Neither Vladimir nor Estragon is too fond of life to dismiss the idea of ending it by hanging from a nearby tree - but they both know it won't really happen. It's simply a way of passing the time: a sort of 'I Spy' - I spy with my little eye, a tree for hanging ourselves on - the way we sometimes dwell on our problems because, paradoxically, we enjoy feeling sorry for ourselves.

Vladimir needs Estragon but the feeling isn't reciprocated, though Estragon is happy enough to spend time with Vladimir. We need to convince ourselves that we are worthwhile. We search our conscience for affirmations of our reason for being. If we don't care what happens to us, we have no need for a close association with our conscience. Vladimir and Estragon were each other's consciences.

When Pozzo and Lucky appear on the scene, Vladimir sees another chance for a way out of the doldrums. Could Pozzo be Godot? No? Ah well, he still may be a welcome diversion while they continue to wait.

Pozzo uses Lucky while he has something to offer but as soon as he has run out of whatever Pozzo needed from him, Lucky loses his appeal and is allowed to slip backwards into abject misery; good only as a beast of burden to be sold to the highest bidder.

Vladimir and Estragon feel sorry for Lucky but do nothing to help him, especially when it seems being helped is something Lucky no longer believes in nor wants. It's easier to believe Lucky is simply someone who has lost his sense of reason and might as well be left alone. Lucky's plight is put in the Too Hard basket.

Often we see only what we can use in a person rather than seeing the person himself. When we grow weary of someone who no longer appeals to us or can no longer provide us with what we need, they become a burden. We become blind to the things that once attracted us to them and can no longer hear their pleas to be loved and needed.

On a larger scale, once we stop caring about our fellow man, we become blind to the problems of the world and the oppressed can lose the ability to speak to us.

Time, as Dylan Thomas said, passes. Was it yesterday? Was it last year? When did Vladimir and Estragon last wait here for Godot? When did they last see Pozzo and Lucky? Does it matter? In the scheme of things, what is a day; or a year, or a lifetime?

Man lives his life waiting. He waits to be born, he waits to become a man, he waits to become successful, he waits to find true love, he waits to find peace; he waits to die.

While he waits, he considers. Faced with many decisions, man argues with himself about which path to take. Should he, like Vladimir, keep hoping tomorrow will bring the answers? Should he, like Estragon, forget about looking for answers? Forget the questions. Should he let life unfold around him and simply 'go with the flow'?

If those around him are suffering, if they are under threat, should he try to help? If he does and he receives a kick in the shins for his trouble, should he give up and let someone else deal with it or should he pick up the handkerchief and try again to wipe the brow of the oppressed?

Waiting for Godot is man waiting for life to unravel its mysteries. It is man and his conscience. It is man's inhumanity towards man. It is the question of meaning. Is there a meaning? Are we right to look for answers or should we go blindly forward while we can, pausing only to give our feet an airing, because the answers, like Godot, will never come and nothing we think or do will make any difference.



Important quotes from the text

"The tears of the world are a constant quantity. For each one who begins to weep somewhere else another stops. The same is true of the laugh. Let us not then speak ill of our generation, it is not any unhappier than its predecessors. Let us not speak well of it either. Let us not speak of it at all. It is true the population has increased."

Astride of a grave and a difficult birth. Down in the hole, lingeringly, the gravedigger puts on the forceps.

We are all born mad. Some remain so.

Let us not waste our time in idle discourse! (Pause. Vehemently.) Let us do something, while we have the chance! It is not every day that we are needed. But at this place, at this moment of time, all mankind is us, whether we like it or not. Let us make the most of it, before it is too late!

To-morrow, when I wake, or think I do, what shall I say of to-day?

Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try Again. Fail again. Fail better.

Habit is a great deadener.

There's man all over for you, blaming on his boots the fault of his feet.

Better hope deferred than none.

My mistakes are my life.

Our vulgar perception is not concerned with other than vulgar phenomena.

God is a witness that cannot be sworn.

Why are we here, that is the question. And we are blessed in this, that we happen to know the answer. Yes, in this immense confusion one thing alone is clear. We are waiting for Godot to come.

A diversion comes along and what do we do? We let it go to waste. . .In an instant all will vanish and we'll be alone once more, in the midst of nothingness!

Let us not waste our time in idle discourse!

From the meanest creature one departs wiser, richer, more conscious of one's blessings.

Was I sleeping, while the others suffered? Am I ... sleeping now? Tomorrow, when I wake, or think I do, what shall I say of today?

Waiting For Godot : Role of Chance

The purpose of life is something mystic, that us, humans, have always seeked, yet don't really know how to find. What is our reason to live? The fact we can't explain it, leads us to believe it's because of a force greater then ours. There are lots of different names to call it. God. Fate. We don't know what the meaning of life is, and there's noone we can ask. This feeling can be pretty depressing in itself, and Waiting for Godot focuses on this feeling and on the way people try to find something to live for

The play basically says that our lives rely on chance entirely, and because of it, they are meaningless, and thats the reason why people rely on unknown forces guiding them through life. And the interesting part is, that even the sources, that should justify the fact that there are greater powers in the universe then we can comprehend, say that human existence has a lot to do with chance. This is clearified when a story from the bible about two thieves is mentioned. „One of the two thiefes was rescued. Thats a reasonable percentage." (Beckett, 8) Percentage represents that chance involved in human life, and the fact that that our fate relies on chance shows that randomness is an important factor in ones life. Beckett uses this quote from the Bible to show, that even a sacred text that has been an a help for thousands of years acknowledges the existence of chance. One of the two thieves. Thats 50%. A 50% chance for salvation, and we have absolutely no control regarding this chance.

The fact that God (if he exists) stays silent, makes the chaos even bigger. The situation that God lets life work like this, makes him guilty. The people's belief in God is explainable though, because it makes them believe that there's a reason to live. As Pascal, a french philisopher said (he was a believer by the way), there's nothing to lose, because if it turns out God doesnt exist, then people wouldnt care for anything anyway, but if it turns out he does, at least you were on the safe side all the way. But God's silence is the main thing that keeps the characters in hopelessness, and makes this work of art a tragedy, even though the characters act comically. Either God doesnt exist, or he just doesnt care. And this statement tells that there's no divine involvment in life.

The world in Waiting for Godot is one without any meaning, which shows that chaos and hopelessness are the leading forces of the world. The events in the

Vladimir and Estragon are at the same place every day, waiting for Godot, doing the same activites over and over again to pass time. This shows the chaotic's world effects on the characters. As Einstein says: „The sign of going mad is doing something over and over again, and expecting different results."

We don't know the time cycle the events transpire in. Time is a very intersting aspect in this play. It exists, but the reasons for this are not entirely clear, because the present, the past, the future, these things don't mean anything in this world. Time is a mess. A very good symbolization of the fact that things are still happening though, are Pozzo and Lucky. They are completely different in Act I and Act II. (Pozzo is healthy/blind, Lucky is able to speak/mute). Beckett uses the change in the situation of Lucky and Pozzo to show that time, and therefore, life, is meaningless.

Humans try to be distracted from this fact. Vladimir and Estragon both try to stay cheerful in the play, and try to pass time with pointless activites. Doing this, they act comical, which adds a humorous aspect to the play. "The positive attitude of the two tramps thus amounts to a double negation: their inability to recognize the senselessness of their position" (Andres, 143-144).

Vladimir and Estragon do various things to get distracted from the endless wait. Discussing mundane topics, sleeping, and sometimes contemplating suicide. They do this because they try to ignore the fact that they are waiting for a figure, which is part of their imagination, and might never even come.

They are waiting for Godot, and they think his arrival will be a salvation to all their problems. They probably know this is only a wish that might never come true, but at least they have something to look forward to. The only other alternative is death, and although they think about it, they don't have the courage to do it. In the end all a human can do are pointless actions, or to perish.

They do these pointless actions because they hope relief will come in a form of an outside force. Godot symbolizes this force, and although he likely doesn't exist, he at least gives their lives a meaning.By waiting, they achieve at least a bit of meaning. Vladimir, while contemplating whether or not to help Pozzo in Act II, declares, "What are we doing here, that is the question. And we are blessed in this, that we happen to know the answer. Yes, in this immense confusion one thing alone is clear. We are waiting for Godot to come-" (Beckett, 51)

Even though salvation is an illusion, it's needed to be able to handle life, and that humans have to rely on „Godots" to live. It's not clear whether Godot is real or not. This is shown by the fact that in both acts, they mistake Pozzo for Godot. That means they have never seen Godot before.The only contact they have with him is the messenger boy he sends everyday, telling them that Godot will come the next day. When Vladimir finally realises that Godot in fact will never come, great depression overcomes him. Vladimir realizes that he has no choice but to put up with the illusion, and go on. There's no point. But there's no other option.

"All of these characters go on, but in the old ruts, and only by retreating into patterns of thought that have already been thoroughly discredited. In the universe of this play, 'on' leads nowhere" (Webb, 41).

"Waiting for Godot" is all about how the world is based on chance, and the fact that a world based on chance can't have a real time sequence, and is therefore pointless, which makes life pointless too. Realizing this, humans will create distractions and diversions, in the form of patterns and reliance on divine forces, to provide them a purpose to live.

In my opinion this book is a very good demonstration of the big questions every human has to face in their lifetime.

Seeing Myself in Waiting for Godot

Some people wondered why in high school my favorite book was Waiting for Godot, a drama described on the title page as "a two-act play in which nothing happens twice." In fact, my liking a play that does not portray a series of connected incidents telling a story but instead presents a pattern of images showing bewildered people in an incomprehensible universe initially baffled me too, as my partiality was more felt than thought. But then I read a piece by the critic Martin Esslin, who articulated my feelings. He wrote in "The Search for the Self" that throughout our lives we always wait for something, and Godot simply represents the objective of our waiting—an event, a thing, a person, death. It is in the act of waiting that we experience the flow of time in its purest most evident form. (31)

I realized that I was seventeen in high school passively waiting for something amazing to happen to me just like Vladimir and Estragon. I also realized that experiencing time flowing by unproductively was not for me regardless of how "pure" that experience might be. At several points in the play, Estragon states that he wants to leave, but Vladimir always responds, "We can't . . . we're waiting for Godot" (8). Neither one knows why the wait nor who Godot is or looks like, and they both admit, when asked by Pozzo why they mistook him for Godot, that "we hardly know him at all" (20). Yet, they wait for him instead of looking within themselves for meaning in their lives. They even turn to close-at-hand sources about them to provide reasons for their wait: from inside a hat or a boot (8). But, as Lucky points out, the "reasons [are] unknown" and always will be (28). Therefore, their external search is pointless to give life meaning. Or put another way, Vladimir and Estragon wait endlessly for life to begin.

As simple as it is, I see myself in them, waiting for someone or something to bring me meaning, to guide me, to spark my life. The existentialist ideas behind much of Waiting for Godot cut to the quick, as I, too, struggle through life trying to achieve some sort of purposeful meaning (Bryce). Like everyone else, I am a victim of waiting and going nowhere fast. As embarrassing as it is to me now, in high school, I ached as I searched to fill an empty part of me with love or true friendship, and at last I found him! But rather than acting on what I felt for him, I sat there and waited, hoping that he would notice me, the perfect soul mate. I did everything I could to draw attention, all those silly girl things like wearing tons of make up, dressing in cute outfits, and trying new hair styles. Only, I never made the effort to reveal my feelings for him and possibly create something meaningful: finding out whether or not my emptiness would go away. Because of my inability to create purposeful action, I lost my chance. He found someone else, and I never saw him after that. To paraphrase Otis Redding, after that I was determined not to be like Vladimir and Estragon "just sittin' on the side of the road, / wasting time" (7-8). No longer would I demurely wait for Prince Charming, and, even more importantly, no longer would I wait for another to give my life meaning. I must look within first. Though I want love and will continue the search, Waiting for Godot nevertheless spoke to me then as it speaks to me now: I shall take control of my own struggle through life no matter how bewildering and incomprehensible it, the world, and the universe may be.

While waiting for Godot, Vladimir and Estragon experience the flow of time "in its purest most evident form" (Esslin 31), which means, ironically, that time is hardl

shows that none of the characters ever actually knows how much time has passed. For example, in the play's beginning, Estragon and Vladimir do not even know what day it is. The characters know that they are to wait for Godot on a Saturday, but Estragon states, "but what Saturday? And is it Saturday? Is it not rather Sunday? Or Monday? Or Friday?" (10). The second act of the play claims to start on the next day, but the phrase the next day can be interpreted as any day after the first act. When Vladimir and Estragon return to the tree where they are supposed to wait for Godot, Vladimir insists that both he and Estragon were there the day before and tells Estragon, "But we were there together, I could swear it!" (68). Estragon, however, has no memory of that. Coming across Pozzo and Lucky, Vladimir and Estragon discover that Pozzo and Lucky have become blind and mute. After Vladimir pesters him about when he became blind, Pozzo states, "I woke up one fine day and was blind as Fortune. Don't Question me! The blind have no notion of time" (99). Having a limited amount of time on one's hands—a lifetime, for example—does not matter if one sees no purpose and does nothing to make life meaningful. Beckett's characters continue to go without purposeful action and, thus, live an absurd life devoid of meaning.

I confess that before my encounter with Godot, I never really thought about time or even what day of the week it was. None of it really mattered. Every day seemed just another day: school, work, friends, soccer practice, whatever. And worse, when I experienced my crush on that guy, I became completely oblivious to time. Time evaporated, and the world was slipping from my grasp. Friends disappeared; school became a blur. I cannot remember work at all. And not because I was in Never-Never Land with him that time stopped, but because I was waiting doing nothing that I let time stop, and my life became foolishly absurd. The play forced me to ask what exactly it was that I had been doing with my life, and am I now creating purposeful action? This question stays in my mind. Godot gives me pause to reflect on who I am, what I am doing here, and the dreams I want to pursue.

Ruby Cohn states, "Godot is the promise that is always awaited but never fulfilled" (45). Vladimir and Estragon never break through the state of nothingness because they use the excuse that they will be given purposeful action only when Godot arrives. Beckett ridicules people who wait for someone like Godot to tell them what to do with life. It is their excuse for inactivity. Godot will never arrive. Essentially Godot is waiting for Vladimir and Estragon to do something, but neither Vladimir nor Estragon knows what to do. But I do, and the play reinforces my resolve to continue pursuing my dreams, my purposeful action, despite how difficult or lonely the struggle. I shall not end up on the wayside waiting to "be saved" (60), shrugging my shoulders, and resignedly sighing, "Nothing to be done" (7).

Waiting for Godot : The Symbolical Meanings

Beckett is known to have commented, "I had little talent for happiness."- This sentence in itself is absurd, like the most famous drama of Beckett: Waiting for Godot. But what exactly absurdity means?

The original or dictionary meaning of absurd is 'Out of harmony'. utterly or obviously senseless, illogical, or untrue; contrary to all reason or common sense; laughably foolish or false. But the word has a different meaning when it is used int he theatre of the absurd.

Marking the difference between a good play and an absurd play, Martin Esslin opines:

If a good play must have a cleverly constructed story, these have no story or plot to speak of : if a good play is judged by subtlety of characterization and motivation, these are often without recognizable characters and present the audience with almost mechanical puppets; if a good play has to have a fully explained theme, which is neatly exposed and finally solved, these often have neither a beginning nor an end; if a good play is to hold the mirror up to nature and portray the manners and mannerisms of the age in finely observed sketches, these seem often to be reflections of dreams and nightmares' if a good play relies on witty repartee and pointed dialogues, these often consist of incoherent babblings.

Waiting for Godot is chock-full of pairs. There's Vladimir and Estragon, the two thieves, the Boy and his brother, Pozzo and Lucky, Cain and Abel, and of course the two acts of the play itself. With these pairs comes the repeated notion of arbitrary, 50/50 chances. One thief is saved and other damned, but for no clear reason. If Vladimir and Estragon try to hang themselves, the bough may or may not break. One man may die, one man may live. Godot may or may not come to save them. In the Bible, Cain's sacrifice was rejected and Abel's accepted for no discernible reason. It's minor, but Estragon's line in Act I: "My left lung is very weak […]. But my right lung is sound as a bell!" More pairs, more arbitrary damnation. Even the tone of Waiting for Godot is filled with duality: two person arguments, back-and-forth questions, disagreement-agreement, questions and (often inadequate) answers.

The tree is the only distinct piece of the setting, so we're pretty sure it matters. Right off the bat you've got the biblical stuff; Jesus was crucified on a cross, but that cross is sometimes referred to as a "tree," as in, "Jesus was nailed to the tree." That Vladimir and Estragon contemplate hanging themselves from the tree is likely a reference to the crucifixion, but it also parodies the religious significance. If Jesus died for the sins of others, Vladimir and Estragon are dying for…nothing.

But we can also think of the two men not as Jesus, but rather as the two thieves crucified along with Jesus. This fits quite nicely with gospel's tale as Vladimir tells it; one thief is saved and the other damned, so Didi and Gogo are looking at a fifty-fifty chance. The uncertainty that stems from inconsistency between the four gospels is fitting, too, since Vladimir can't be certain if Godot is coming to save either one of them.

Furthermore, Vladimir reports that he was told to wait for Godot by the tree. This should be reassuring – it means the men are in the right place. As Estragon points out, they're not sure if this is the right tree. And, come to think of it, they can't even be sure if this is a tree or not. It kind of looks like a shrub.

The tree could be the tree of life. So the tree's random blooming would suggest that it is something of a tree of life. And, according to the proverb, that means a desire has been fulfilled.

Moreover the tree's sprouting leaves could be an ironic symbol pointing out that, far from fulfilled desires, hopes have been deferred yet another day – much like Vladimir's ironic claim in Act II that "things have changed here since yesterday" when, clearly, nothing at all has..

While Vladimir and Estragon wait for Godot, they also wait for nightfall. For some reason (again, arbitrary and uncertain), they don't have to wait for him once the night has fallen. The classic interpretation is that night = dark = death. The falling of night is as much a reprieve from daily suffering as death is from the suffering of a lifetime.

There's also the issue of the moon, as its appearance in the sky is the real signal that night has come and the men can stop waiting for Godot. Estragon, in one of his "wicked smart" moments, comments the moon is "pale for weariness […] of climbing heaven and gazing on the likes of us." Though the man remembers nothing of yesterday, he does in this moment seem to comprehend the endless repetition of his life. And if the moon is weary just from watching, imagine what that says about the predicament of the men themselves.

Carrots and turnips are in one sense just a gag reel for Vladimir and Estragon's comic bits. But I was interested in their disagreement over the vegetable: "Funny," Estragon comments as he munches, "the more you eat, the worse it gets." Vladimir quickly disagrees, adding that, for him, it's "just the opposite." On the one hand, this could be a completely meaningless conversation – the point is simply that Vladimir is in disagreement, playing at opposites, adding to the bickering duality between himself and Gogo.

On the other hand, the carrot could be about the meaning of life. It could be a hint as to the differences between the way Vladimir and Estragon live their lives. Vladimir's subsequent comment, an addendum to his carrot claim, is that he "gets used to the muck as [he goes] along." He resigns himself to banality. Estragon, on the other hand, wearies as time passes – much like the weary moon he observes in Act II. When Pozzo later dishes about smoking, he claims that a second pipe is "never so sweet [as the first]. But it's sweet just the same." This is a third and distinct answer to the carrot question.

When Lucky is commanded to dance in Act I, Pozzo reveals that he calls his dance "The Net," adding, "He thinks he's entangled in a net." You would think a guy tied up on a rope leash would feel confined enough. Of course, the image of Lucky writhing in an imaginary net is a lasting image for the play as a whole, and especially for the plight of Vladimir and Estragon, who, as we've said before, are confined in a prison – or perhaps a net – of their own imaginations.

There seems to be no shortage of inane props in Waiting for Godot, and these three have one thing in common: they are all absurd objects on which the men have developed irrational dependences. Lucky cannot think without his bowler. Pozzo needs his vaporizer to speak. Estragon seems condemned to forever take his boots on and off, as does Vladimir with his hat. This is another great combination of the tragic and the comic; the situation is hilarious for its absurdity, but dismal at the same time.

Estragon is repeatedly repelled by smells in Waiting for Godot. Vladimir stinks of garlic, Lucky smells like who knows what, and Pozzo reeks of a fart in Act II. It seems every time Estragon tries to get close to a person, he is repelled by their odor. It looks to us like smells represent one of the barriers to interpersonal relationships. Estragon isn't just repelled by odors – he's repelled by the visceral humanity of those around him. There's something gritty and base about the odour of a human body, and for Estragon it's too much to handle.

There are several interpretations of Waiting for Godot, the two most well-known are the religious one and the political one.

The religious interpretations posit Vladimir and Estragon as humanity waiting for the elusive return of a saviour.

If this is the basic idea, then this makes Pozzo into the Pope and Lucky into the faithful. The faithful are then viewed as a cipher of God cut short by human intolerance. The twisted tree can alternatively represent either tree of death, the tree of life, the tree of Judas or the tree of knowledge.

Political interpretations also abound. Some reviewers hold that the relationship between Pozzo and Lucky is that of a capitalist to his labor.

This Marxist interpretation is understandable given that in the second act Pozzo is blind to what is happening around him and Lucky is mute to protest his treatment. The play has also been understood as an allegory for Franco-German relations.

An interesting interpretation argues that Lucky receives his name because he is lucky in the context of the play. Since most of the play is spent trying to find things to do to pass the time, Lucky is lucky because his actions are determined absolutely by Pozzo. Pozzo on the other hand is unlucky because he not only needs to pass his own time but must find things for Lucky to do.

Cherry Orcahrd

Life and Works of Anton Chekhov

Chekhov is one of Russia's many important literary figures, and one of the greatest playwrights of modern times. He won the Pushkin Prize and he is known for his short stories and his plays, works that often combine elements of both comedy and tragedy. While works reflect the frequently turbulent developments specific to his homeland, their lasting appeal lies in Chekhov's talent for exploring universally human situations with such grace and dexterity.

Anton Pavlovich Chekhov was born in Tanarog, Russia, near the Sea of Azov, on January 17, 1860. The very fabric of Russian society was permanently altered when Chekhov was only one year old: on February 19, 1861, Russia's serfs were freed. Chekhov himself was the grandson of a serf, and the overturning of this older social order plays a central role in many of his writings.

When his father's business failed, the family moved to Moscow, a Russian centre for intellectuals. There, Chekhov grew intellectually, although he developed in two different directions. On the one hand, at the age of twenty he attended medical school at the University of Moscow, preparing himself for his lifelong profession as a physician. While at medical school, Chekhov also began writing to help support his family. He worked as a freelance writer for newspapers and magazines; the respect he gained from these often humorous pieces encouraged Chekhov to begin writing serious short stories. Tolstoy, an older Russian contemporary of Chekhov's, was a great influence on the young writer and medical student. Chekhov was quoted as saying that medicine was his lawful wife and literature was his mistress, and he remained devoted to his two professions throughout his life.

Chekhov graduated from medical school in 1884, and while he began his life as a physician, the period after his graduation also marks the moment when Chekhov began writing seriously. During the late eighties, Chekhov wrote both short stories, such as The Bear in 1888, and The Wedding in 1889, and plays, which include Ivanov in 1887 and The Wood Demon in 1889. Although these works are only of moderate acclaim and are not the masterpieces that Chekhov is best known for, they form an important part of his development as a literary figure. For example, Chekhov came back to The Wood Demonin 1896, and after re-working it and re-titling it, the finished product, known as Uncle Vanya, propelled Chekhov's success and fame in his own life and to this day.

During the early 1890's, Chekhov's writing experienced something of a dry spell. Unfortunately, Chekhov suffered from health problems, and he spent much of the early nineties with his family or travelling to gentler climates. During this time of travel, Chekhov was able to pursue his interest in all things French, particularly French farce, and a genre, which marks his own theatrical comedy.

In 1896, Chekhov entered the period of creativity for which he is best known. At the turn of the century, he authored four plays, commentaries on Russian society, which have gained him lasting acclaim: The Sea Gull in 1896, Uncle Vanya (a derivative of1889's The Wood Demon) in 1896, The Three Sisters in 1901, and The Cherry Orchard, his last great play, in 1904. Chekhov spent these years between Moscow and Crimea, dividing his time between his works and nursing his failing health. Olga Knipper performed in each of these four plays; in 1901, she and Chekhov married. The Cherry Orchard was first performed in Moscow on January 17, 1904, Chekhov's last birthday, with his wife in the leading role. Chekhov died of pulmonary tuberculosis on July second of that year, in Germany.

Chekhov changed the theatrical world with these four plays. He was often disappointed when they were performed as tragedies; although they each have sad elements to them, Chekhov believed that this darker side of the plays should in no way undercut the immensely funny comic elements, which pervade even in the seemingly darkest moments. This confusion of the comic and tragic genres is one of Chekhov's important contributions not only to theatre, but also to literature in general. Chekhov is also known for the emphasis he places on dialogue and off-stage action, otherwise known as "indirect action." The most important events in Chekhov's plays do not necessarily occur on Chekhov's stage; often, the audience experiences some of the most pivotal and dramatic action not by seeing it, but by hearing about it from the characters. In this concept of indirect action is an innovation on the part of Chekhov, whose impact on theatre and literature continues even today.

About The Cherry Orchard

The nineteenth century offered two important developments to Russia which are manifested in the play. In the 1830's, the railroads arrived, an important step in Russia's move into a more international sphere. More importantly, in February of 1861, Russia's vast population of serfs was liberated for good, bringing a long-awaited social change. These two dimensions, social change and the growing importance of the international community, pervade the play and even drive the plot.

The railroad facilitates Madame Ranevskyin coming and going across borders, but the intrigue itself deals with the theme of social change: the aristocratic family loses power as the former serf gains, and a whole host of other characters fall in between. With the changes in the class system, debates about the nature of progress and freedom spring up across Russia, and these questions are reflected in The Cherry Orchard as well. The theme of social change is an international theme at the moment when the play was written: countries everywhere, including the United States, were experiencing similar growing pains and similar philosophical debates.

Chekhov's writing style is very pertinent to the population of Russia at this moment. While former aristocrats still patronized the arts, there was also a growing class of less educated, nouveau-rich attending the theater. Chekhov's plays are famous for their simple language, which many hold partly responsible for his popularity. The fact that his play discusses every social class in language that everyone can understand makes his play accessible to people of all backgrounds. It makes high-brow jokes while also being universally comedic.

Chekhov had a strong sense of social duty; his play implies that a sense of social duty towards others is necessary for the advancement of humanity. This idea is manifested in the fact that nearly all of his characters are sympathetic. Chekhov felt it was important that his characters be sympathetic, and indeed, The Cherry Orchard lacks a villain. While the play certainly criticizes our faults, it only does so to guide us in the right direction: the sympathetic quality of the characters, the accessibility of the language, combined with the factors of social change makes The Cherry Orchard critical and philosophical, yet fundamentally an optimistic work.

The Cherry Orchard: Historical Context

Politics: In 1904, the year *The Cherry Orchard* was first produced, Russia was in a state of upheaval. The Japanese declared war on Russia on February 10, 1904, following Russia's failure to withdraw from Manchuria and its continuing penetration of Korea. The Japanese defeated Russia at the Yalu River on May 1, 1904; by October of that year the Japanese had forced Russia to pull back its forces. This war was the beginning of tensions in Asia and the establishment of Japan as a military force.

On the home front, Russia's minister of the interior, Vyacheslav Plehve, exercised complete control over the public. He forbid any political assemblies, required written police permission for small social gatherings, and forbid students to walk together in the streets of St. Petersburg, Russia's capital. On Easter Sunday of 1904, 45 Jews were killed, 600 houses were destroyed in Kishenev in Bessarabia on orders from Plehve, and the police were instructed to ignore rioting in the streets. These events culminated with Plehve's assassination on July 28, 1904. This kind of civil unrest marked the beginning of a time of great conflict and transformation in Russia that ended with the Communist Revolution in 1917. These tensions both in and outside Russia made life difficult for Russian citizens. The middle class began to assume an elevated position in society as many nobles lost their wealth and large, lavish estates. As the Ranevsky family discovers, Russia is changing and the climate is no longer hospitable to those who do not act in their own interests. Trofimov's character alludes to the strict control of the public when he speaks of the "things he's seen" that have caused him to age prematurely. When the serfs were freed, the landowners were forced to pay for labour, and as conditions in Russia worsened due to war and the totalitarian regime, revolution becomes imminent.

Transportation and Industry: The Trans-Siberian Railroad's link from Moscow to Vladivostok opened in 1904. This is the longest line of track in the world, spanning 3,200 miles between the two cities. In the United States, the first New York City subway line of importance opened on October 27, with the Interborough Rapid Transit, known as the IRT, running from the Brooklyn Bridge to 145th Street with stops in between. This system would grow to become the world's largest rapid transit system, covering more than 842 miles. These transportation systems are important because, as society became more urbanized around the world, it changed. Large plots of land, such as the cherry orchard in Chekhov's play, were broken up into smaller plots for building and industry. The railroads allowed people of all economic backgrounds to travel and allowed goods to be shipped long distances using much less manpower.

Science and Technology: Marie Curie discovered radium and polonium in uranium ore in 1904; these two new radioactive elements helped to fuel the nuclear age in the decades to come. Also in 1904, German physicists Julius Elster and Hans Friedrich Geitel invented the first practical photoelectric cell, which led to the invention of radio. The first wireless radio distress signal was sent the same year. Clearly, the time in which Chekhov wrote *The Cherry Orchard*— during 1903 and 1904—was a time of much change and scientific advancement. The simple way of life on the orchard was being phased out of existence; a different mindset was required for the dawning age of science and industry. The Ranevsky family is unable to adapt to this new, quickly evolving world in which discoveries are made almost weekly and change is imminent.

Literature and Drama: 1904 saw the first publication of such works as Lincoln Steffens's expose of urban squalor *The Shame of the Cities*, *The Late Mattia Pascal*, by Italian novelist Luigi Pirandello, Henry James's *The Golden Bowl*, and *Reginald*, by English writer Saki, also known as H. H. Munro. Plays which, like *The Cherry Orchard*, were first produced in 1904 include: *Riders to the Sea* by John Millington Synge, Frank Wedekind's *Pandora's Box*, George Bernard Shaw's *Candida* and *How He Lied to Her Husband*, and *Peter Pan, or The Boy Who Would Not Grow Up*, by James M. Barrie. Chekhov's style was substantially different from his contemporaries'; his self-proclaimed "farce," *The Cherry Orchard*, portrays psychology and human behaviour far more realistically than many of his fellow playwrights. Unlike the other plays of its time, *The Cherry Orchard* focuses upon an historical era and examines the whole of society rather than just characters.

The Cherry Orchard : Synopsis

The Cherry Orchard describes the lives of a group of Russians, in the wake of the Liberation of the serfs. The action takes place over the course of five or six months, but the histories of the characters are so complex that in many ways, the play begins years earlier.

The play opens in May, inside the cherry orchard estate; friends, neighbours, and servants are preparing for the long-awaited return of Madame Ranevsky, the mistress of the house, and her daughter Anya. Madame Ranevsky has two daughters. She had fled the cherry orchard five years before, after the deaths of her husband and young son. She is now returning from France, where her abusive lover had robbed and abandoned her. She has accrued great debts during her absence.

Lopakhin begins by telling the story of his own success: born a serf, he has managed to make himself a fortune. Another former serf, Firs, readies the house during Lopakhin's speeches. Firs has maintained the same post he always has, despite the Liberation. Dunyasha confesses a potential romance between her and Ephikhodof, but no one is interested.

Finally, Madame Ranevsky returns. Her friends and family are overjoyed to see her. Act I introduces many subplots: a romance between the tutor Trophimof and Anya, another hopeful romance between her sister Barbara and wealthy Lopakhin, a love triangle between the servants Dunyasha, Yasha, and Ephikhodof, the debt of the neighbor Pishtchik, the class struggles of Lopakhin and Firs, the isolation of Charlotte, etc. The main intrigue of the play, however, hinges on Madame Ranevsky's debt. Neither she nor her brother Gayef have money

to pay the mortgage on the cherry orchard estate, and unless they find a solution, the state will be auctioned off in August.

Lopakhin suggests that Madame Ranevsky build villas on the estate. She can lease them and use the money to pay the mortgage. Madame Ranevsky and Gayef object to the idea, and prefer to work something out on their own. However, as spring passes into summer, Madame Ranevsky only finds herself more in debt, with no solution in sight. Strange romances between Anya and Trophimof and Dunyasha and Yasha continue, while nothing develops between Lopakhin and Barbara and Dunyasha and Ephikhodof. Firs' health is declining. Madame Ranevsky is receiving letters from her lover, and Gayef begins to consider a job at a bank. Pishtchik takes out loans from Madame Ranevsky, whose own funds are dwindling away to nothing.

On the night of the auction, no solution has arrived. Madame Ranevsky holds a ball. Charlotte performs, and guests and servants alike dance. Madame Ranevsky and Trophimof have a serious conversation about Madame Ranevsky's extravagance; not only does she continue to run up debts, but she is now considering returning to her abusive lover in France. Madame Ranevsky is nervous about the outcome of the auction; she is still hoping for a miracle.

Finally Gayef and Lopakhin return: Lopakhin has bought the cherry orchard. Barbara is furious, and Madame Ranevsky is devastated. Lopakhin, however, cannot hide his happiness: he has bought the estate where his family lived as serfs. Ironically, he encourages the party to continue, even though the hosts are no longer in the mood to celebrate.

Act IV shows Madame Ranevsky leaving the cherry orchard for the last time. Lopakhin has bought champagne, but no one except the uppity servant Yasha will drink it. Lopakhin and Trophimof share a tender farewell: Trophimof will return to the university. Charlotte complains that she no longer has a position; Ephikhodof has a new position with Lopakhin. Pishtchik is able to pay off some of his debts. Gayef has a job at a bank, Barbara a position as a housekeeper, and Yasha will stay on with Madame Ranevsky, who is returning to France. Many characters try to confirm that Firs has been sent to the hospital. Lopakhin misses his last chance with Barbara, and Dunyasha cries that Yasha is leaving.

Madame Ranevsky and Gayef share a nostalgic moment alone before leaving on a relatively optimistic note. In the last moment, we hear axes cutting down the orchard, and Firs stumbles on to stage, forgotten, locked in the house. He lies down to rest and presumably dies.

Character List

Madame Ranevsky: Madame Ranevsky is one of the leading characters in the play. She is the owner of the cherry orchard estate, and she is a woman with a complicated history. She comes from an aristocratic family, but she married beneath her, and her husband was an alcoholic. She had three children with him before his death: Barbara, Anya, and Grisha. Grisha drowned shortly after his father's death, causing Madame Ranevsky to flee in despair. Grisha died approximately five years before Act I. Madame Ranevsky took a lover in Paris, and abusive man who robbed her and took another mistress. She is returning to Russia after leaving him.

Madame Ranevsky has accumulated many debts upon her arrival in Russia, and cannot pay the mortgage on her estate. Throughout the play, her debts are a symbol of her personality; she is an excessive woman who does whatever her emotions incline her to do, regardless of consequences, financial or otherwise. One moment she cries in panic and despair about how to pay her mortgage, yet the next moment she gives her neighbour a healthy loan to pay his own. Her behaviour is irrational, and that characteristic is both her most charismatic quality and her most serious weakness.

Of all of the characters in this play, Madame Ranevsky is among those with no capacity to adapt to a changing society. She continues to be generous with her friends, and even with strangers, living the life of a kind and wealthy aristocrat, even though the power of the aristocracy no longer ensures her any wealth, and the few assets that she has are dwindling quickly. She tells herself that she can control her purse and abandon her horrible lover, yet she cannot keep even these most fundamental of resolutions. Even after losing the cherry orchard, Madame Ranevsky remains sadly unable to change: she continues to surround herself with expensive and suspicious help, such as Yasha, and she rejoins her lover in Paris, despite his abusive history.

Yermolai Alexeyitch Lopakhin: Lopakhin is the other lead character in The Cherry Orchard. He is a neighbour of Madame Ranevsky, perhaps in his thirties, unmarried. His father and grandfather were serfs on the cherry orchard estate all of their lives. Although he was born into a family of serfs, Lopakhin has managed to use the Liberation of the serfs to his full advantage and is now a wealthy landowner and a shrewd businessman.

The change in class Lopakhin has experienced during his lifetime is amazing; at the end of the pay, he is not only a wealthy man, but he is the owner of the estate where he was born a serf. Lopakhin is a symbolic character in that he epitomizes the success possible for the newly freed serfs. However, while his bank account makes him more powerful than the aristocratic former owners of the estate, he is an interesting specimen because he still has qualities that betray his modest beginnings. He is well dressed and respected, yet he is not literary or cultured; both his preposterous misquotings of Hamlet and his poor penmanship embarrass him.

Lopakhin's talent for business distinguishes him from the other characters; this attribute is both his best and worst quality. His preoccupation with money and success are his trademark. On the one hand, his savvy allows him great personal success with finances; he has completely overcome the poverty he was born into. On the other hand, as Barbara points out, he is almost too preoccupied with business to enjoy important aspects of humanity, such as love and friendship. In some sense, his appetite for business opportunities leads him to betray Madame Ranevsky, his first benefactor, by buying and cutting down her cherry orchard. Lopakhin is a complicated character, and he can be portrayed as a villain, a hero, or something in between the two. The ambiguity in his character is precisely what makes him, and all the other characters in the play, so mesmerizing to the audience.

Leonid Andreyitch Gayef: Gayef is Madame Ranevsky's older unmarried brother. He has no particular profession, and apparently lives off of the family fortune. He and Lopakhin do not get along; there is evidence to suggest that Gayef resents Lopakhin's success, for he treats all of the non-aristocratic characters with derision.

It is ironic that Gayef can be snobbish towards other characters, because he himself is a walking disaster. He is constantly running off at the mouth and embarrassing himself. His trademark behaviour is an imaginary game of billiards; whenever he has put his foot in his mouth, he acts like he is playing billiards to distract himself and others. He is humorous, but he is clumsy and ungraceful. He clearly demonstrates that being of the nobility and being a noble person are two mutually separable categories.

Although he is a constant social catastrophe, Gayef does demonstrate some ability to adapt that his sister lacks. Although he is never effective, he is always dissuading her spending. Moreover, at the end of the play, he is one character who makes a somewhat positive decision, accepting a modest position in a bank. In some ways this job is a step down, but it is also a step into reality, something which many of the characters in the play do not attain.

Barbara: Barbara is Madame Ranevsky' oldest daughter. She is somewhat old to still be single, perhaps in her twenties; her family anticipates that she will marry Lopakhin, and although she would like to, Lopakhin never proposes to her. Barbara virtually runs the estate, a fact visually represented onstage by the massive ring of keys she wears at her waist. She is a controlling person, but she cannot look out for her mother as well as she looks out for the servants. She cries frequently, usually over her mother's spending or Lopakhin's mixed signals.

Barbara's controlling practicality is her best and worst quality. On the one hand, her level head keeps the estate running when there is no money to run it with; on the other hand, the responsibility she feels towards the cherry orchard causes her nothing but grief and stress. Her desire to help and be productive keeps the household running as it drives everyone mad. Barbara's greatest wish is to join a convent or become a pilgrim. At the end of the play she takes on a position as a housekeeper.

Anya: Anya is Madame Ranevsky's youngest daughter, in her teens, the complete opposite of her fretful, responsible older sister. Anya is very innocent and appears very much a child. She is usually happy. She is an idealist, like Trophimof, but she is not as philosophical as he. Her happiness is inspiring, helping the family even through these hardships, yet it does not accomplish anything concretely productive. Anya can comfort her mother with her optimism, but she cannot influence her. It is unclear whether Anya's idealist attitude will be enough to bring her success.

Peter Trophimof: Trophimof is an important character in the play because, amid a world full of people like Madame Ranevsky and Gayef, he consistently speaks some sort of sense. He tutored Madame Ranevsky's deceased son, and as such, represents the past, although he is very concerned with the future. He is an idealist and a student. His intellectual qualities both empower him, by leading him to demand more from Russia and humanity than any other character, and hinder him, by making him appear a bit inaccessible, emotionally. The play creates a romantic tension between him and Anya, which he is too philosophical to act upon. He often speaks wisely, but he holds a powerless position and is not able to exert influence.

Firs Nikolayevitch: Firs was born a serf on Madame Ranevsky's estate, and although the serfs have been freed, Firs remains on the estate because he has no other opportunities.

Although he and Lopakhin share the same background, Firs has not been able to adapt to the changing society as Lopakhin has. Firs is a figure who represents time, a character who symbolizes the old class system. At the end of the play, he is accidentally left behind, and he presumably dies onstage. His death marks the passing of the old class system, the passing of the aristocracy's reign on the cherry orchard, and the passing of a phase in Russian history.

Dunyasha: Dunyasha is a young servant on the cherry orchard. She enjoys the attention of Ephikhodof, but is far more interested in Yasha, with whom she enjoys a romance. She is a comic character who represents many of the class issues at work in the play. Despite her humble station, Dunyasha fancies herself a lady, and her pretensions constitute some of the funniest moments in the play. These dreams of hers are both irritating and hopeful because they are all possible. Her character has a serious function when one regards her interactions with other characters: Lopakhin and Firs, for example. Both men criticize Dunyasha for not remembering her station. This criticism is ironic because both of these men are former serfs who defy conventional classifications of station. Consequently, Dunyasha's character serves to focus attention to hypocrisy, as well as hope: in this new topsy-turvy social order, no one is in a position to criticize Dunyasha's plans.

Yasha: Yasha is Madame Ranevsky's man-servant. Like Dunyasha, he is young, from the village, and extremely pretentious. He is involved with Dunyasha. He is also a very comic character, although he is also the only character in the play who seems truly cold and without consideration for anyone but himself. He follows Madame Ranevsky around like a parasite, feeding off of her loose control of her purse and begging to be taken abroad. He is a snob to most everyone, often openly rude and insulting to others in public. He refuses to see his own mother, a villager. Yasha is the only character in the play who does not appear to have any redeeming personality traits.

Simeon Panteleyitch Ephikhodof: Ephikhodof is a young clerk who works on the estate. He is a comic character, and his nickname is "Twenty-Two Misfortunes" (or "Two and Twenty Hard Knocks," depending on the translation). His entrances and exits are generally marked by his falling on or off stage. He is infatuated with Dunyasha, but she does not return his interest. At the end of the play, Lopakhin employs him. Ephikhodof is an optimistic figure, because despite the disasters which constantly follow him, he is always relatively happy. He accepts fate as it comes to him, and he deals with it calmly, if not gracefully. He also has an enormous capacity to laugh at himself, and this ability perhaps contributes to his good humor. Perhaps his significance is that we should never take ourselves too seriously: if we do, we will be disappointed, but if we don't, we can still be content even under adversity.

Charlotte Ivanovna: Charlotte is Anya's governess, although she is no longer employed at the end of the play. She is an orphan, and she is popular for her magic tricks. She is a strange character, generally treated as more of a spectacle than a person, and many of her lines address her own isolation. She is not depressed; on the contrary, she is lively and energetic, but neither does she bring great cheer to the play. Depending on the performance, she can be either an amusing or an uncomfortable character to watch.

Simeonof-Pishtchik: Pishtchik is a land-owning neighbor of the cherry orchard. He is always impressed with Charlotte's magic tricks, and he is a very social f

successful jokes where others fail. He spends the play in debt, although he is able to pay off some of it at the end. His requests for loans can often be interpreted as disrespectful and selfish, as Madame Ranevsky does not have enough money for her own debt. However, because Pishtchik is able to pay some of his loans at the end of the play, he is one character who may achieve a sort of redemption through the course of the drama. The miracle that saves his estate is an optimistic aspect to the end of the play, although the fact that he has forgotten that Madame Ranevsky must leave is not.

Act Wise Summary of The Cherry Orchard

Act I

The play is set in Russia, in the late 1800's. Act I opens at dawn, in the month of May, inside Madame Ranevsky's estate. The acts are not divided into scenes, although the entrances and exits of different characters delineate distinct moments of action.

Lopakhin, a wealthy neighbour, and Dunyasha, a maid, are waiting for Madame Ranevsky, her daughter Anya, and their companions to return to their cherry orchard estate from France, where they have spent five years. The room they are in is called the nursery. Dunyasha and Lopakhin begin by discussing the tardiness of the trains, and Lopakhin recounts his childhood memories of Madame Ranevsky, who once brought Lopakhin, then a serf's son, into the main house, after his father struck him, to care for him and to wash him. After Lopakhin's speech, Dunyasha expresses her anxiety at the return of the family.

Ephikhodof, a clumsy clerk infatuated with pretentious Dunyasha, enters the nursery with a nosegay, his boots squeaking the whole way. Lopakhin sends Dunyasha for a drink, and he and Ephikhodof have a brief and comic discussion on the weather and squeaky boots. Dunyasha re-enters, and Ephikhodof falls over her on his way out. Dunyasha confesses to Lopakhin that Ephikhodof has proposed to her. Lopakhin is not interested, but Dunyasha goes on to explain her feelings; she is fond of the clerk's personality, but not his clumsiness, and she does not know what to do.

Madame Ranevsky finally arrives, bringing her daughters Barbara and Anya, her brother Gayef, Anya's governess Charlotte, and Pishtchik, a neighbour, along with her. Madame Ranevsky cries, as she often does. After a brief moment of welcome-home chaos, the stage is empty except for Anya and Dunyasha, who grew up together. Dunyasha tries to discuss Ephikhodof, but only captures Anya's attention by mentioning that Trophimof, the tutor of Anya's deceased younger brother Grisha, is in the house. Barbara, the older daughter, enters with an enormous ring of keys at her waist. Dunyasha leaves to make coffee, and the sisters reunite. Barbara is also a crier, and she cries with happiness at seeing Anya, and then with distress as Anya describes the family's financial problems. Madame Ranevsky, used to living the luxurious life, is spending money she does not have, and now the family cannot pay the interest on the mortgage; the cherry orchard will be sold in August. Lopakhin enters during this tense moment, moos like a cow at Barbara, and exits. Barbara hopes to marry Lopakhin, and society expects it. She confesses to Anya that he has not proposed, and begins crying again. She announces that she wants to become a pilgrim.

Dunyasha returns with coffee; Yasha, Madame Ranevsky's social-climbing servant, enters with bags. He does not recognize Dunyasha; when she tells him her name, he embraces her, calls her a "little cucumber," and chases her around the room. Dunyasha squeals in delight and Yasha runs out before Barbara can reprimand him.

Anya ponders the significance of tutor Trophimof's return. She briefly describes the death of her father six years early, followed shortly by the death of her younger brother, who drowned at age seven. These events prompted Madame Ranevsky to go abroad and forget her misfortunes, and Anya reflects that Trophimof, who was her brother Grisha's tutor, might remind Madame Ravensky of the tragedy.

After Anya's reflections, Firs, a former serf and present servant, enters the scene. He is talking to himself, for he is half deaf and of questionable sanity. Although he is not quite communicating with anyone else on stage, one can tell he is delighted at his mistress's return, and his comments, as usual, are nostalgic and focus on events of years gone by. He proclaims that now that he has seen his mistress Madame Ranevsky come home, he is ready to die, a comment which clearly illustrates the old social order in Russia.

Madame Ravensky, her brother Gayef, and neighbours Pishtchik and Lopakhin enter. Gayef pretends he is playing billiards, his trademark behavior. Anya says good night and exits. Firs waits on Madame Ranevsky and Barbara suggests that the guests go home. Madame Ranevsky thanks Firs profusely and starts crying again, with joy. Firs responds to her thanks with completely unrelated comments, due to his hearing problems. Pishtchik and Lopakhin begin complimenting Madame Ranevsky. Lopakhin goes on to complain about Gayef, who thinks Lopakhin a snob, and insists he loves Madame Ranevsky dearly. Madame Ranevsky is excited and begins kissing the furniture; Gayef breaks the mood by telling her of members of the household that have died in her absence. Madame Ranevsky already knows, but her reaction is interesting. She becomes very quiet and still, with none of her usual drama. This change in her behaviour emphasizes her flaws as a character; she is a creature of positive excess reacting with more emotion to the furniture of her home than to the death of her old friends.

Lopakhin is about to leave, and he changes the subject with his plan to save Madame Ranevsky's estate from auction: if she cuts down the cherry orchard and the old house, she can build villas, sell them to the nouveau rich, pay off the interest, and make a profit. Madame Ranevsky and Gayef do not understand the suggestion. Pishtchik changes the subject by asking Madame Ranevsky about Paris.

Barbara enters with Yasha and two telegrams for her mother from Paris; Madame Ranevsky tears them up dramatically; Gayef then announces that the cupboard in the room is one hundred years old. Pishtchik acts astonished, which encourages Gayef to embarrass himself, which he does frequently. He gets on his knees and recites a dramatic and ridiculous ode to the cupboard, while the rest of the company looks on, embarrassed for him and astonished. When he realizes how foolish he looks, he begins playing imaginary billiards again. Pishtchik saves the mood by swallowing an entire box of pills: although his act is equally foolish as Gayef's speech, everyone finds it wildly entertaining. Firs continues to mumble, and Charlotte, the governess enters. She is a strange personality; a social misfit. She teases Lopakhin, refuses to do a conjuring trick, and goes off to bed. Lopakhin says his good-byes. Pishtchik asks Madame Ranevsky for a loan to pay his mortgage, despite the

perfectly well that she cannot pay her own; she refuses him. Firs fusses over Gayef's clothes, and Barbara discover Anya asleep. Gayef and Madame Ranevsky look out over the orchard and reminisce.

Trophimof enters in shabby student clothes to greet Madame Ranevsky. At first she appears to not know him, so he explains himself as her deceased son's tutor; then she suddenly throws her arms around and beings to cry. She is not crying in happiness, but rather mourning for her son. She is startled to see that he has grown old, and a brief discussion of age follows; the subject irks Madame Ranevsky, but it does not seem to bother Trophimof. Pishtchik and Gayef begin to say their goodnights, and Pishtchik once again asks Madame Ranevsky for a loan to pay his own mortgage. This time she agrees, and despite a brief protest on his part, Gayef also concedes the money to Pishtchik. As Madame Ranevsky, Trophimof, Pishtchik, and Firs leave, Barbara announces to Yasha that his mother wants to see him. Yasha complains bitterly about this visit; as he exits, and Gayef discusses the family's financial problems with his nieces, referring to a distant aunt as an obscure source of economic hope. Gayef continues to describe what a small hope it is; in his opinion, the aunt, although wealthy, would disapprove of Madame Ranevsky's "sinful" life. Through his rather harsh criticisms of his own sister, another example of indirect action, we learn that Madame Ranevsky married beneath her aristocratic station, and, upon the death of her husband, became another man's mistress. Anya, one of the play's two idealists, is hurt by Gayef's words against her mother; Gayef is instantly shamed, and tries (rather ungracefully) to wriggle out of the situation by changing the subject. He bemoans the way his own words constantly embarrass him, as they did with his speech to the cupboard. He swears on his honor that he will do all he can to save the property, and says goodnight. Barbara drags a sleepy Anya towards her room; Trophimof enters to watch them leave and, as Anya disappears from stage, whispers after her "My sunshine! My spring!"

Act II

Act II opens in the outdoors, in the summertime. The set consists of a bench; the town in visible in the background. Charlotte, Yasha, and Dunyasha are sitting on the bench; Ephikhodof is standing, playing a guitar. Charlotte is dressed for hunting, and is cleaning her gun. She meditates out loud on her past; she is an orphan who spent her childhood performing tricks in county fairs, and she describes her continuing feelings of isolation.

No one else appears to be listening. Ephikhodof mistakes his guitar for a mandolin, and a brief comic exchange follows, wherein Ephikhodof focuses his attention on Dunyasha, Dunyasha fawns over Yasha, and Yasha smokes a cigar and admires himself. Charlotte enthusiastically attempts to join in on the bungled conversation, but no one wants to talk to her, and she leaves in something of a huff. Ephikhodof tries to get Dunyasha alone, but she sends him away so she can be alone with Yasha. The two of them have a rather comic and pretentious conversation, which informs the audience that they have become romantically involved. With the noise of another party approaching, Dunyasha scurries off to protect their secret romance.

Madame Ranevsky, Gayef, and Lopakhin enter the scene; Lopakhin is trying to convince Madame Ranevsky to sell the cherry orchard. She changes the subject by complaining about Yasha's cigar. Three conversations ensue: Lopakhin demands an answer, but no one responds to him, Gayef considers the railroad to himself, and Madame Ranevsky p

funds and her excessiveness. She drops her purse and Yasha picks up the coins. Madame Ranevsky complains that she spent too much money at lunch; she then complains that Gayef had another tirade, which embarrassed her, and Lopakhin agrees. Yasha laughs out loud at Gayef's foolishness, and Madame Ranevsky sends him away.

Lopakhin insists on the subject of the cherry orchard; there is a millionaire interested in the property. Gayef and Madame Ranevsky discuss the prospect of their wealthy aunt sending them money, but Lopakhin is scandalized to hear the amount they expect; it is nowhere near enough to pay the interest on the mortgage. Lopakhin insists that they build villas and sell them to save themselves financially; Madame Ranevsky and Gayef do not focus on the practicality of this suggestion, but, rather, moan about how tedious they find villa residents.

Madame Ranevsky follows this discussion by criticizing herself for the bad luck she has brought on herself during her life. She married an alcoholic, and when he died, followed shortly by her son, she went off with another man. She cared for this man through his illnesses, and he repaid her by robbing her in Paris and finding another woman. Madame Ranevsky attempted suicide, but instead returned to Russia. Her outpour is prompted by the fact that she has just received another telegram from her lover, asking her to return to Paris. She rips up the telegram and discusses a band, heard in the distance, with Gayef.

Lopakhin talks about his peasant roots again, referencing his poor penmanship as a symbol of his original class, and Madame Ranevsky advises him to marry, suggesting Barbara as a wife. Lopakhin goes along with the conversation, but his words do not betray enthusiasm. Gayef announces he has been offered a position in a bank, and Madame Ranevsky scoffs.

Firs enters, bringing a coat for Gayef, and through a misunderstanding, begins to discuss his recollections of the Liberation. Trophimof, Anya, and Barbara enter, and everyone sits. Lopakhin teases Trophimof about being escorted by two girls and being such an old student, and Trophimof responds by citing Lopakhin's carnivorous economic tendencies. Everyone laughs at the joke, although it may be truer than they would like. Madame Ranevsky begs Trophimof to continue a philosophical discussion from the day before; as he embellishes his ideas on the nature of man, we discover him to be another idealist, and full of good sense.

Gayef interrupts the mood by making an embarrassing ode to nature. An owl is heard, and Firs announces that a great misfortune is coming, just as it did before; he is referring to the Liberation. A tramp enters, startling the party, and begs for money, Madame Ranevsky cannot find any small change, and so gives him a considerable sum. The tramp exits, and Barbara howls in despair at her mother's spending. Madame Ranevsky announces that she has arranged the marriage for Barbara and Lopakhin. Barbara is mortified, and Lopakhin wriggles out of the situation by misquoting Hamlet.

Everyone exits except for Anya and Trophimof. Trophimof ponders that Barbara never lets them alone, and Anya considers that Trophimof has made her cease to love the cherry orchard as she once did. They both have larger, philosophical issues on their mind. Trophimof explains how the orchard makes him feel; although it is two hundred years old and has seen so much history, it frightens him that it has seen so little positive change. They philosophize together about the future; they have a romantic relationship, although being the idealists that they are, their relationship is not sexual. Barbara calls Anya into the house, and they exit.

Act III

Act III is set inside the estate, during a party in August on the day of the auction of the cherry orchard. Music is heard. Pishtchik, Charlotte, Trophimof, Madame Ranevsky,Anya, Barbara, and Dunyasha enter in the background, with assorted guests, and dance the grand-rond. Firs serves drinks. Pishtchik and Trophimof come into a sitting area and Pishtchik complains about his money troubles dozes from time to time. Barbara comes into the sitting room and Trophimof teases her, calling her Madame Lopakhin. She is angry, both at the joke, and at the expense the party represents. She leaves, and Trophimof comments to Pishtchik that Pishtchik could have done great things in his life with all the energy he has devoted to scrounging for money to pay his loans. Pishtchik agrees, and falls into a momentary panic, thinking he has lost his purse, which he quickly recovers.

Madame Ranevsky and Charlotte enter. Madame Ranevsky wonders where Gayef is, and why she had the dance. Charlotte performs card tricks for the group; they all applaud, and Pishtchik announces that he loves her. Her final magic trick involves making Anya appear from behind a shawl; she kisses her mother and quickly scurries away. She then performs the same trick with Barbara, and exits herself, with Pishtchik following.

Madame Ranevsky cannot distract herself from the outcome of the auction. Barbara insists that their wealthy aunt will have bought the cherry orchard for Anya's sake, but Madame Ranevsky knows that the aunt does not trust her enough to spend so much money on her.

Trophimof breaks in to tease Barbara, calling her Madame Lopakhin again. Barbara is upset; it's not that she doesn't want to marry Lopakhin, but he has never proposed. Despite all the discussion of how they should get married, he always wiggles out of his opportunities. Barbara thinks his hesitance is because he is too occupied with money; she herself announces that she would join a nunnery in an instant, if only she had money to join. Trophimof mocks her, and she starts crying again.

Yasha enters, laughing, to announce that Ephikhodof has broken a billiard cue, and Barbara rushes off to reprimand him. Madame Ranevsky seizes the opportunity to criticize Trophimof for teasing Barbara. He explains that he does it because she always follows he and Anya around, trying to prevent a romance. He insists her efforts are useless, as he and Anya are "above love;" Madame Ranevsky comments grimly that she must therefore be beneath it.

She begins to panic about the outcome of the auction; Trophimof points out that now it is far too late to panic, as she in essence lost the cherry orchard long before through her inaction. She announces that the cherry orchard is a symbol of her family and of her self; when they sell it, they sell her as well. She holds a telegram from her abusive lover during her tirade, and she begins to cry. Madame Ranevsky confesses to Trophimof that her lover has asked her back, and that she will go. Trophimof is devastated by her choice; he too begins crying and pleads with her. Madame Ranevsky becomes defensive and then insulting, calling Trophimof a freak for not considering love, saying he is too cold to be able to understand her.

Trophimof runs out furious, and Madame Ranevsky instantly begs him to return. A crash is heard, and Anya enters, laughing that Trophimof has fallen down the stairs. The music starts again. Trophimof and Barbara enter, and Madame Ranevsky casually apologizes. They dance;

Yasha and Firs enter, Firs complaining about his health. Yasha is irritated by the conversation, and Firs become offended.

Anya announces that she has heard that the cherry orchard has been sold, although no one knows to whom. Madame Ranevsky asks Firs where he will go if the property is sold, implying that she will not bring him with her; he announces he will go anywhere she tells him to. She notes that he looks ill, and Yasha interrupts to ask Madame Ranevsky to take Yasha back to Paris with her when she returns. Pishtchik enters, asks Madame Ranevsky to dance, and then begs her for another for another loan. She does not respond to either Pishtchik or Yasha, but her silence is as good as a yes.

Dunyasha enters, tittering about a compliment she received while dancing; both Yasha and Firs make irritated comments. Ephikhodof has followed Dunyasha out, and he maintains his good cheer despite her attempts to shoo him away. Barbara hurries in to scold Dunyasha and Ephikhodof for acting like guests. Ephikhodof sticks up for himself, but Barbara manages to remove him after a brief moment of comedy.

Lopakhin enters just as Ephikhodof leaves, coming face-to-face with a furious Barbara. Everyone rushes in to hear what happened at the sale. Before Lopakhin can answer, Gayef follows him in, wiping tears away. Lopakhin responds that the cherry orchard has, in fact, been sold. Madame Ranevsky begs for more information, but Gayef exits, taking Firs with him. Finally, Lopakhin answers the question; he has bought the cherry orchard. Madame Ranevsky falls into a chair, and Barbara throws her keys to the ground, and exits. Lopakhin begins his speech slowly, about how a millionaire immediately outbid Gayef's small sum, and then grows more and more excited as he describes his own triumph. By the end of his speech, he cannot hide his delight, and he commands the musicians to play. Anya leads her crying mother off the stage, promising her a new orchard, which symbolizes a new life.

Act IV

The scene opens in October, in the same room as Act I, but now the furniture is piled in a corner. Gayef and Madame Ranevsky stand outside, saying good-bye to the peasants. Madame Ranevsky gives them her purse, and Gayef chides her. They go into another room, and Lopakhin attempts to call them back to have some champagne, held byYasha. They will not have any, and Yasha drinks the champagne instead, criticizing its quality as he sips, while Lopakhin defends its worth.

Trophimof enters, looking for his galoshes so he can prepare to leave. He will see the family into town, and then return to the university in Moscow. Lopakhin makes a joke about how old Trophimof is to be a student; although Trophimof is irked at the joked, he and Lopakhin share a very tender farewell. Trophimof declines Lopakhin's offers of champagne and money, but he accepts an embrace, and advises Lopakhin not to draw too much attention to himself. Trophimof is still looking for his galoshes; Barbara throws a pair at him from offstage. Lopakhin again insists on giving Trophimof money, not out of pity, but as a sign of respect. Trophimof, however, then insists that as a free man, he cannot accept Lopakhin's money. The sound of axes is heard, and Anyaenters to ask that they stop cutting down the orchard until the family has left. Lopakhin is embarrassed and exits after Trophimof to see to the request.

Anya asks Yasha if Firs has been sent to the hospital. Yasha says he thinks so, but Anya asks Ephikhodof to find out for sure. Yasha is insulted that she does not accept his answer, and Ephikhodof lightly comments that he wishes he were as close to death as Firs. Barbara enters the room and asks if Firs has gone to the doctor, and Anya responds yes, although she has yet to receive a definite answer. Barbara ponders why, if Firs has left for the hospital, the note for the doctor has been left behind. Anya exits to send the note after him. Barbara announces to Yasha that his mother wants to say good-bye; Yasha responds with irritation. Barbara disappears, and Dunyasha enters, crying over Yasha. Yasha is not moved; he is excited about going to Paris, and brushes Dunyasha off. His action is cold, but it is unclear whether or not Dunyasha is crying because she is upset or because it seems the glamorous thing to do.

Madame Ranevsky, Gayef, Anya, and Charlotte enter. Madame Ranevsky acts excited about her new life, and Gayef looks forward to his new job. Anya is not going with her mother; she is going to study, and she and her mother plan their anticipated reunion. Charlotte sings, holding a bundle as though it were a baby, and then throws the bundle away as she announces she is now without a position. Madame Ranevsky insists she will find Charlotte a new job.

Pishtchik enters, exhausted from his walk. He has somehow come into some money, and he pays Lopakhin and Madame Ranevsky a token portion of the debt he accrued with them. Only after explaining his luck does he realize Madame Ranevsky is leaving; he begins crying as he says his good-byes, and wishes her well before he exits.

Madame Ranevsky takes care of her final business. Anya again confirms that Firs has been to the hospital. Then Madame Ranevsky pushes Lopakhin one final time to marry Barbara. Lopakhin agrees that he will propose, and goes to offer the champagne again, but Yasha has drunk it all.

After Madame Ranevsky, Anya, Charlotte, Gayef, and Yasha have left, Barbara enters. Lopakhin inquires as to her plans now that the cherry orchard has been sold. Barbara says she has taken a position as a housekeeper, and Lopakhin replies that he has asked Ephikhodof to take on the cherry orchard for him. Lopakhin exits, without proposing, and Barbara sits on the floor and cries for a moment. The entire household re-enters, and everyone picks up luggage and says their final good-byes; the scene is chaotic. Gradually everyone leaves the room, save Madame Ranevsky and Gayef, who share one final moment of nostalgia while Anya calls them away from without. Finally, he responds to her calls, and the room is empty for a moment.

As the doors are locked from without, Firs enters. He has been forgotten, left behind. He complains that he does not feel well, and lies on an old bench. He is still for a moment, and the play ends.

Analysis of the Play

The Cherry Orchard focuses on the tensions of changing times. This tension between what was and what is centers on different levels. One level, personal tragedy, is very specific, and

the death of Madame Ranevsky's son Grisha five years before the start of the play is one example. On another level, the play centers on the complications with major changes in an entire society: the recent freedom of the serfs and the decaying power of the aristocracy are two more general aspects of Russian history which affect the play.

Lopakhin's first speech is important because it immediately introduces this theme of Russia's newfound class mobility. In 1861, the system of serfdom was ended in Russia, and although this event happened perhaps fifteen years before Act I, it drives the action of the play. Lopakhin himself points out the irony in the situation developing in Russia; Lopakhin, born a serf, is now a wealthy, well-dressed landowner, calling on his aristocratic neighbor, Madame Ranevsky, as an equal. Despite his financial success, he still refers to himself as "a peasant of the peasants," noting a difference between himself, a nouveau rich, and the aristocratic members of the upper class. This speech introduces an ambiguity in Lopakhin's character which can only be resolved in a performance of the play; it is unclear from the text alone whether Lopakhin feels love, respect, and gratitude towards Madame Ranevsky and her family, or whether he harbors some resentment towards this household that held his father and grandfather as slaves. All of the characters in the play possess a similar ambiguity, which can only be alleviated by a director's choice.

Not only are Lopakhin's intentions unclear from the text alone, but he interacts with the other characters in very complicated ways, due, in part, to his own change in class. Although Lopakhin revels in his own economic transformation, he chides Dunyasha for not remembering her place in society, acting too much like a lady when she is only a maid. The close chronology between these two moments at the very opening of the play creates a tension about class differences which pervades the entire play. Dunyasha and Lopakhin come from similar, lower class backgrounds; however, Lopakhin has been able to fulfill his aspirations and rise through the class system, while Dunyasha is still trying. Lopakhin can easily be portrayed as a hypocrite for moments like his criticism of Dunyasha.

Ephikhodof, the next character to enter, is something of a clown, and his entrances are sources of comedy. Although he is an extreme example, he is not unlike the rest of the characters in the play: they are all ridiculous in some way. Even Barbara, who seems so stern, can be portrayed as a parody. Her keys, for example, are often as enormous as they are loud, depending on the performance. These keys are attached to her throughout the play, and they are a symbol of her authority in the household; her practicality and her sense of duty are both her biggest strengths and her most ridiculous qualities. While the sight and sound of her keys are a symbol of her power, they are also an unwieldy and ridiculous object. Barbara and her keys stand in sharp contrast to the younger sister, Anya, one of the play's two idealists. Anya is a charismatic character because she is both capable of being appalled at her mother's extravagant spending, and capable of forgiving her every flaw. She may appear more comic in later acts, when she and Trophimof, the other idealist, voice their philosophies.

Anya's criticism of her mother's overspending in France is important because it is one of The Cherry Orchard's many examples of indirect action, a technique Chekhov is famous for. The action described in the speech has not taken place on the stage, and is therefore indirect; the play revolves around the character's on-stage reactions to such off-stage action, for although this sort of action is not seen, it actually drives the plot. Lopakhin's opening speech is another example of indirect action, which both informs the audience of the past and maneuvers the development of the action.

Firs is a highly symbolic character, for as the oldest character, he is a remnant of the past. He spent almost his entire life as a serf on the estate. Freedom has not changed his life as it has changed Lopakhin's; although neither is a serf now, Firs is old and has nowhere else to go, so he stays on in the household as he always has, while Lopakhin has become independent and wealthy. The two of them reflect two different sides of the Russian serfs' freedom; together on stage, they create rather a complete picture of the fate of the old serfs, while Madame Ranevsky and her brother Gayef illustrate the fate of the old aristocracy. Madame Ranevsky's often comically joyful tirades on her homeland and her family demonstrate that she is a woman of excess. This excessiveness is both her most charismatic trait and her greatest weakness; she too is a ridiculous character. The contrast in her reactions to seeing her furniture again and the reality of he acquaintances' deaths implies early on in the play that this woman is completely incapable of dealing with difficulty; she ignores problems and constantly exaggerates her abilities and her emotions to create a perfectly happy world for herself.

For Madame Ranevsky and Gayef, cutting the cherry orchard down is not an option: the estate is too important. Their inability to comprehend the sense of Lopakhin's lucrative suggestion implies that they are two characters of the old aristocracy who cannot change with the changing times. They do not understand that if they do not cut down the orchard, it will go to auction and whoever buys it will cut it down anyway. Pishtchik is another character who does not seem capable of adapting and saving himself. He feeds off of others; he knows Madame Ranevsky has her own financial problems, yet he insists on asking her for money, complimenting her and goading her until she agrees. Madame Ranevsky agrees because of her own fundamental flaw, her excessiveness; she continues to live the life of a wealthy woman even as her assets dwindle. Even Gayef, the bumbling social idiot, can criticize her for this behavior, although he is too weak to stop her. Yasha is similar to Pishtchik in the way he feeds off Madame Ranevsky. His behavior with regards to his mother demonstrates his own flaw as a character. He has not seen his mother for five years, and he is more concerned with himself and impressing the family he serves than he is with visiting his own mother. Although he and Pishtchik both have charismatic moments on stage, they are both fundamentally parasites who frequent the cherry orchard for the purpose of benefiting from Madame Ranevsky's weak control of her purse.

Charlotte and Trophimof are the two final characters who appear onstage in this act. Each appears only briefly. They are both outsiders, and it is therefore appropriate they neither is fully integrated into the action until a later act.

Act I is thematically occupied with the development of different characters' strengths and weaknesses. These themes are demonstrated again during Act II, but the central issue in Act II is the development of the play's views on Russian history, social and economic change, and the concept of progress.

These ideas of social change are demonstrated in the personalities and actions of the characters. For example, the moment when Madam Ranevsky drops her purse is a symbolic one. She is talking to herself, complaining that she spends more than she should, when she drops her purse and spills her money. This action is an accident, yet it differs very slightly from the way she behaves in general. She complains that she does not have enough money to pay her own mortgage. Then, moments later, she gives Pishtchik money for his mortgage. She laments that there is barely enough for the servants of the househ

dines at restaurants and tips the waiters in gold. Her words suggest that she wants to save her money, but her actions always betray a tendency to the opposite. She is careless with her purse, whether she is dropping her money deliberately or not. After she drops it in the garden, Yasha scurries to her side to help her collect the coins; this picture continues the symbolism established at the beginning of this sequence. Although Yasha is only helping his employer to collect what she has dropped, his eagerness to help with this particular task parallels the way in which he shadows Madame Ranevsky so that he might benefit personally from her own excessive tendencies with her purse.

Another thematically loaded moment in Act II immediately follows the incident of the spilled coins; Lopakhin tries to persuade Madame Ranevsky and Gayef to sell their property as villas, and they will have none of it. The siblings hesitate for two reasons. In Act I, they explained that their estate and cherry orchard are too important to be torn down; at this moment, in Act II, they condemn the idea of dealing with villa residents as "vulgar." This exchange between the decaying aristocratic family and Lopakhin, the wealthy former serf, illustrates many of the important social issues at work in the play. Now that the serfs have been freed, the older upper class no longer has an economic position with such long-term security. However, Madame Ranevsky and Gayef appear incapable of taking any economic threat seriously. It is interesting that the prospect of having villa residents is so distasteful to them. Villa residents would not come from old money, as Madame Ranevsky and Gayef do, but would rather come from the nouveau rich created by the rearrangement of the Russian classes. Madame Ranevsky and Gayefs' resistance to Lopakhin's suggestions therefore illustrates their inability to adapt to their changing society; they continue to think themselves somehow above their problems and above having to depend on people from common families. The intrigue of the play revolves around whether or not they can overcome this current blindness to their necessity to adapt.

Firs addresses this same issue in his entrance; he recalls the happiness of the serfs immediately following the Liberation, but laments that they did not understand why they should be happy. At least before the Liberation, Russia was an ordered society. Although the Liberation created a more fair class system, it did not necessarily improve the lives of individuals or create a stronger country. Firs' choice to remain with Madame Ranevsky and Gayef, despite his freedom, demonstrates the same reservations about social change that they have, but from a different class perspective.

Trophimof has a much stronger presence in this act, and his philosophical remarks further meshes out the ideology of the play. Trophimof is the only character in the play who consistently speaks words of wisdom. The tensions he meshes out in his own views of Russian society may represent the thesis of the play as a whole, as many of the details he points out are directly dealt with in the action. Through his final discussion on the cherry orchard, Trophimof contrasts the idea of change with the idea of progress. While he is apparently in favor of the freedom of the serfs, he also does not consider the Liberation as a source of positive social change. He is optimistic, in that he hopes Russia and humanity will correct their shortcomings in the future, but he is also realistic, in that he views the Liberation as necessary change, but not sufficient.

Act III is full of juxtapositions. In this act, not only do characters' class and social differences come out, but the way in which they interact in various moments emphasizes both the extreme differences between their personalities, and the similarities. Par

exaggerated distinctions between these characters that create an awareness of some quality that unites them all.

The characters in this play are all remarkably distinct from one another on a individual level, but in a greater sense, they are similar because they all possess a tendency towards excess. For example, in the scene where Madame Ranevsky and Trophimof discuss their involvement with love, Trophimof asserts that he and Anya are "above love," to which Madame Ranevsky responds that she must be "beneath love." This moment is ironic because it emphasizes the differences between these two characters. On the one hand, Trophimof has found a lovely young woman with whom he shares certain chemistry. However, he and Anya are intellectual idealists, and they will part from each other at the end of the play forever, without having taken advantage of any opportunity they might have had together. On the other hand, Madame Ranevsky is fleeing to Russia from her cheating, abusive lover. She, however, is a woman controlled too much by her passions and not enough by her intellect, and at the end of the play she will return to the side of this monster who has so mistreated her. Trophimof and Madame Ranevsky have opposite problems when one considers the details of their situations, but in terms of the end of the play as a whole, they are in the same position: they each had a good opportunity, but by being so much themselves, they have managed to lose it.

Act III also contains the pivotal moment of the play's action: the sale of the cherry orchard, bought by none other than Lopakhin himself. This moment brings together many of the central ideas in the play. In the first place, it is the most beautiful example of indirect action, the technique which Chekhov is famous for, in the entire play. The sale of the cherry orchard takes place offstage, far away, yet its expected fruition completely drives the action of the plot. Moreover, this moment, which occurs offstage, provides the most dramatic of all moments on-stage, teaching us that visual action is superfluous, and indeed, unnecessary, next to the reactions of finely sculpted characters.

This scene is a moving account of the social change occurring in Russia; Lopakhin is now the owner of the estate where his father and grandfather were serfs, and Madame Ranevsky is homeless. This moment is full of the most powerful irony in the entire play, as the roles of the two main characters have been completely reversed from the beginning of their history to this moment. Theirs is the most extreme example of the changes in class which effect each character in the play.

In addition to being the most important moment in the play in this respect, this scene also has the potential to be the most important moment in terms of the development of Lopakhin and Madame Ranevsky as characters. Lopakhin is both triumphant and tactless; Madame Ranevsky is naïve and devastated. This dual aspect of the scene exits in the text, and it can be either emphasized or done away with, depending on the performance of the play. In any interpretation of the play, however, this interpretation of this scene must control the characters' identities from the beginning of a performance, and even still there are endless possibilities. Whether Lopakhin comes off as vindictive or as lovable throughout the play, this speech can be either the moment where the audience most identifies with him and feels his triumph, or most resents him for his lack of tact. By the same token, whether Madame Ranevsky is charmingly innocent or annoyingly naïve throughout the first two acts, at this moment, the audience sees her at her weakest; we may see her as a fool who acted too late or as a poor abused woman, beaten down by misfortune.

These moments of irony and symbolism are the fabric of the entire play, not only Act III. Part of the richness of the play depends on the variety of interpretations it supports. However, in choosing one's own interpretation, the reader should bear in mind that Chekhov was disappointed when his play was performed as a tragedy; the fact that the play may contain various moral lessons should in no way undermine the light-hearted, comic moments which pervade the entire play and are just as important to its substance.

Act IV is an act when many of the play's loose ends come together. At the same time, the end of the play also remains ambiguous, and a performance may choose to either alleviate or preserve some of the loose ends that the text does not provide definite answers to.

Act IV is an act when many characters are most themselves. Lopakhin and Trophimof, for example, share a stunning good-bye. They are fond of each other, and they each make a gesture towards one another which acts as a sign of their respect for one another. Their gestures, however, differentiate in such a way that they are complete and true expressions of each man's own personality. Trophimof, for example, analyzes Lopakhin and gives him advice. This sort of mental exercise is what Trophimof, the philosophical idealist, does best, and although his words are somewhat critical, they are also well-meaning. Lopakhin, true to his recent success and consequent sense for the financial, offers Trophimof a small sum of money as a parting gift. He takes care to explain that he offers the money not out of pity, but out of respect, because he understands how inconsequential ideas of loss can be. They each offer the other the best thing they have that the other can find useful: Trophimof offers wisdom, and Lopakhin offers free money. We cannot quite know if Lopakhin follows Trophimof's advice, but we do know that Trophimof is too philosophical to accept Lopakhin's money. In this sense, their gestures are somewhat stunted, yet the scene remains extremely tender nonetheless, optimistically demonstrating that such different individuals have more in common than one would expect at the beginning of the play.

Although Lopakhin and Trophimof part so gracefully, not all of the characters' final appearances inspire optimism. While things are looking up for Pishtchik and Anya radiates hope, Charlotte forces the audience to remember that this final parting of ways is not joyous for everyone. The loss of the cherry orchard does not only affect Madame Ranevsky; as a result of the sale, Charlotte finds herself unemployed, with an uncertain future. Ephikhodof, Barbara, and Gayef have new jobs, and self-centered Yasha is allowed to travel with Madame Ranevsky, but loyal Firs is left behind altogether, and Barbara's hopes for romance with Lopakhin are dashed. In this way, the ending of the play is mixed, for while some see great opportunities ahead, other characters suffer great losses.

When Madame Ranevsky and her brother leave their family home for the final time, there is a sense that they have come to peace with the loss of the estate. The two of them look forward to the future, and their enthusiasm is contagious even if the audience doubts their abilities. It is another character, a much more minor character, who provides perhaps the most symbolic moment to Act IV: Firs. Act IV ends with Firs unmoving and unconscious, perhaps dead, forgotten, locked in the house where he was born a serf. In some ways it does not even matter whether or not he is dead: he might as well be. His position at the end of the play is symbolic ad can be read as a metaphor for the passing of the old order in Russia. This man was born a serf, and although he lived through the Liberation, he chose to maintain his position in the household because he had no other opportunities. Liberation was meaningless to him, and he stayed loyal to the family his whole life. The family, h

loyal to him; for all his service, no one could even be bothered to confirm whether this sick old man had been sent to the hospital, properly cared for. This negligence provides an extremely sharp criticism of the other characters' priorities: themselves. The fact that Firs has been forgotten demonstrates a lack of respect to Firs as a person, to his long service with the family, and to all the serfs that the Russia of Chekhov's day would not be held responsible for.

It is unclear whether or not Firs has died in the final scene, and while this neglect seems cold, it is not entirely pessimistic. Firs dies symbolically, and his immobility in the last scene indicates the passing of the old order. The class system, after so much upheaval, begins to settle down again with the passing of time, the deaths of the former serfs, and the integration of their children into society. Firs' presumable death is the last phase in a long process of change, beginning with former serfs like Lopakhin gaining power, the aristocracy losing power, and ending with the deaths of those who continued to live by the old system. In some ways, The Cherry Orchard describes nothing more than the growing pains of a society, and the fact that the play ends with a potential death should not be used to label the play a tragedy. The play describes the cycle of life, and it is important that we do not know for certain whether these characters will succeed or fail, live or die, because such an ending would rob the play of its greatest asset: its infinite possibilities. It is the play's ambiguity that provides so many interpretations and so many morals to so many different people.

The Cherry Orchard : A Classic Play by Anton Checkhov

The Cherry Orchard is a classic play written by Anton Checkhov circa 1901 to 1903. There were a variety of characters along with a unique storyline. There were twelve characters in the play that played separate but important roles throughout. The protagonist in the play was Mrs. Lubov Ranevsky; she was about middle aged in the play. She was owned the cherry orchard along with the estate which the story greatly concentrates on. Yermolay Lopakhin was another key character in the play; he was the son of peasants on the estate. His family had long been a part of the Ranevsky estate. He is very worried about his image when he is around Mrs. Ranevsky. He steadily complains about his lack of education and had a very rough childhood in comparison to Ranevsky. Peter Trofimov was a student at a nearby university. He intelligent although quite immature, Lubov had believed it was because of his rough upbringing. He has opposing views with Lopakhin because of Lopakhin's views on life. Next is Leonid Gayev. He is Lubov's biological brother and he is a bit odd and at times childish. At very odd times Gayev describes billiard shots that having nothing to do with the topic. He also behaves quite different when he is not within his own social standard. Varya is yet another character in the play; she was adopted and is in loves Lopakhin but has doubts about Lopakhin's ability to move the relationship a step further. She is works very hard but she is very emotional and cries frequently. Anya is another character introduced. She is the birth daughter of Lubov and she has lived a life of comfort. She is very supportive to her mother when the estate is lost. Boris Simeonov Pischik is another character. He is a landowner like Lubov and is having money problems and continuously borrows money from others. He is known for his optimistic attitude towards life. Another important character is Charlotte. She is a private tutor for Anya's children despite the amusement she provided to the people around her, she is constantly mocked by others behind her back. Firs is a Lubov's manservant. He is elderly and always talks about the "old days" and how it used to be on the estate. He is the only think that shows the past of the estate. Simon Yephikodov is a clerk at the Lubov's estate. He is an amusing suicidal. He amuses all the people around him and he is

a lover and he proposed to Dunyasha who works as a maid in the estate. The final character is Yasha; he is the manservant who follows Lubov in her travels. He has a passion for France and is not afraid to speak his mind. He once told Firs to his face that he is too old and that he should die.

Act I begins with the characters in a nursery despite the fact that no children have been there for quite some time. It was May and Lopakhin was waiting for Lubov, the owner of the estate. Lopakhin is joined by Yephikodov who enters the room and complains about weather and his life. After rude remarks from Lopakhin he is forced to leave. As Dunyasha enters she tells everyone that Yephikodov has proposed to her. As Lubov arrives with Anya, they are met by Varya, Charlotte, Gayev, and Pischik. Dunyasha makes another announcement saying that Trofimov is residing in the estates bathhouse. Anya is rejoiced. As Varya comes in to the estate she meets with Anya and they have a talk about poverty and their financial necessities. Varya tells Anya about how Lopakhin has not proposed to her yet. Anya talks about how Lubov going to Paris was because Lubov's husband and seven year old son dying. Anya goes to sleep.

After Anya goes to sleep, Lopakhin starts talking about the orchard which is going to have to be sold in in order from Lubov to pay off of her debt. The matter is debated and Firs tells about how "back in the day" jam was made out of the cherries and sold, but now this is forgotton about. Lopakhin says that more wealthier and professional people have moved in to the country side. Gayev starts to say bad things about Lopakhin and then leaves himself. Varya then enters and gives Lubov two telegrams that she rips apart. As Lopakhin departs, Pischik asks for a loan from Lubov but the request is rejected. She looks at the cherry orchard and sees what looks like her dead mother walking. It was actually just a tree which looked like a women. Trofimov then enters and has a reunion with Lubov and they talk about alt times. Lubov tells her brother that he needs to pay off his 240 rubles that he owes to Pischik and goes to sleep. Once she goes to sleep Gayev talks about of her spending problems and he might have a plan to save the cherry orchard and be able to keep the property. The act ends with Varya telling Anya that the servant quarters are being moved.

Act two begins with Yephikodov, Dunyasha, Charlotte, and Yasha talking, singing, and having a fun time. Charlotte begins to tell about her life story about how her father and mother used to perform tricks and that her mother and father were possibly never married. Yephikodov admits that he can't figure out what to do with his life in spite of the various books he has read. He says that he can't decide whether to shoot himself or not. Charlotte is abhorred by his sayings and leaves. After Yephikodov speaks to Dunyasha and Dunyasha begins to worry about Yephikodov's ongoing suicidal behavior. Dunyasha admits her love to Yasha. The scene ends with Yasha admitting that he is embarrassed to be seen with her.

As the next scene begins, Lopakhin attempts to again to convince Lubov to make her estate into cottages. Lubov attempts to change the subject and drops her purse. Yasha picks the purse up and starts laughing when he hears Gayev speak. Gayev becomes infuriated and Lubov makes Yasha go away, he does go away but still laughing. Lopakhin says that a man name Deriganov wants to buy the money. Gayev counters this by saying that a rich lady wants to send money for them; it will only be fifteen thousand though. Lopakhin says that Lubov and Gayev didn't have any sense in business and that they don't understand the fact that they are going to lose their property. Lubov goes on telling about how she had an affair with a man before her husband died and that he robbed her for her mo

another woman. She admits that the telegraphs are from him and that he is asking for her to return to France. The scene ends with Lopakhin talking about his childhood and Gayev informing everybody that he has been offered a job at a bank. Lubov tells him to reject the offer.

The final scene of act two comes forth and Firs talks once again about the "good old days", before the freedom of the serfs. Lopakhin gets offended due to the fact that he is the son of a serf and he insults Firs behind his back. As Trofimov enters he and Lopakhin have a conflict and they laugh about it with the others later. Gayev starts to almost recite a poem before Anya suppresses him. Out of nowhere then comes a drunk who asks for direction but is shooed by Lubov who gives him pieces of gold. Anya, Trofimov and Varya leave due to this odd incident. Act two comes to an end with Trofimov giving a speech about hope and Varya is left alone in the woods while Trofimov and Anya go by the river. Varya starts to call for Anya in the pitch black of the night.

As act three begins the date is the 22nd of August. The scene begins with Firs serving the people of the party and Pischik is having a conversation about his poor financial status. Lubov wonders why her brother has not returned home. She also is worried about the auction that is occurring tomorrow. This leads up to Charlotte doing a variety of magic tricks and Lubov talking to Varya in private. Varya admits that she thinks that Lopakhin will never propose to her because cares about his business more than her, and that she thinks that it will be awkward if she proposes to him herself. The scene is ended by Yasha taunting Yephikodov because he has broken a pool stick.

As the second part of act two approaches, Lubov and Trofimov talk and he Trofimov says that he is in love with Anya. About Lubov's French lover problems, Trofimov advises her to ignore him due to the harm that he has caused her. Lubov responds negatively and insults Trofimov, Trofimov in outraged by her comments and departs. In the hallway he trips over himself and is laughed at by Anya. A dance has been set up at the estate and many people are invited. Firs talks more about the old days and how all these high classed people used to attend. Yasha, somehow offended, tells Firs that the time has come for him to die. Firs responds with an insult. As Pischik enters the dance he asks Lubov for more money to pay his mortgage. The scene is ended with Dunyasha showing how much she likes good compliments and how sensitive she is. Dunyasha becomes irritated with Yasha and decides that she will no longer treat him with seriousness.

As Varya enters it is the final scene of the third act. She demands Dunyasha to leave and starts yelling at Yephikodov telling him he doesn't work and that she is surprised that the estate even has a clerk. Yephikodov is deeply offended by this, though he was more afraid of her at the time than offended. Yephikodov leaves and Varya hears a noise in the hallway, she is afraid that it might be Yephikodov with a stick. It is not. Lubov asks Lopakhin if he bought the orchard and he said that he did. He says that he wants to build cottages and remove the cherry orchard. Lubov and Varya become very upset. Lopakhin lectures on the irony of how his ancestors used to work on this estate and now he owns it. Lopakhin adds salt to the wound and says "My poor dear friend, you can't turn back the clock now." At the end of the third act Lubov is still very upset and Anya tries to cheer her up and says that they will plant another cherry orchard that is better and everything will be better.

The month is now October at the beginning of the final act. All the members of the estate are getting ready to leave. The members can hear the axes hitting the branches of the once beautiful cherry orchard. As Lubov and Gayev say good bye to the peasants, Yasha insults them under his breath. As Lubov and Gayev approach the nursery Lubov admits to Gayev that she gave all of the money in her purse to the peasants. Gayev scolds her for the act and Lubov claims that she couldn't resist the urge. Lopakhin and Trofimov have a long conversation. They talk about how they will always have their differences, but they both still cared about each other. Lopakhin tries to give a loan to Trofimov, but he rejects and gives a speech. Anya then appears on behalf of Lubov, she asks Lopakhin to halt the cutting of the orchard until they have left. It is then informed that Firs has fallen ill, Yephikodov says that Firs is just old and that time has come for him to die. He admits that he in a sense looks up to Firs. The scene ends with Lubov and Yasha going back to Paris. Gayev has accepted the job offer at the bank and Varya is going to another estate to become a house keeper. Finally, Pischik unexpectedly pays back Lubov and says that he leased his property to some Englishmen who found white clay on the land.

The final scene begins with Lubov expressing her concern about Varya and Firs. She worries because Firs is still ill and that Varya is depressed due to the loss of the estate. Lubov manages to convince Lopakhin to propose to Varya and he decides he will. Lopakhin then makes small talk with Vary about the weather and her plans; Varya pretends she doesn't know what it's about. Lopakhin admits that there is no life left in the home. Varya is even sadder, Lopakhin didn't propose to her. When the time arrives for everyone to leave, Gayev gives a speech but both Anya and Varya silence him. There is lots of crying, and Lubov tells the others that she just wants to look at the house a bit longer. Gayev then makes a random referral to billiards and everybody leaves except for Gayev and Lubov. They observe the home, cry a little bit, and then leave the home. Firs then appear on the stage talking about how his life slowly slipped away and he sits on the sofa and never moves again. The curtain closes with the sound of a tree being chopped down in the orchard.

Overall, in The Cherry Orchard there were two dominant themes. One was struggle over memory and the past and wealth was another. Struggle over memory was a dominant theme due to the fact that memory has been keeping the characters of the play from happiness. Lubov wants to forget about the present day and she just wants to go back to her old life. But the house that she lives in contains the memories of her husband that she had an affair with and her seven year old son that had drowned in a nearby river. Even for the character of Lopakhin, his memories ore abhorrent also. He had a horrid childhood and was raised by peasants. Firs plays the most important role in this theme. All Firs does in the play is talk about memoires. He talks about the "old days" before the serfs were freed. Even at the end of the play, all of the other characters had forgotton him. The next dominant theme is wealth. This is an obvious theme due to the fact that the story practically revolved around it. Characters have been trying to make more, borrowing money from others, and some are even begging for it. On page 25 of Act I Gayev said, "My sister hasn't lost the habit of throwing money about." This shows that while the Lubov is doing nothing to earn money she is spending it like crazy. Finally Lopakhin, he plays the most important role in this theme. He shows the value of hard work. He was the son of peasants who worked up to his wealth and ended up buying the orchard when Lubov went into financial trouble.

Major Themes

Indirect Action: Indirect Action is a technique Chekhov was most famous for. It involves action important to the play's plot occurring off-stage, not on. Instead of seeing such action happen, the audience learns about it by watching characters react to it onstage. Lopakhin's speech at the end of Act III, recounting the sale of the cherry orchard, is the most important example of indirect action in the play: although the audience does not see the sale, the entire play revolves around this unseen action.

Mixing of Genres: Traditionally, humor and tragedy have been kept separate in dramatic works. Although Chekhov is certainly not the first playwright to mix comic and tragic elements onstage, he develops this tendency by creating a play that defies classification as either one of these two dramatic genres. Works such as The Cherry Orchard, which cannot be subjected to the traditional standards of classification, have helped build new modern literary traditions through their innovation in genre.

Symbolism: There are many symbols in this play. The keys at Barbara's waist symbolize her practicality and her power. Gay's imaginary billiards game symbolizes his desire to escape. The cherry orchard symbolizes the old social order, the aristocratic home, and its destruction symbolizes change. Firs himself is a figure of time; Anya is a figure of hope. The symbols in this play are too numerous to count, but many of them hinge on the idea of the changing social order or the specific circumstance of a given character.

Irony and Blindness: Irony appears in many instances throughout the play, and when it is not used for purely comic effect, it is tightly bound to the theme of blindness. On the one hand, the positions of the character's themselves are ironic. For example, the opposite circumstances of Lopakhin, Firs, and Dunyasha point out the irony in the now supposedly free-moving class system; characters talk about and praise a system of economic mobility. Still, they cannot see the contradiction in the situations of those around them that have no opportunity to improve their standing or are criticized for attempting to do so. In other cases, the play erects ironic moments, where the power in a given scene comes from a combination of two different images. For example, in Act II, Madame Ranevsky complains loudly about how she cannot control her money, while in the same breath she allows Yasha, the most untrustworthy character, to pick up her spilled purse. The fact that she is able to talk about her weakness and neglect the safety of her money in the same breath indicates that, despite her complaints, she is still blind to much of her problem.

Social Change and Progress: Several characters address the potential difference between social change and social progress. Firs and Trophimof are two of them. Both question the utility of the Liberation. As Firs notes, it made everyone happy, but they did not know what they were happy for. Firs himself is living proof of this discrepancy: society has changed, but his life, and the lives of countless others, have not progressed. Both characters insinuate that the Liberation is not enough to constitute progress; while it was a necessary change, it was not enough to bring mankind to the idealized future Trophimof imagines. The play leaves the impression that while change has come, there is more work to be done.

Independence, Liberation, and Freedom: This play deals with the theme of independence in many different ways. Fundamentally, it demands that we ask what it is to be free. What with the Liberation, The Cherry Orchard deals with independence in a very concrete way: shortly before the beginning of the play, much of Russia'

free. The play's characters demonstrate the different degrees of freedom that result from the Liberation. On opposing ends of this question are Lopakhin and Firs. One man has been able to take advantage of his liberation to make himself independent; the other, although he is technically free, has not changed his position at all and is subject to the whims of the family he serves, as he has always been. The difference in their situation demonstrates the observations of many Russians of the time: officially liberating a group of people is not they same as making them free if you do not also equip them with the tools they need to become independent, i.e, resources such as education and land.

Trophimof, the play's idealist, offers one definition of freedom for the audience to consider when he declines Lopakhin's offer of money. According to Trophimof, he is a free man because he is beholden to no one and nothing more than his own concept of morality. His observations seem accurate in light of other forms of non-freedom in the play. Madame Ranevsky, for example, is not free in a very different way from Firs. She has enough assets to be able to control her own destiny, but she is a slave to her passions, spending extravagantly and making poor decisions in romance, and therefore cannot follow a higher moral code as Trophimof does. What with the combination of economic circumstances and the bizarre weaknesses of the characters, the play therefore suggests that there are two sources which control freedom and the lack thereof: economics, which comes from without, and control over oneself, which comes from within.

Conflict in The Cherry Orchard

Russian dramatist Anton Chekhov wrote The Cherry Orchard in which he chose to focus on the deepest desires and fears of his characters while Henrik Ibsen, considered to be the father of modern drama wrote Ghosts in which he explored and exposed the harsh reality that lay behind the many facades donned by his characters.

Both Chekhov and Ibsen spoke the 'unspoken' in their literary works. Through their characters, they explored many subjects that were considered taboo in their day. Many of the actions and reactions of the characters that inhabit their plays are based on the conditions of life at the time.

The central conflict of The Cherry Orchard revolves around Madame Ranevsky's stubborn refusal to accept the merchant Lopakhin's plan to save their heavily mortgaged estate by sacrificing their beloved cherry orchard. Ibsen's Ghosts explores the consequences of building 'ivory castles in moral ruins'. Helen Alving lives a lie as she hides the evils of her marriage behind a veneer of moral respectability.

Both Madame Ranevsky and Helen Alving behave in a similar way when faced with difficult situations. Their reaction to problematic events is marked by a withdrawal into illusionary worlds that are far removed from the realities of their actual lives. Illusion and self-deception are key elements that characterize the reactions of Madame Ranevsky and Helen Alving. However, Illusion is a stronger force than reality in their lives. In both these plays, the chief protagonists react to events and situations by using the force of illusions to hold their families together only to find that eventually the very fabric of their illusions have been torn apart by reality.

In Ibsen's Ghosts, illusion and reality are set into a conflict within the story. Helen Alving's marriage is blighted by infidelity and abuse. However, her reaction to this is to retreat into an illusory world in which she does not need to face reality. She maintains an illusion of a perfect marriage. Mrs. Alving, obsessed with keeping up appearances, tries to protect her late husband's reputation to shield her son from the truth about Mr. Alving. However, she not only ends up living a lie and building a memorial to her husband's false reputation, but she also ruins the lives of Oswald and Regina.

The key factor that marks Helen Alving's reactions to difficult situations is to turn her back on reality and live a life that is in essence a lie. Although she puts up with her husband's depravity, she sends away their seven year old son, Oswald, in the hope of saving him from his dead father's decadence. Maintaining the illusion of a happy marriage to a noble man, she doesn't want anyone to doubt that he was a good and honorable man even after his death. As she says, "I had always before me the fear that it was impossible that the truth should not come out and be believed. That is why the Orphanage is to exist, to silence all rumours and clear away all doubt." [1] Mrs. Alving does this to protect the children from the sin that marks their family's history. Ultimately, when Mrs. Alving is faced with the incestuous relationship between Oswald and Regina, she has no choice but to finally face the reality she was trying to escape from. She discloses the harsh truths she had concealed to protect the children. Faced with reality at the end of the play, Mrs. Alving bitterly regrets the lies on which she has built her life. As she confesses to the priest Manders, "Yes, I was always swayed by duty and consideration for others; that was why I lied to my son, year in and year out. Oh, what a coward I have been." [2] Mrs. Alving tries to protect Oswald from truths that have consequences on his life, as he has got syphilis from his father.

Like Helen Alving, Madame Ranevsky in The Cherry Orchard also inhabits an illusionary world of her own creation. Both react to the changing situations in their lives by staying cocooned in a world of illusions. Like Helen Alving, Madame Ranevsky too lacks the ability to perceive the truth of her situation. Both their reactions are marked by a tendency to shun reality – Helen Alving shuns the reality of her relationship with her husband while Madame Ranevsky shuns the reality of her financial situation. She along with her family returns to the family's estate which includes an extremely large and renowned cherry orchard. Just prior to its auction, Lopakhin suggests and wishes to implement a plan to save the estate by paying the mortgage. However, Madame Ranevsky refuses as this will mean that the cherry orchard will need to be destroyed. For her, the orchard has become a symbol of her youth and childhood and she clings to these symbols of the past instead of living in and facing the reality of her present situation.

Throughout the play, Lophakin tries to make Madame Ranevsky focus on the estate so that they can find a solution to her financial problems. However, Madame Ranevsky constantly dwells in the past. Instead of trying to find a solution to her problem, she acts as if there is no problem on hand. Her energies which should have been focused on preserving the estate are spent on holding a party instead.

This shows that Madame Ranevsky is totally out of touch with reality and is very irresponsible when it comes to financial matters. She spends her money without giving a thought to the consequences of her actions. Madame Ranevsky lives a lavish lifestyle when in reality she hasn't a dime to spare. She throws parties and hires orchestras she knows she cannot pay

for. It is this type of behavior that put Madame Ranevsky deep into debt and her estate at risk.

Madame Ranevsky's refusal to accept the truth about her situation in life eventually leads to her downfall. At the end of the play, the estate is sold and the family leaves even as the cherry orchard is being cut down. Madame Ranevsky's refusal to tackle problems facing her estate and family mean that she eventually loses almost everything.

Even at the end of the play it is not certain if she has completely realized the seriousness of her situation. While Helen Alving in Ghosts is forced to confront reality eventually, Madame Ranevsky remains cocooned in her illusions returning to Paris and to her lover who had treated her so badly in the past. Mrs. Alving on the other hand is eventually compelled to recognize the Ghosts from her past that have prevented her from living just for the joy of life.

On seeing the reactions of Mrs. Alving and Madame Ranevsky to the changing situations in their lives, one would realise that many of their actions and behaviors are spurred by the dictates of society. Helen Alving’s self-deceit is the result of the constraints imposed by the social structure of the time. Mrs. Alving’s middle class upbringing forces her to conform to certain pre-defined ideals. These ideals compel her to deceive others around her, and, most importantly, force her to deceive herself. One can see here that the upper and middle classes were very concerned with the issue of reputation. Unlike today, when a divorce is socially accepted, in the past, people involved in such scandals were often shunned by society.

Like Helen Alving, many of Madame Ranevsky’s actions and reactions also spring from social compulsions. She is a victim of social change. Due to this, former serfs gained wealth and status in society. On the other hand, the aristocratic class was impoverished. They could not tend their estates as they could no longer exploit the serfs for cheap labor. Society was still reverberating with the effect of these social reforms when Chekhov wrote forty years after the mass emancipation. Madame Ranevsky's inability to tackle problems related to her estate and family mean that she loses almost everything. Her fate can be seen as a telling comment on the fading aristocracy who are unwilling to adapt to the changes in Russia

Anton Chekhov's The Cherry Orchard portrays the social conflict present at the turn of the century in Russia. Many of Madame Ranevsky’s reactions are the result of her social background. She conforms to society’s expectations of how the aristocratic class behaves and cannot change or adapt to changing traditional values.

In the plays, The Cherry Orchard, by Anton Chekhov and Ghosts by Henrik Ibsen, the protagonists' reactions to changing situations are marked by a combination of illusion and reality and this is responsible for shaping the plot of the respective stories. The ability of the characters to reject or accept illusions, along with the social motifs and compulsions that motivate their decision, leads to their individual downfall.

The Cherry Orchard as a Comic Masterpiece

Henri Bergson, the French philosopher, theorized in the essay collection *Comedy*, that laughter springs from our perception of “something mechanical encrusted upon the living.” The comic figure, Bergson maintained, is rigid or inflexible in circumstances that demand a

resiliency of the mind or body. Moreover, laughter increases through a character's repeated failures to alter a rigid behavior, for it is repetition that transforms mere rigidity into the semblance of something mechanical, like a jack-in-a-box. If Bergson's ideas have any validity, there is no writer who possessed a greater sense of the comic than Anton Chekhov. Nor is that sense more fully revealed than in his last play, *The Cherry Orchard*, generally considered his greatest work.

From the outset, Chekhov designed the play as comedy. In a letter to his wife, Olga, quoted in Chekhov in *Performance: A Commentary on the Major Plays*, he said that it was to "be funny, very funny, at least in conception." Furthermore, as his later correspondence indicates, he was convinced he had done what he intended. Writing to Lilina, wife to the Moscow Art Theater's great director, Konstantin Stanislavsky, he claimed that, "in places," *The Cherry Orchard* was "even a farce." Stanislavsky and his co-director, Nemirovich-Danchenko, as they had with other Chekhov plays, chose to interpret the play as much more serious stuff than farce. On stage, they weighed it down as a serious drama, advertising it as such, much to Chekhov's annoyance. The playwright had never felt that either man had fully understood his plays, and he often bristled at their interpretations—yet he could hardly argue with the acclaim their theater won him. Chekhov's adherence to realism, his objectivity, made it difficult for his contemporaries to see his characters in the kaleidoscopic light in which he cast them. In *The Cherry Orchard*, as in all his comedies, he created characters who confront serious, often insoluble problems. From one perspective, they do elicit sympathy, even pity, no matter how passive or inept they may also seem. If their suffering is the main element the audience perceives, the comic impulse is suppressed, for, as Bergson noted, laughter is really only possible when there is an "absence of feeling." Farce, most particularly, depends on a hardening of the heart, an emotional distance that allows uninhibited laughter, often at the expense of a character's misfortune or suffering.

Some great comic writers, including William Shakespeare, have used various methods to prevent an audience from feeling too much empathy–comic asides, for example, or mistaken identities arising from the use of disguise. Chekhov, ever true to the limits of realism, uses no such devices. As a result, as J. L. Styan suggested in *Chekhov in Performance*, he risked misinterpretation: "Farce, which prohibits compassion for human weakness, and tragedy, which demands it, are close kin. The truth is that *The Cherry Orchard* is a play that treads the tightrope between them, and results in the ultimate form of the special dramatic balance we know as Chekhovian comedy."

The Cherry Orchard, depicting the passing world of twilight Russia (before the country's casualty-ridden involvement in both World Wars and its Communist Revolution), certainly has a tragic backdrop. Sometimes, when it cannot be repressed, an anxious awareness of that passing wells up in the characters, but it does not change them. Only Lopakhin really adapts, because to find his place in the new world, he must help destroy the old. He is not mercenary or callous, however, just practical. Although he has only a commercial interest in Mrs. Ranevsky's property, he is genuinely respectful towards her, partly from habitual reverence that typified the Russian peasant class from which he springs. Initially, he even tries to help her, but her inability to take action finally forces him to buy her land himself. In doing so, he severs the last invisible strings of class deference, ties that bind another character, the old manservant, Firs, until death. The play confirms Lopakhin's resourcefulness, his adaptability. He is, primarily, a flexible character, and is not therefore comical, except perhaps in his still-born efforts at wooing Varya.

The central symbol of the old Russia is *The Cherry Orchard*. In his way, Peter Trofimov, the perennial student, perceives it as such, but he sees nothing of worth in the ways of the past. The orchard only reminds him of human misery. He speaks of the ghosts of the serfs to Anya: Can't you see human beings looking at you from every cherry tree in your orchard, from every leaf and every tree trunk? Don't you hear their voices? His solution is not to cut the orchard down, but rather to run from it, into "ineffable visions of the future." He is a Utopian dreamer, as impractical and inflexible as Mrs. Ranevsky and her brother, and, therefore, unlike Lopakhin, he is more than slightly ridiculous. *The Cherry Orchard* is not simply an emblem of a Russia that has passed. As Styan suggested, "it represents an inextricable tangle of sentiments, which together comprise a way of life and an attitude to life." Its white cherry blossoms remind Mrs. Ranevsky and her brother, Gayev, of their youthful purity and innocence. To them, the orchard is a thing of great and enduring beauty, and they find Lopakhin's proposal to replace it with vacation cottages "vulgar." For Firs, the orchard is "an inviolable aesthetic symbol of the traditional order." Anya, on the other hand, drawn by her heart to Trofimov, accepts the student's dream of a future happiness, despite Trofimov's inconvenient belief that they must transcend love and practice celibacy to prepare for it.

On a more mundane level, the orchard is simply a white elephant. No one harvests its fruit, and, in fact, no one even enters it, except the anonymous, unseen woodsman who starts felling its trees in the last act. And while the orchard may be glimpsed through the windows of the house, it is the house itself that is the play's true setting, "the centre and heart of the play," as J. B. Priestley claimed in his text*Anton Chekhov*. Three of *The Cherry Orchard*'s four acts take place inside the house, and two of them, the first and the last, occur in the same room—the nursery. It is the setting for both the arrival and departure of Mrs. Ranevsky and her entourage. The room at first vibrates with life, brimming with the excitement of the reunited family members, who animate the room with their memories and maudlin but joyous greetings to the furniture. In contrast, at the end, it is stripped of all its furnishings, all signs of life, except some odds and ends; the flotsam of the past, now abandoned, like Firs, who seems indistinguishable from the discarded sofa on which he lies immobilized at the final curtain. Staged, the room has a more immediate impact than the orchard, for it is actually present, unlike *The Cherry Orchard*, which remains indirectly experienced through words alone.

The orchard's presence is most keenly felt in the last act, in the sound of the axe that has begun its destruction. The most poignant and haunting presence in the play is not even identified with a locale. It comes in the sound of the breaking string, heard first in the second act, and then at the end of the play. Maurice Valency argued in *The Breaking String: The Plays of Anton Chekhov*, that the broken string is "the golden string that connected man with his father on earth and his father in heaven, the age-old bond that tied the present to the past." In general terms, it represents the passing of a way of life, but it relates, too, to the play's specific actions, especially Lopakhin's purchase of Mrs. Ranevsky's estate. The act gives him an overwhelming sense of emancipation, expressed in his triumphant monologue at the close of Act Three: "I've bought the estate where my father and grandfather were slaves, where they weren't even allowed in the kitchen. I must be dreaming. I must be imagining it all. It can't be true."

Most of the other characters suffer some anxious and painful moments in their ritual passage into the changing but uncertain world that the play foreshadows. Some, like Yepichodov and Charlotte, experience an identity crisis, while others, like Gayev ar

disoriented and confused. Yet, as Francis Fergusson claimed in *The Idea of a Theater: A Study of Ten Plays*, while *The Cherry Orchard* is "a theater poem of the suffering of change," it is free "from the mechanical order of the thesis or intrigue" play. The tragic implications of the change drift through the comedy like the ghost of Mrs. Ranevsky's mother in the orchard, but they are not shaped into a single catastrophe and momentous reversal of fortune. The tragic elements are simply too diffuse and, like the breaking string, too distant to be distinct or fully understood. They are also muted and even subverted by the foreground elements that provide a comic counterpoint to the tragic backdrop. Much of the play's action remains routine and mundane, even trivial. Behind a facade of politeness, there is a quiet tension between those who fear change and those who welcome it, but when tension surfaces as anger or open aggression, Chekhov releases the pressure through some sort of comic safety valve. For example, in the third act, Trofimov, stung by Mrs. Ranevsky's attack on his perceptions of man/woman relationships and his childish whining, exits with theatrical indignation, only to fall down some offstage stairs to a chorus of laughter. So, too, in the second act, when the frustrated Lopakhin calls Mrs. Ranevsky "a silly old woman" because she will not agree to his plans for the estate, Gayev defuses the situation with his billiard game prattle and non-sequitur confession to a fruit candy addiction.

Most of the play's characters are idiosyncratic, and some, like Gayev and Pishchik, are wonderfully eccentric. Most, said Priestley, if "coldly considered," are also at least slightly contemptible: "Madame Ranevsky is a foolish woman only too anxious to return to a worthless young lover; Gayev is an amiable ass who talks too much; Anya is a goose and her Trofimov a solemn windbag; Lopakhin, the practical self-made man, is confused and unhappy; Epihodov a clumsy idiot; Dunyasha a foolish girl; Yasha an insufferable jumped-up lad; and Firs far gone in senility." However, Chekhov never leaves any one of them exposed to such a naked light for very long; he is too congenial for that, too, as Priestley stated, "tender and compassionate." Each character also seems to have a comic foil or nemesis, Firs and Kasha, for example, or Charlotte and Yepichodov. All also ride some sort of mental hobby horse that sporadically sends them off the track of conversation onto private, incongruous pathways, i.e., amusing non-sequiturs. Most, at the point of self-awareness, behave exactly like a jack-in-the-box, never able to suppress their foolish impulse. For example, in Act Two, Mrs. Ranevsky, berates herself for her careless waste of money, then immediately drops her purse on the ground and a moment later bestows one of her last gold coins on a panhandler. Meanwhile, Yepichodov, ever mindful of his role as an unfortunate clod, stumbles into furniture as if to prove he was not miscast for the part.

It is possible to probe such characters to reveal some darker or more sinister personality traits. Beverly Hahn, for one, argued in *Chekhov: A Study of the Major Stories and Plays* that the weaknesses of Mrs. Ranevsky and Gayev, their lack of will, "amounts to a complex sense of guilt and self-degradation which is both personal and yet obscurely the product of their situation of privilege." The Moscow Art Theatre audience of 1904 came from and returned to the world depicted in Chekhov's plays, and they experienced such inner guilt first hand—plus all the pain, sorrow, and pathos that Stanislavsky felt was in *The Cherry Orchard* and that scholars can still expose. But a reader or viewer of the play need not be quite so myopic. There is sufficient distance from Chekhov's world to free laughter from inhibition, restoring the comic balance that Chekhov felt was somehow missed in his own time.

"The Cherry Orchard" : Major Themes/ Main Conflicts

Change is the law of the cosmos. The clock of time moves on persons, and things come into existence, grow up, mature, decline and go to their resting place. So is the schedule with the socio-political orders and systems. Clash between feudalism and capitalism, tradition and modernity as well as aesthetic beauty and commercialism is central to "The Cherry Orchard."

"The Cherry Orchard" turned over its new leaf as a debut on the stage in 1904. At that time Russia was ruled over by the Tsar dynasty. Only thirteen years later, the Tsar was overthrown through a putsch.

The process of socio-political U-turns in Russia, as in the rest of the world, had kicked off showing conspicuous indications of great vicissitude in keeping with the times. The old order of feudal supremacy was on its last breaths. Agro-based economy amalgamated the Business or Agro-based economy commingled with the industrialism. The balance of power was shifting from feudal sway to industrialism/ commercialism. Huge estates and plazas were selling out and were being put to commercial use.

In "The Cherry Orchard", the change has been symbolized in the sale of Gaye family's cherished and renowned cherry orchard. With the passage of time, when Chekhov started jotting down this play unlike his contemporaries, he gave this theme a hilarious twist by highlighting the ludicrous facet of the ongoing process of socio-political change in Russia. Speaking of the social custom, Firs, the old servant of Lyubov laments:

"That's it! The peasants belonged to the masters and masters belonged to the peasants. You knew where you were. Now, its all topsy-turvy can't make any sense of it."

The revolution and the war metamorphosed everything. The post war Russia was an innovative Russia with a new political and social setup. Symptoms of the imminent revolution make "The Cherry Orchard" a political play.

Lopakhin, who comes of a serf family, represents the whole plebeian who was emerging into an industrialist class. Lyubov and her family with all its pages represent the feudal class that is, at recent times, eradicated in Russia and is not struggling for its survival on its own.

Lyubov's ménage and clan is under the obligation of their creditors. They are to pay their debt, which they cannot so their sole asset "The Cherry Orchard" is going to be sold under the law Gayev says that they are expecting some funds from Yeroslavl. On Lopakhin's enquiry, he reveals that the money is in the region of ten or fifteen thousand roubles. The amount is evidently like a drop in the bucket, which have now run into seven digits. This exasperates Lopakhin as he cries out,

"……With all due respect, you are the most frivolous, unbusiness like people I have ever met in my life."

Lopakhin's statement makes his sharp sagacity apparent in business field and impotence of the feudalism that was prevailing at that time.

In the present case, the renunciation is the penalty, Gayev's clan ought to reimburse for their reckless and lavish spending. It would not unjust to say that in the present case, the loss of tradition and estates came as a blessing, otherwise they would be soon p

Chekhov wants to convey the moral persuasion through his theme that sacrifice of aesthetic value is a necessary evil for the gratification in the recent world. “The Cherry Orchard” is a superb source of aesthetic enjoyment that is going to be put to havoc for purely materialistic interests. It is to be hewed down for building dachas. This gloomy transition reflects the on-going socio-political transition in Russia that is the striking theme of “The Cherry Orchard.”

“The Cherry Orchard” : Genre of the Play

A Comedy or Tragedy

Anton Chekhov’s The Cherry Orchard serves as a glimpse into the lives of upper middle-class Russians at the turn of the century. The play at times seems to be a regretful account of past mistakes, but at other times it seems very comedic. The final outcome tends to classify it primarily as a tragedy with no shortage of light hearted moments. It invokes many feelings within the reader: joy, regret, pity, and anger are all expressed among the interactions of several characters with rich and complicated personalities. The reader finds some parts of the characters appealing and some parts disgraceful. This complexity enhances the authenticity of the roles and in turn augments the reader’s emotional involvement.

Whether “The Cherry Orchard” is a comedy or tragedy, is a serious and a bit ambiguous question about this play. Notwithstanding, some lavishly humorous situations, characters and dialogues, “The Cherry Orchard” is barely like a comedy in the known sense. And yet Chekhov exhorted that it was a comedy and in places even a farce.

If it is a tragedy, a comparison with Aristotle’s concept of tragedy will make this ambiguity beyond question. Aristotle defined tragedy in a universal way. According to him,

“Tragedy is a representation of an action, which is serious, complete in itself and of a certain length, it is expressed in speech, made beautiful in different ways in different parts of the play, it is acted not narrated and by exciting pity and fear, it gives a healthy relief to such emotions.”

During the course of 18th century, the view of tragedy made a U-turn. The realistic vogue gripped the theatres of Europe. The audience did not favour the false exploitation of the princes in tragic plots. In the Elizabethan age, the playwrights had maintained, with a few exceptions, the outlook of social theories prevalent in the society. In the recent times, endeavours are made for composing tragedies. To the Greeks, Fate or Chance was the dominating factor, to the modern world, power of the society is overwhelming. Ergo, a tragedy of today can be wrought out of the conflict between a single human being and his surroundings.

In the light of above mentioned tragedies of different ages, “The Cherry Orchard” is not up to them. The play, in the point of fact, conforms entirely to Aristotle’s definition of comedy;

“As an imitation of characters of a lower stratum, which are not internally inferior, but whose faults and shortcomings possess something ludicrous.”

The symbolism of the sale of the cherry orchard can be sent as comical; it turns out to be a seminal icon for the memories of the family. This play is generated on seminal values of this family. No one in the family wants to see the cherry orchard go but it is ludicrous that the family does not see that the cherry orchard is going either by sale or development. Since this is a fact, it is only risible that the family should profit from the loss of the cherry orchard. The importance of seminal values should be overrun by the importance of survival. Ranyevskaya does not seem to be concerned with survival and can only see the cherry orchard as a seminal object. This is completely ridiculous and demonstrates the comical actions of Ranyevskaya. The view of the cherry orchard as seminal object also effects the true objective of the cherry orchard. Firs says:

"In the old days, forty, fifty years ago, they used to dry the cherries, they used to soak them, they used to pickle them, they used to make jam out of them, and year after year."

This caption informs the reader that the original purpose for the land was for profit. Ranyevskaya memories of the orchard as a fantastic playground disallows her to see the truth that the cherry orchard was just her parents business and it is time to change the business because times have changed. Every one of the many characters was carefully planned out to show some purpose in the message conveyed in The Cherry Orchard.

Chekhov is able to illustrate that the core of humanity is full of ludicrous emotions and ideas. The importance of the use of comedy in the play conveys with the importance of comedy in our lives. It shows the reader how the most ridiculous moments and decisions are probably the most important ones. The decisions of the characters are full of "faults that possess something ludicrous in them" which allows this to be considered a comedy. Apart from the elusive humour in "The Cherry Orchard", Chekhov was a top-Notch humourist in his own right. He came to be known early for his divergent humour. In this play, he puts the sense of humour in on lookers and readers to a trial. As a critic proposes, "Throughout, The Cherry Orchard, Chekhov places the action on a knife edge between laughter and tears. But he intends to weigh on the side of the comic, not against it." Another critic writes about Russians, "Russians very frequently laugh where one ought to weep. "The play, it is true, has plenty of emotional undercurrents but they are all of hilarious nature. Some of the critics have come up with sound reasons for labelling this play a comedy. To wind up the discussion, it may be concluded that there are arguments on either side. But the writer's word counts more than what the critics say. Since Chekhov called the play on comedy, the conclusion should certainly weigh that way.

"The Cherry Orchard" : Role of Mrs. Lyubov Ranevsky

Mrs. Lyubov Ranevsky is the protagonist figure of Chekhov's "The Cherry Orchard". She is quinquagenarian Russian lady, the owner of the estate and the Cherry Orchard around which the story revolves. Lyubov's life as well as her nature has alleviation of multi shades. She has stood in the way of hard realities of life many times and rather endeavoured to avert them.

A keen study of "The Cherry Orchard" denudes many facets of her personality. Anton Chekhov presents her before us as a representative of Feudal order. By the last breaths of 19th century, feudalism was dwindling and was replaced by commercialism. So, being a

representative of feudalism, she must have to face penury, melancholy and misery. As the descendant of landlords, the current miseries are no less than an ordeal for her.

Her first name "Lyubov" means "Love" in Russian. She seems to personify love with her generosity, magnanimity, corporeal attractiveness and hedonistic nature. She is the only character in the play with suitor. But her amorous feelings waver her judgment frequently. She is sanctimoniously kind hearted and genteel as well as affectionate and sincere to all. She even adores her adopted daughter Varya and courteously behaves eve with her servants.

She has to support a large family that proves her a generous lady by nature. Her family includes her brother Leonid Gayev who has several intriguing verbal habits. Varya, her adopted daughter who is at the apex of her youth, her biological daughter who is a teenager, Charlotte, Anya the governess girls an old servants, Yasha, a young man servant and Dunyasha, a maid servant. She also splurges money on the beggars munificently. She was thrown from the sky to the earth due to her lavish habits. In act IV, Gayer advises her,

"There was no need to give them your purse Lyubov. You should not have done that you really should not".

Lyubov replies,

"I could not help myself! I could not help it!"

ntle, beautiful orchard!...... my life ...... my you ……. My happiness… goodbye …. Farewell!"

Her love for aesthetic beauty has been manifested through her love for cheery orchard. To wind up her character, we can assert her with veracious representative figure of feudalism in Russia in the last breaths of 19th century. The most touching figure in a comedy also stimulates the reader's commiseration. Lyubov's character is the one and only character that fabricates the play as "A blend of smiles and tears."

"The Cherry Orchard" : The Title of the Play

Relationship between Lyubov and Cherry Orchard

Anton Chekhov's play The Cherry Orchard introduces readers to a pre-Revolution Russian family faced with the impending sale of their estate, the cherry orchard. The major character Lyubov Andreyev in the play is the possessor of the cherry orchard. It is in the play that Lyubov must ultimately decide whether to allow her cherry orchard to be cut down to make room for villas or to sell the entire estate to pay off her debts. It is her unconditional love for both the cherry orchard and what it symbolizes to her that allows her to put the estate up for sale rather than have the cherry orchard cut down.

Although she is a constituent of the Russian upper class, Lyubov is hopelessly out of touch with reality and very irresponsible when it comes to finances. She often throws money around as though there are no consequences to her actions. After her husband died and her boy was tragically drowned at the cherry orchard, she fled to Paris and bought a villa, which she soon had to sell to pay off her debts. Lyubov dines lavishly and tips han

actuality she hasn't a dime to spare. She throws parties and hires orchestras she knows she cannot pay for. It is this type of behaviour that put Lyubov deep enough into debt to where her beloved estate has been put at risk.

To Lyubov the cherry orchard means so much more than the acres and acres of beautiful cherry trees and rivers; so much more than the piece of land that was featured in the encyclopaedia. To her it represents her sense of nostalgia, a longing for the past. It is the place where her grandparents lived. Her mother and father lived there as well. It reminds Lyubov of her youth. When she looks at the cherry trees she does not just see branches and blossoms, she sees a time when she walked through the orchard with her mother as a young girl. She says "I used to sleep here when I was little…and here I am like a child again." Lyubov's innocence also remains a part of the cherry orchard, for as a child she did not own serfs or squander her family's money. Even though the cherry orchard invokes thoughts of her lost husband and son, she still treasures it. The cherry orchard a piece of Lyubov's heart.

Because the cherry orchard means so much to Lyubov, it is especially hard for hero come to grips with the fact that she has two options neither of which suits her liking. Because of all the debt that she acquired so irresponsibly, it has become inevitable thither relationship with the cherry orchard will never be the same. Lyubov will only be able to maintain ownership of the cherry orchard if she has the cherry trees cut down and builds summer villas in their place. Her other option would be to sell the cherry orchard. Since she has lived on the estate all her life and loves it so dearly, Lyubov never even considers cutting down the cherry orchard. In fact she believes that to be a "vulgar" notion. Not only would the land that belonged to her family be trodden on by hundreds of visitors every summer, but also the orchard that held her childhood memories as well as those of the rest of her family would exist no longer. Because Lyubov refuses to insult the integrity of the estate by means of summer villas, the cherry Orchard ultimately goes up for sale. Lyubov can live with this only because she assures herself that the condition of the estate will be maintained. In essence, Lyubov cares more about the cherry orchard than herself and her family. If she were more concerned for herself and her family then she would have built the villas.

Unfortunately for Lyubov, her hopes to keep the cherry orchard intact were dashed when she found out that Lopakhin bought it and planned to have the villas built anyway. She was so crushed when she learned of this that she could barely stand up. She wept bitterly, consoled only by the fact that she could return to Paris and that she and her daughter, Anya, would be able to begin a new life together. Had Lyubov not loved the cherry orchard so dearly, she would have allowed the cherry trees to be cut down and the villas built, but because she did love it so, she risked her own welfare to keep it intact. Although the cherry orchard ultimately came down anyway, where it not for Lyubov's love it would have never even had a chance.

The cherry orchard : An epitome of modern theatrical technicalities

Chekhov is one of Russia's many important literary figures, and one of the greatest playwrights of modern times. He won the Pushkin Prize and he is known for his short stories and his plays, works that often combine elements of both comedy and tragedy. While works reflect the frequently turbulent developments specific to his homeland, their lasting appeal

lies in Chekhov's talent for exploring universally human situations with such grace and dexterity.

Traditionally, humour and tragedy have been kept separate in dramatic works. Although Chekhov is certainly not the first playwright to mix comic and tragic elements on stage, he develops this tendency by creating a play that defies classification as either one of these two dramatic genres. Works such as The Cherry Orchard, which cannot be subjected to the traditional standards of classification, have helped build new modern literary traditions through their innovation in genre.

Chekhov changed the theatrical world with his plays. He was often disappointed when his plays were performed as tragedies; although each work has sad elements in it, Chekhov believed that this darker side of the plays should in no way undercut the immensely funny comic elements, which pervade even in the seemingly darkest moments. This confusion of the comic and tragic genres is one of Chekhov's important contributions not only to theatre, but also to literature in general.

Indirect Action is a technique Chekhov was most famous for. It involves action important to the play's plot occurring off-stage, not on. Instead of seeing such action happens, the audience learns about it by watching characters react to it on the stage. Lopakhin's speech at the end of Act III, recounting the sale of the cherry orchard, is the most important example of indirect action in the play: although the audience does not see the sale, the entire play revolves around this unseen action.

Anya's criticism of her mother's overspending in France is one of The Cherry Orchard's many examples of indirect action. The action described in the speech has not taken place on the stage, and is therefore indirect; the play revolves around the character's on-stage reactions to such off-stage action, for although this sort of action is not seen, it actually drives the plot. Lopakhin's opening speech is another example of indirect action, which both informs the audience of the past and manoeuvres the development of the action.

Irony appears in many instances throughout the play, and when it is not used for purely comic effect, it is tightly bound to the theme of blindness. On the one hand, the positions of the character's themselves are ironic. For example, the opposite circumstances of Lopakhin, Firs, and Dunyasha point out the irony in the now supposedly free-moving class system; characters talk about and praise a system of economic mobility. Still, they cannot see the contradiction in the situations of those around them that have no opportunity to improve their standing or are criticized for attempting to do so. In other cases, the play erects ironic moments, where the power in a given scene comes from a combination of two different images. For example, in Act II, Madame Ranevsky complains loudly about how she cannot control her money, while in the same breath she allows Yasha, the most untrustworthy character, to pick up her spilled purse. The fact that she is able to talk about her weakness and neglect the safety of her money in the same breath indicates that, despite her complaints, she is still blind to much of her problem.

Symbolism is also a major tool in the hands of the playwright. In "The Cherry Orchard" many symbols are employed for thematic clarification. The keys at Barbara's waist symbolize her practicality and her power. Gay's imaginary billiards game symbolizes his desire to escape. The cherry orchard symbolizes the old social order, the aristocratic hom

symbolizes change. Firs himself is a figure of time; Anya is a figure of hope. The symbols in this play are too numerous to count, but many of them hinge on the idea of the changing social order or the specific circumstance of a given character.

Chekhov is also known for the emphasis he places on dialogue and off-stage action, otherwise known as "indirect action." The most important events in Chekhov's plays do not necessarily occur on Chekhov's stage; often, the audience experiences some of the most pivotal and dramatic action not by seeing it, but by hearing about it from the characters. In this concept of indirect action is an innovation on the part of Chekhov, whose impact on theatre and literature continues even today.

"The Cherry Orchard" : The Use of Symbolism

"We don't see things as they are. We see them as we are." This citation by Anais Nin articulates an essential point of view for debate about the symbolic connotation of inanimate bits and pieces, since it is our personality and our memories, which determine our character and meanings. Our feelings towards certain objects are individual, as everyone associates different things in a different manner. Insofar, "we see them as we are", since they can mirror our past, pains, hopes and our ideals. Thus they become more than just an object, but a symbol for a certain part of someone's feelings and life.

This is also the case in "The Cherry Orchard": objects as the 'nursery room', 'the bookcase' and 'the cherry orchard' take on their own symbolic life. They all share one thing in common: each one reveals something of the characters' personalities, feelings and ideals. These inanimate objects are a reflection of the characters' inner states of being. The meanings of these inanimate objects are changing analogously with the characters 'change of mood, perspective and state of mind. Thus one gets the inkling that the objects are more like persons, since it is only the characters' life, which makes and keeps them alive. 'The nursery room' may be for a stupendous person without any implicit significance, but for Lopakhin and Lyubov it is a symbol for their childhood, background and past.

The nursery room reminds Lopakhin of his origins. It makes him aware that he is "just a peasant"; no matter how rich he has become or how elegant he might be dressed, his social background still remains visible for other people. After all, one "can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear", as his origins will be for good a part of his identity. For Lyubov the nursery room symbolizes her "innocent childhood". Being in this room, in which "she used to sleep when she was little" seems to bring her back to feel a part of that secure, carefree life and makes her feel "little again".

The bookcase has the same effect on her; all her troubles seem to be far away and she feels pure "happiness". Gayev's' 'relationship' to the bookcase is less personal, as he doesn't associate a particular personal memory with it. He considers it rather as an object, which has its own personality; hence, though it is "an inanimate object, true, but still – a bookcase"! The way he sees it is reminiscent of a hero, as it has for already hundred years "devoted itself to the highest ideals of goodness and justice" and has never deceived anyone. Being constantly and unshakably true to its 'principles', it was a source, from which "several generations of their family" have drawn courage and hope "in a better future". In the course of time a lot of things have changed: some people are dead, Gayev and Lyubov got

adolescent, and the estate is probably going to be sold. However, the bookcase not being subject to any rules or changes thus becomes for Gayev a symbol of consistency and security.

The central symbol of "The Cherry Orchard", as the title might suggest, is the cherry orchard itself. The cherry orchard does not only represent an inanimate object, but it is the centre of the characters' world. Their lives could be divided into the era "before the cherry orchard was sold" and into the era after it. With this change the symbolic meaning of the cherry orchard before and after the sale also changes. The cherry orchard 'before the sale' plays a part in each of the characters' past; but it seems foremost to be part of Lyubov mind, through which the cherry orchard takes on his own symbolic life, as its symbolic meaning changes with the changes in her mind. She "can't conceive to live without the cherry orchard", as almost her whole past and memories are connected to it. Looking at it seems to revive the memories of her "happy childhood" and makes time stand still, as if "nothing has changed" in her life. In those days her attitude towards life was innocent and "bold", as she wasn't yet "able to foresee or expect anything dreadful". She felt like the cherry orchard, "after the dark, stormy autumn and the cold winter, young and joyous again"; but now, she seems to have lost this "power of vision" and her naive view of life. That's might be the reason for her to see the cherry orchard in such an illusory light. It had become a refugee place, where she hides to escape from reality, her "problems" and "sins". The cherry orchard for her embodies a kind of paradise, into which her 'unhappy past' does not enter, but only her 'happy past'. She doesn't want to let go the cherry orchard, because she doesn't want to let go her 'happy past'. As long as the cherry orchard exists, her childhood feelings seem to continue to still exist for real. To sale the cherry orchard would mean to erase that beloved part of her life and thus sell her, too.

However, the irony is that she escapes from her 'unhappy past' to a place just like the cherry orchard, which magic only lives through the past itself. In as much as the cherry orchard represents a kind of 'Garden Eden' for her, it at the same time also is a "burden", which rests on her shoulders. As long as she continues to stick to the orchard, she won't "forget her past" and won't thus be able to create a new future.

"To begin to live in the present, one must first atone for his past and be finished with it". Unlike Lyubov, her daughter, Anya, already reached that conclusion and is willing to "leave" this burden behind her; her "love" for the cherry orchard has vanished, as it is part of her past life and has therefore nothing to do any longer with her present and future.

'The cherry orchard after the sale' thus becomes a symbol for renewal and a new beginning for the life of each character in the play: Lopakhin purchasing the estate go table to get rid of his origins. "Gay with life and wealth", he has freed himself from being only the grandson and son of serfs, who used to work on this estate. Now he has become the owner of that place and with the cutting down of the cherry orchard, he is going to leave his past and origins behind him, creating a "new living world". Also Lyubov's "burden" of the past seems now to have become lighter; "her nerves are better" and she is going to leave for Paris, since she might have recognized that it's finished long ago and that there is no turning back".

Gayev has finally "calmed down", too and is going to be an employee of a bank. Varya is going to leave for a new job, and Anya and Trofimov are gladly stepping towards their "new life". Also the rest of the characters have to start a new life in a new place. When they leave there won't be a soul in this place" anymore. May be not in this place, th

in another place, since there are in the world "many, many wonderful places", on which one can "plant a new orchard".

The characters in the cherry orchard do not learn, why?

The cherry orchard is a struggle between the characters' incompatibility. Make a convincing case.

The world of the cherry orchard is consisting of people with difference in their behaviours, comment.

The Cherry Orchard by Anton Chekhov is a dramatic play set at a cherry orchard in Russia. Some of the characters that help set the dramatic setting of the play are Lyubov, Lopakhin, and Pishchik. These characters find life difficult because they fail to understand each other and because they passively submit to their environmental situations without making an effort to rise above them.

Lyubov is the owner of the cherry orchard, and has lived there her whole life. The estate has been handed down through the generations, and Lyubov has been left to take care of it. Since Lyubov has grown up wealthy, she has not learned to manage her money wisely. She wastefully spends and hands out money: "I haven't any money, my dove…oh, very well…give it to him, Leonid." She does not know how to work in order to regain the money she has spent. She finds herself going into debt and not being able to pay the mortgage. These problems grow so severe that she is forced to sell the orchard.

Lopakhin offers to help L Lyubov and her family to get them out of debt. He suggests several ideas such as tearing down buildings and the house, and renting homes on the land that the cherry orchard now grows. He cares not about the sentimental value the orchard holds, but the money that could be made selling it. When told the personal value of the orchard, Lopakhin replies: "The only remarkable thing about this cherry orchard is that it's very big." He also says: "There's a crop of cherries once every two years…that's hard to get rid of…nobody buys them." Though this does not make Lopakhin a greedy or uncaring person, one might think this is quite awkward.

Pishchik on the other hand is only out for himself. He too was once wealthy, but had problems spending his money. He begs for money instead of working or earning it, creating even larger debts. When he asks Lyubov for 240 roubles to pay for his mortgage, she agrees, but is turned away by Gayev's. Pishchik then relies on luck and a lottery ticket his wife gave him. Throughout the story, he refers to gimmicks in order to make money: "Well-a horse is a fine animal-You can sell a horse." He also talks about counterfeiting money in order to repay his debts. It is not until the end of the story when his luck pays off by finding a large sum of money, which he is able to pay all his debts.

The Cherry Orchard shows several examples of characters that do not learn or react to their mistakes and surroundings. Lyubov and Pishchik both have problems spending and managing their money. Pishchik, though, relies on luck. Lopakhin, on the other hand, is not sympathetic to people's feelings and is out to make money. These characters find life

fail to understand each other and because they passively submit to their environmental situations without making an effort to rise above them.

Describe the cultural conflict, independence and social changes as the basic themes of the play.

Anton Chekhov's The Cherry Orchard projects the cultural conflict of the turn of the twentieth century of Russia. With a historical allusion, Chekhov exhibited the changing Russia with "slice of life" in his play. The Cherry Orchard is not only a depiction of Russian life but also an understatement of changing traditional value. Cultural conflict itself is an abstraction. To explain it, it is the traditional culture that is unable to resist the invading one.

In the play, each character has his or her own personality, which symbolizes the individual social levels of Russian society. But these characters distinguish themselves into two sides, which are conservators and investors; therefore, they conflict each other in opinion. The following developments will begin with an outlook of The Cherry Orchard to acknowledge the basic concept of the play. The second part is culture in change that explains historical background of modern Russia. Third by a contrasting method, the main idea of this part is an illustration of conflict.

The play deals with the theme of independence in many different ways.Fundamentally, it demands that we ask what it is to be free. What with the Liberation, The Cherry Orchard deals with independence in a very concrete way: shortly before the beginning of the play, much of Russia's population was not free. The play's characters demonstrate the different degrees of freedom that result from the Liberation. On opposing ends of this question are Lopakhin and Firs. One man has been able to take advantage of his liberation to make himself independent; the other, although he is technically free, has not changed his position at all and is subject to the whims of the family he serves, as he has always been. The difference in their situation demonstrates the observations of many Russians of the time: officially liberating a group of people is not the same as making them free if you do not also equip them with the tools they need to become independent, i.e., resources such as education and land.

Trofimov, the play's idealist, offers one definition of freedom for the audience to consider when he declines Lopakhin's offer of money. According to Trofimov, he is a free man because he is beholden to no one and nothing more than his own concept of morality. His observations seem accurate in light of other forms of non-freedom in the play. Madame Ranevsky, for example, is not free in a very different way from Firs. She has enough assets to be able to control her own destiny, but she is a slave to her passions, spending extravagantly and making poor decisions in romance, and therefore cannot follow a higher moral code as Trofimov does. What with the combination of economic circumstances and the bizarre weaknesses of the characters, the play therefore suggests that there are two sources which control freedom and the lack thereof: economics, which comes from without, and control over oneself, which comes from within.

Several characters address the potential difference between social change and social progress. Firs and Trofimov are two of them. Both question the utility of the Liberation. As Firs notes, it made everyone happy, but they did not know what they were happy for. Firs himself is living proof of this discrepancy: society has changed, but his

countless others, have not progressed. Both characters insinuate that the Liberation is not enough to constitute progress; while it was a necessary change; it was not enough to bring mankind to the idealized future Trofimov imagines. The play leaves the impression that while change has come, there is more work to be done.

"The Cherry Orchard" : Social Realism

The history of the early twentieth century Russian society is the history of social transition, transformation. The late 19th century Russian society was struggling to be free from the shibboleth of the dying feudal aristocracy. In parallel to this struggle there was also progressive change which hastened the dawn of a mercantile middle class. At every time in the chapter of social history, a single class can't maintain its supremacy and privileged status. With a passage of time the old social order has to die yielding place to the new emerging social order. No society remains unchanged. Every society has to transform. Each society is bound to undergo change as time passes by. It is the very nature of society to undergo change. This law of social change is applicable universally in the world.

The late 19th century Russian society witnessed the soaring success of the capitalistic middle class. At very step the middle class was on the rise. At all point this class was successful. The progressive march of this class was so strong that no obstacle was going to disturb it. Furthermore the old feudal aristocracy was not only on the immediate decline, but on the verge of extinction without levelling any remnant of it. The old feudal social order was no longer in a tenable position to dictate its ethos and to impose its ideals and norms. Surprisingly enough, this class was totally ignorant and un- habituated to adaptive evolution. A new emerging class was head over heel in love with change, with progressive social transformation. But the old dying aristocratic class was allergic to change, antipathetic to change, and unprepared to embrace the costly social transformation.

In the play The Cherry Orchard Lyubov and Gayev represent the dying aristocracy. Their heavy debt forced them to put their Orchard in auction. Their orchard was sure to be lost. However, there was a route to save it by letting it on lease for the construction of summer cottage. There was a chance for the virtually dying class to live a life of adaptation and compromise. But this class was too proud to let their orchard on lease. Lyubov and Gayev were rather ready to leave the place that to see others possessing it. They fought their last battle in their hopeless and unsuccessful attempt to save the orchard. Finally they failed. The orchard fell into the much more practical and sensible man, Lopakhin.

Lopakhin represents the victoriously emerging middle-class. A man of action he believes in the necessity to take quick action man of vision he is far busier in the plan to rise above the underprivileged class through financial and practical success. Once he belonged to the working class. He was a servant in Lyubov's house when he was a child. Through hard- work and practical line of thinking he succeeded in earning money. With the huge amount of money he earned, he succeeded in changing himself from the working class to the middle class. Economically he became so strong that he bought the Cherry Orchard of Lyubov in auction on the highest purchase. Even the aristocratic was attracted towards him. Lyubov offered her daughter Varya's hand to him but Lopakhin hesitated. If Lopakhin represents the practical middle class, Trofimov represents the theoretical and visionary ideals of the class committed to embrace.

Thus, the play The Cherry Orchard presents a social phenomenon which exemplifies the old decent feudal order giving way to the rapidly expanding capitalistic and mercantile middle class. As a mode of social realism the play represents the Russian society by the end of the 19th century. At that time the society was moving towards the threshold to change. Chekhov captured the reality concerning the social transformation. The displacement of Lyubov and Gayev on account of their failure to stand in the lives of compromise and adaptation illustrates a golden fact that the early 20th century Russian society bade final adieu to the last remnant of decaying feudal structure. In most of Chekhov's plays the feudal aristocrat are presented as bored, passive, dreamy and ridiculously ideal. This mode of characterization also reveals that this class has no right to occupy foreground in the social hierarchy of Russia. The middle class people are depicted as practical, sensible, painstaking, hard- working and radical as well. This line of characterization displays the fact that the playwright is in favour for the emergence of this class.

Chekhov's The Cherry Orchard as a Comedy

Some people have called Chekhov's The Cherry Orchard a tragedy, but there's a case to be made for it being a comedy. Anton Chekhov called The Cherry Orchard "a comedy in four acts." Of course he called The Seagull a comedy, too, even though one of the main characters commits suicide at the end. I think The Cherry Orchard really is a comedy however. It's a comedy in two senses of the word, the classical and modern senses.

It's a comedy in the classical sense that, even though things look bad for a while, they all work out in the end. Some of Shakespeare's comedies are not very funny, for example Measure for Measure, in which a corrupt judge demands relations with a novice nun in order to save her brother's life. But it's a comedy because no one dies and the characters who've tried to do what's right finally get justice. A callous fate doesn't get to wipe everybody out in a classical comedy.

No one dies tragically in The Cherry Orchard, either, although Firs, the ancient servant, dies peacefully in the home that he loves. The owners of the cherry orchard and the rest of the estate, the generous Mrs. Ranevsky and her brother Gayev, are faced with having the property sold to pay their debts. They cling to happy memories of their childhood home, and hatch all kinds of plans to save it. "Oh, my orchard!" Mrs. Ranevsky cries, "after the dark autumns and the cold winters, you're young again, full of happiness!" But once they know the property is gone for good, they soon reconcile themselves to the idea. Mrs. Ranevsky returns to Paris to take care of her hapless lover, and Gayev quickly secures a job at a bank.

Mrs. Ranevsky and Gayev even pass up the chance to save the estate by selling it for summer cottages. It's a plan proposed by their friend Lopakhin, who will even loan them the money to clear the land. Lopakhin is a wealthy businessman whose father was a serf under Mrs. Ranevsky's father. But the brother and sister refuse even to consider the scheme. "Villas and villa residents--it's so vulgar, excuse me." Mrs. Ranevsky says.

So Lopakhin ends up buying the estate at auction. How times have changed. Lopakhin can't help pointing it out, although he's a kind man. "I've bought the estate where my father and grandfather were slaves, where they weren't even allowed in the kitchen," he declares triumphantly.

And, although Mrs. Ranevsky and Gayev mourn the loss of their childhood home with all its beauty and happy memories, they know its time is gone. Former serfs have become rich by commerce. The children of past gentry must now get by as best they can. Mrs. Ranevsky asks her daughter, "Are you very pleased? You are, aren't you?" and Anya answers, "Oh, yes, I am. This is the start of a new life, Mother." Gayev adds, "It's quite true, everything's all right now."

The Cherry Orchard is also a comedy in the modern sense that it's funny. It's full of wonderful, wacky Chekhov characters. There's Yepikhodov the clerk who complanins constantly, always adding, "not that I complain." There's Pischik, a neighbor, who has a great penchant for borrowing money and swallows a whole bottle of Mrs. Ranevsky's pills as a joke. "I've swallowed the lot!" he laughs. There's Yasha, the servant who fancies himself educated, and pronounces that the old servant Firs has a case of "anno domini."

Best of all there's Gayev, a good-natured man who loves to make speeches as much as everyone else hates to hear them. He congratulates a bookcase on being a hundred years old, and "educating us up to ideals of goodness and to the knowledge of a common consciousness." Later he begins, "Nature, glorious nature, glowing with everlasting radiance, so beautiful, so cold--" His nieces quickly cut him off, saying, "Uncle, you're doing it again!"

The Cherry Orchard is about how hard it can be to accept changes. It's also about how resilient people can be in the face of change. And, although a thread of sadness runs through the play, its characters are drawn with Chekhov's gentle humor. It gives us an optimistic view of humanity, which is a good thing for a comedy to do. We're left with the comforting thought that everything really is going to be all right.

Naturalism in Search of a Genre

Look! In the sky! It’s a tragedy! No, it’s a comedy! No, it’s…both? This is the dilemma directors, actors, readers, and audiences alike have experienced throughout the years when reading, watching, or performing Anton Pavlovich Chekhov’s final work, The Cherry Orchard. Originally written as a comedy, it was first produced as a tragedy by Konstantin Stanislavsky and The Moscow Art Theatre in 1904. The Cherry Orchard tells the story of Madame Ranevskaya, her brother Gayev, and her two daughters Varya and Anya, the family that owns the old estate and the orchard after which it is named. The family is nearly bankrupt and their estate is set to be sold at auction soon. Try as they might, they cannot earn, borrow, or even find the money they need to save their precious estate. The wealthy businessman and son of former serfs on the estate, Lopakhin, suggests that the family cut down the orchard, divide it into lots, and build rental property on the expanse. This, however, would destroy the very thing that they love the most: the orchard. In the end, the family cannot find the means to save the orchard, and so it is sold at auction to—ironically—Lopakhin, who intends to do with the land just what he suggested the family do. Insult is added to injury as his men begin chopping down the orchard even before the family has left the premises. While it cannot be denied that humor is found throughout The Cherry Orchard, neither can the underlying feeling of tragedy. Many scholars have questioned the ultimate genre of Chekhov’s play, and found their answer, whether or not it was the one they expected to find.

Barricelli makes much of the "sound of a snapped string mournfully dying away" found both near the end of Act II and at the very end of Act IV (348, 380). He does not hold his opinion back and firmly resolves that "regardless of Chekhov's own paradoxal assertions about his plays being comedies and not tragedies, is that the play in not an "undramatic drama" but indeed a tragic drama." (115) He implores his readers to "be able to say how [the sound] got to have this meaning [of tragedy], and how it reveals it structurally within the play." (116) Barricelli looks to Russian folklore at the time, and finds his answer.

In folklore, a player may leave his instrument behind as a "life token," an extension of himself, and if during his absence a string breaks, this is considered evil portent. The chord that snaps involves the idea of a separable soul. One may come upon several such examples of a breaking string: "If an instrument breaks for no special reason, then there will soon be a wedding, or, according to a more widespread superstition, one must expect death." (117)

While Barricelli goes on to state that only the latter part of the superstition applies, I believe that both are relevant. The symbolism of the heron and the owl, of which Gayev and Trofimov, the former tutor to Madame Ranevskaya's late son, speak, can be linked to Egyptian hieroglyphics. In the Egyptian systems, the owl symbolizes death, night, cold, and passivity, while the heron symbolizes morning and the generation of life. (118) Both meanings exemplify the very balance of comedy and tragedy in The Cherry Orchard: a simple sound that forebodes of new beginnings and endings, of life and death.

Fergusson explores the poetic aspect of The Cherry Orchard. He finds that "the larger elements of the composition—the scenes or episodes, the setting, and the developing story—are composed in such a way as to make a poetry of the theatre; but the "text", as we read it literally, is not." (386) He never addresses the question of comedy or tragedy, but merely accepts the presence of both. He describes it as "a realistic ensemble pathos," (383) explaining his standpoint by asserting that "the characters all suffer the passing of the estate in different ways, thus adumbrating this change at a deeper and more generally significant level than that of any individual's experience." (383) He takes questions the sound of the snapped string as well, calling it a "sharp, almost warning signal," but says nothing else about it. (389) Fergusson does address the irony of the play in another way, noting that in the last act "all the characters feel, and the audience sees in a thousand way, that the wish to save the Orchard has amounted in fact to destroying it; the gatherer of its denizens to separation; the homecoming to departure." (384) This statement is ultimately is the same as the question between comedy and tragedy. Are these ironies amusing or heart-breaking? Once again we find that they are both.

Remaley questions: "Is it indeed a comedy as Chekhov claimed, or a tragedy as so many producers and critics have chosen to interpret it?" (16) This can be answered once more in the final scene of Act IV, as they are leaving the orchard forever, Madame Ranevskaya and Gayev hold each other, sobbing. Gayev is unable to say anything other than, "My sister, my sister…" (379) while Madame Ranevskaya exclaims in despair, "Oh, my dear, sweet, lovely orchard!…My life, my youth, my happiness, good-bye!…Good-bye!" (379) Furthermore, in the last moment, we find that Firs, the aged and ailing valet, has been forgotten. He speaks the finals words of the play, muttering,

> "They have gone…They've forgotten me…I'll lie down awhile…I expect Leonid Andreich hasn't put on his fur coat and has gone off in his overcoat.[Sig

> didn't see to it…When they're young, they're green!…There's no strength left in you, nothing's left, nothing…Ach, you…addlepate! [Lies motionless.] (380).

The audience is left with this searing and symbolic image. At this moment of solitude and death, the "sound of a snapped string" of which Barricelli spoke is heard once more, combined with the "thud of the ax far away in the orchard" (380). These concluding scenes are anything but comedic. Remaley does, however, cite many instances of humor found in The Cherry Orchard. He uses the example of Yasha, Madame Ranevskaya's manservant, who is deeply offended by Lopakhin's champagne, yet drinks the entire bottle himself (17). Another example Remaley uses is Gayev's rather long apostrophe to the antique bookcase:

Dear and most honoured book-case. In you I salute as existence devoted for over a hundred years to the glorious ideals of virtue and justice. In the course of the century your silent summons to creative work has never faltered, upholding through tears in several generations of our line confidence and faith in a better future and fostering in us the ideals of virtue and social consciousness. (18)

To drive his point home, Remaley quotes Ionesco, who comments that "it all comes to the same thing anyway; comic and tragic are merely two aspects of the same situation" (20). The tragic story is not made a comedy, or even neutralized, by its comedic elements, but rather it is made more tragic. It causes the reader to feel that much more for the characters, for in this they become that much more realistic. Life is ups and downs, highs and lows, tears and laughter.

In the end, all debate can be settled simply by going to Chekhov's personal writings. Chekhov "insists that the reader understands that his play is a description of life, and the single, all-important fact which screams for attention is that life contains both the comic and the tragic, both the ludicrous and the serious, both the painless and the painful." (Remaley, 19) He further insists that "the critic commits a serious error when he emphasizes either the sombre, pessimistic dimension or the lighter, comic dimension in his dramatic creations, for both dimensions are equally evident in life and must be equally evident in any artistic endeavour which hopes to achieve verisimilitude with life." (Remaley, 20) Chekhov intended The Cherry Orchard to be a comedic play, which it is, yet in his naturalism it became tragic as well. In fact, he struck the very heart and soul of man existence: that happiness is pain, that sorrow can be joyful, that life is found in death, and that endings lead to beginnings.

Genre-Bending in The Cherry Orchard

The following genres have all had The Cherry Orchard ascribed to them by some influential critic or playwright: Comedy, Drama, Tragedy, pastoral comedy, "Chekhovian comedy." The last genre was created specifically for the play, by Donald R. Styran; the term "pastoral" is a literary term usually denoting poems that are about shepherds, but according to Beverly Hahn, a "pastoral comedy" is the closest fit in terms of genre that The Cherry Orchard can manage. The first genre on the list is what Chekhov himself considered the play to be, as reflected in the play's subtitle: A Comedy in Four Acts. But Stanislavksy, the great director of the Moscow Arts Performing Theatre where the play was first produced, disagreed. He thought the play was a drama, and directed it as such. This annoyed Chekhov to no end. Especially irksome to the playwright was the way Stanislavsky stretched out the fourth Act to

forty minutes in length, in order to heighten the emotional impact of Ranevsky's final departure. According to Chekhov, the Act should have lasted no more than twelve.

There is a fine line between pathos and comedy; as Richard Peace notes, they both involve the build-up and then release of emotional tension. The difference between is often dependent upon whether we closely sympathize with a given character's predicament or whether we maintain a certain distance from that predicament. The Cherry Orchard walks a fine line between the two. Where Chekhov may cross the line from comedy to pathos is in the amount of attention he gives to Ranevsky in terms of character development. She is, next to the orchard itself, the largest presence in the play, and thus draws the attention of readers. She is a sympathetic character, and furthermore is the one character who seems to escape the irony which distances us from the rest of the characters in the play. This has prompted some critics and readers have seen Ranevsky as a tragic hero. The play's structuring of time supports this interpretation, as well; it flows from the beginning towards a fixed end-point in the future; this fixed time frame is typical of tragedy.

Others, however, have taken Chekhov's side in the debate. And even though the subject matter of the play may appear serious, we can see that Chekhov mixes both comic elements and tragic elements in the play. First of all, though the end of the play is far from upbeat, the central character Ranevsky is alive, healthy, and perhaps better off than she was before, having the chance to leave her past behind her. Secondly, there is an element of vaudeville in the play; Yephikodov is a buffoon, and when Varya hitting Lopakhin is pure slapstick. Also, it must be noted much of the humor in The Cherry Orchard does not translate nearly as well as the symbolism. Russian culture, like any culture, has its own unique sense of humor; the challenge of translating Chekhov's jokes into the English idiom may be the main reason why there have been so many translations (90), not one of which has proven to be perfectly satisfactory. And no matter how good a translation is, it will never catch, for example, the pun on Yephikodov's words when he hands his bouquet of flowers to Dunyasha in Act One; he intends to say," allow me to communicate to you," but the word he uses in the original Russian, prisovokupit, which is a little too close to sovokupit, which means "to copulate," especially when directed towards the woman he wants to marry.

Life of Galilio Galili

Life and Works of Bertolt Brechet

Bertolt Brecht was born on February 10, 1898, in the medieval city of Augsburg, part of the Bavarian section of the German Empire. Married in 1897, his father was a Catholic and his mother a Protestant. Brecht was their first child, baptized as Eugen Bertolt Friedrich Brecht. His father, Bertolt Friedrich Brecht, worked in a paper factory. His mother, Wilhelmine Friederike Sophie Brezing, was ill with breast cancer most of his young life. He had one brother, Walter, who was born in 1900.

Brecht was a sickly child, having a congenital heart condition and a facial tic. As a result, he was sent to a sanitarium to relax. At age six he attended a Protestant elementary school (Volksschule) and at age ten a private school, The Royal Bavarian Realgymnasium (Koeniglich-Bayerisches Realgymnasium). Like most students, he was educated in Latin and the humanities, later being exposed to Nietzsche and other thinkers. He suffered a heart attack at the age of twelve but soon recovered and continued his education.

Significantly, Brecht was exposed at a young age to Luther's German translation of the Bible, a text considered instrumental in the development of the modern German language. Quotes from and references to the Bible abound throughout Brecht's work and can be found most particularly in Mother Courage and Her Children in the mouth of the chaplain.

While in school he began writing, and he ended up co-founding and co-editing a school magazine called The Harvest. By age sixteen, he was writing for a local newspaper and had written his first play, The Bible, about a girl who must choose between living and dying but saving many others. He was later almost expelled at age eighteen for dissenting about it being necessary to defend his country in time of war. By nineteen, he had left school and started doing clerical work for the war, prevented from more active duty due to health problems.

In 1917, he resumed his education, this time attending Ludwig Maximilian Universitaet in Munich, where he matriculated as a medical student. By this time, his mother was heavily drugged with morphine because of her progressing cancer. He started to write Baal at this time, a play concerned with suffering caused by excessive sexual pleasures. It sensationally depicted what were considered immoral attitudes at the time.

Brecht's own sex life is fascinating in many ways. He is thought to have had no fewer than three mistresses at any time throughout his adult life. When he was a child, the family's second servant, Marie Miller, would hide objects in her undergarments for Brecht and his brother to find. Through Brecht's poetry, we understand that his mother used to smell his clothes to determine the extent of his sexual activities. By the age of sixteen, he began to frequent a brothel as part of a conscientious effort to broaden his experiences. Between sixteen and twenty, he apparently pursued eight girls simultaneously, including Paula Banholzer, the woman who gave birth to his illegitimate child in 1919. He is known to have experimented with homosexuality, often inviting literary and musically in

his room on weekends in order for them to read erotic compositions. His diaries, although vague, mention his need for both males and females to fulfil his sexual desires. Brecht's desire for experience was, throughout his life, all-consuming.

In 1921, he took his second trip to Berlin and attended the rehearsals of Max Reinhardt and other major directors. In 1922, his play Drums in the Night opened in Munich at the Kammerspiele and later at the Deutsches Theatre in Berlin. He received the prestigious Kleist prize for young dramatists as a result. Brecht also entered into his first committed relationship, his marriage with the opera singer Marianne Zoff, at the age of twenty-four. Their daughter Hanne was born the following year. Despite being married, Brecht had extramarital affairs and spent very little time with his wife or daughter. In 1923, his two plays Jungle of Cities and Baal were performed.

After moving to Berlin in 1924, he met a communist Viennese actress, Helene Weigel. His wife Marianne moved in with her parents after the birth of Hanne, and soon she stopped responding to Brecht's letters. At age twenty-six Brecht fathered his second illegitimate child, with Weigel. Their son was named Stefan. Brecht divorced Marianne Zoff and in 1929 married Helene Weigel. At this point, he was just thirty-one.

Helene Weigel gave birth to their second child, Barbara, in 1930. During this time, Brecht was by no means monogamous. He was obsessed with the idea of abandonment, and as a result, he abhorred ending relationships. The women in his life were important for his writing career, and modern feminist detractors often try to claim that his mistresses in fact wrote much of what was accredited to him. The allegation is largely untrue, but women such as Elisabeth Hauptmann did write significant parts of The Threepenny Opera. In addition, other mistresses included Margarete Steffin, who helped him write The Good Woman of Setzuan and Mother Courage and Her Children; Hella Wuolijoki, who allowed him to transform her comedy The Sawdust Princess into Herr Puntila and His Man Matti; and Ruth Berlau, who bore him a short-lived, third illegitimate child in 1944. Weigel was tolerant of his affairs, and she even warned other men to stay away from his mistresses because it upset him when they made their moves.

Brecht's writings show the profound influence of many varied sources during this time and the remaining years of his life. He studied Chinese, Japanese, and Indian theatre, focused heavily on Shakespeare (adapting, among other plays, Shakespeare's Coriolanus) and other Elizabethans, and was fascinated by Greek tragedy. He found inspiration in other German playwrights, notably Buchner and Wedekind, and he enjoyed the Bavarian folk play. Mother Courage and Her Children arguably owes much to Schiller's Wallenstein trilogy. Brecht had a phenomenal ability to take elements from these seemingly incompatible sources, combine them, and convert them into his own works.

In 1933, Brecht took his family and fled to Zurich after the burning of the Reichstag, later moving around the world to escape Nazi rule. In October 1947, during the McCarthy years, Brecht was called to appear before the House Committee on Un-American Activities. Although not an official member of America's Communist party, Brecht left the United States for Switzerland the next day. He soon reunited with Helene Weigel, and they traveled to East Berlin in 1948 and set up the Berliner Ensemble with full support from the Communist regime. Mother Courage and Her Children was the Berliner Ensemble's inaugural production. In 1950, Brecht and Weigel were granted Austrian citizenship.

Brecht's four great plays were written between 1938 and 1945. These included, for one, The Life of Galileo, which followed history slavishly. It dealt with the protagonist's self-hatred for giving up his convictions in the face of the Inquisition. The others were Mother Courage and Her Children; The Good Woman of Setzuan, which in some ways follows from Mother Courage in examining the compatibility of virtue and a capitalist world; and The Caucasian Chalk Circle, which introduces questions about power and who is entitled to own things. After this period, Brecht worked on his famous adaptation of Antigone and spent much of his energy recording his theoretical ideas.

Brecht experimented with Dadaism and expressionism in his early plays, but he soon developed a unique style that suited his own vision. He detested "Aristotelian" drama and the manner in which it (at least from his point of view) made the audience identify with the hero without enough analysis of the hero's flaws. To him, when such drama produced feelings of terror and pity and led to an emotional catharsis, the process prevented audience members from thinking. (It is the ancient quarrel between philosophers and poets once again, with another thinker trying to reform poetry.) Determined to destroy what he considered theatrical illusions, Brecht made his dreams into realities when he took over the Berliner Ensemble. In one of his early productions, he famously put up signs which said, "Glotzt nicht so romantisch!" (“Don't stare so romantically!”).

Brecht received the National Prize, first class, in 1951. In 1954, he won the international Lenin Peace Prize. Brecht died of a heart attack on August 14, 1956, while working on a response to Samuel Beckett's absurdist play Waiting for Godot, written the year before. Even at the end, Brecht was very much interested in the modern drama of the day. He provided instructions that a stiletto be placed in his heart and that he be buried in a steel coffin so that his corpse would not be riddled with worms. He also left a will giving the proceeds of his various works to particular mistresses, including Elisabeth Hauptmann and Ruth Berlau. Unfortunately, the will lacked the necessary witness signatures and was therefore considered void. His widow, Helene Weigel, generously gave small amounts of money to the specified women. Brecht is buried in the Dorotheenfriedhof in Berlin.

Brechet-The Playwright

By 1936 a wide range of experimentation and innovation had established the parameters of the contemporary theatre. The training of actors in the Western theatre has since become more organized to take in concepts and programs from the earlier innovators. There are few schools today that do not acknowledge the work of Stanislavski in their training. Less obvious but equally pervasive is the influence of Reinhardt and Copeau, largely by way of their pupils in teaching. And towering above all others (save perhaps Stanislavski) is the figure of Brechet. It is reasonable to argue that Brechet absorbed, and in turn perpetuated, more influences than any other individual in the modem theatre,

Of central importance in establishing this argument is Brechet’s essay "On Experimental Theatre” (1940) in which he reviews the work of Vakhtangov, Meyerhold, Antoine, Reinhardt, Okhlopkov, Stanislavski, Jessner, and other Expressionists. Brechet traces through the modem theatre the two lines running from Naturalism and Expressionism. Naturalism he sees as the "assimilation of art to science," which gave the Naturalistic theatre great social influence, but at the expense of its capacity to arouse aesthetic pleasure.

Expressionism (and by implication the other anti-illusionist theatres), he acknowledges, “vastly enriched the theatre’s means of expression and brought Aesthetic gains that still remain to be exploited." But It proved incapable of shedding any light on the world as an object of human activity, and the theatre's educational value collapsed. Brechet recognized the great achievements of Piscator's work, in which he himself played a significant role, but proposed a further advance in the development of so-called epic theatre.

Brechet’s Marxist political convictions led him to propose an alternative direction for the theatre that would fuse the two functions of instruction and entertainment. In this way the theatre could project a picture of the world by artistic means and offer models of life that could help the spectators to understand their social environment and to master it both rationally and emotionally. The main concept of Brechet’s program was that of Verfremdungseffekt ("alienation,). In order to induce a critical frame of mind in the spectator, Brechet considered it necessary to dispense with the empathetic involvement with the stage that the illusionary theatre sought to induce. Generally, this has been understood as a deadening coldness in the productions, but such an interpretation proceeds from a general ignorance of Brechet's own writings on the subject. Rather, he insisted, as Appia, Craig, and the Symbolists did before him, that the audience must be reminded that it is watching a play.

Brechet’s ideas can be approached through the image presented by the theatre he chose to work in on his return to East Germany in 1947. The auditorium of the Theatre am Schiffbauerdamm is lavish to the point of fantasy, decorated with ornate plaster figures. The stage, by complete contrast, is a vast mechanized scenic space in which everything is clearly exposed to view as theatrical and man-made. In the contrast between the comfort of the auditorium and the science of the stage lies the condition of Brechet's theatre the audience was there to be entertained but also to think scientifically.

Many of the techniques of Brechet's staging were developments of earlier work. The use of three-dimensional set pieces in a large volume of space clearly derived from Jessner. His delight in the use of machinery and in particular the revolving stage came from Piscator. The insistence on the actors' demonstrating through the physical disposition of the body their gestus ("attitude") toward what is happening derived from Meyerhold, though with Brechet the gestus was always socially based. The clearest of his alienation devices, the projection of captions preceding the scene so that the audience knows in advance what will happen and, therefore, can concentrate on how it happens, derived from Piscalor's jotter screens and film captions.

Brechet acknowledged in his work the need for the actor to undergo a process of identification with the part, and he paid tribute to Stanislavski as the first person to produce a systematic account of the actor's technique. Brechet required his actors to go beyond Stanislavski and to incorporate a social attitude or judgment into their portrayal. Characterization without a critical judgment was in Brechet's view seductive artifice; conversely, social judgment without the characterization of a rounded human being was arid dogmatism. The theatre of mixed styles and means that Meyerhold and others constructed to cope with the grotesque experience of modern living was transformed by Brechet into a political principle. He used mixed means and styles to expose the contradictions, inconsistencies, and dialectics of situations and characters

theatrical effects were created through the juxtaposition of inconsistent attitudes in a character. Although the settings in Brechet's productions were clearly theatrical, the costumes and properties were not. Great care was taken to make each property and its use authentic for the period or character. In Brechet's theatre, if a chicken were to be plucked the actor did not mime or roughly approximate the action- the chicken was plucked. Costumes had to make clear the social class of the persons wearing them. This places Brechet directly in the line with the Meiningen Players, though again the gestus is particularly social rather than historical.

Brechet's methods of rehearsal were especially innovative. The methods worked out in his own company, the Berliner Ensemble, established a directing collective well advanced beyond those of Reinhardt and Piscator. In Brechet's theatre, the director, dramaturge, designer and composer had equal authority in the production. The designer had a special function; in addition to designing the sets and costumes, he also produced, for early rehearsal purposes, a series of sketches of key moments in the action. The rehearsals became a process of testing hypotheses about the play and its production. What held the collective together and made the method workable was the story, or fable. All the elements of production were synthesized for telling this story in public. At some points the music conveyed the meaning, at other times the setting, or the actors, or the words did. Brechet often invited observers to the rehearsals in order to test the clarity of the story, The process of testing could continue into the performance period. When the company was satisfied that the staging was correct, the production was photographed and a Modellbuch was prepared with photographs set against the text to show the disposition of the stage at all times and to mark significant changes of position on the part of the actors. The Modellbuch was then available (in a more advanced form than the designer's sketches) as the basis for any subsequent productions.

The Modellbuch has aroused resentment on the part of directors who prefer to respond freely to the text. Brechet's intention was not to limit but to provide a document as scientific evidence of an experiment that could be used in further research. Since the finished text was, in any case, only one facet of the fable, the model book gave evidence of other aspects of the story and it's telling.

Brechet's influence on the contemporary theatre has been both considerable and problematic. His Marxist views have proved a real stumbling block to his assimilation in the West , and his use of formalist techniques in the service of entertainment has presented difficulties in the socialist countries, There is no doubt that the settings and costumes of his productions are the features that have most influenced the contemporary theatre. Contemporary design exhibits in many ways the influences of his staging.

Brechet's Dramatic Theories

Brechet's special lexicon (theatrical jargon) may be confusing. He invented a complex language to describe essentially straightforward ideas, this lexicon includes such terms as epic-theatre, non-Aristotelian drama, alienation effect (Verfremdungseffekt) and so on. While his plays are mostly very clear and fluent, Brechet's own theorizing is not so simple. Brechet is less novel than he is supposed to be, His drama owes much to a wide range of theatrical conventions: Elizabethan, Chinese,

Japanese, Indian, Greek idea of Chorus, Austrian and Bavarian folk-plays, techniques of clowns and fairground entertainers.

Brechet's theory never arrived at a fixed and final view. His ideas changed, developed, mellowed, especially because of practice in real works on stage. Much of his theory was explanation after the writing of the plays, not the bases on which these were written, And, in the writing of plays for real performance, Brechet's sense of what works is always paramount.

In part, it was the things against which he reached at the determined Brechet's theories (and his overstatements). Among these were: • Bourgeois theatre and the fourth wall. • Anything which precludes thought, excites emotion or reinforces capitalist values Brechet disliked the twin clichés of heavily bombastic classics (Shakespeare, Schiller, and Goethe) and of naturalism in melodrama or drawing room. (This is a 19th century development, which had ossified into an invariable norm.) Naturalism was developed and perfected by such as Stanislavski and Harley Granville-Barker. Against this, reaction had already begun by the 1920s. Naturalism could go no farther; so new types of theatre arose: • Poetic drama • Satire • Expressionism (types not people) • Political theatre

Brechet had been influenced by expressionism and had collaborated with Erwin Piscator, father of political theatre and himself ready to experiment with new technique. Convinced that theatre must be an agent of social and political change, he sought a suitable form of theatre. Having found it he described it as "Epic theatre":

> ***"Today when human character must be understood as the 'totality of all social conditions' the epic from is the only one that can comprehend all the processes, which could serve the drama as materials for a fully representative picture of the world."*** (Brechet's comment, 1931, in The Three penny Opera)

The Epic Theatre

"...the epic poet presents the event as totally past, while the dramatic poet presents it as totally present."

The epic invites calm, detached contemplation and judgement; the dramatic overwhelms reason with passion and emotion, the spectator sharing the actor's experiences. Brechet's objection to "Aristotelian" theatre was an objection to Goethe and Schiller's interpretation of it - an objection to: • Catharsis by terror and pity • Identification with the actors • Illusion - the attempt to represent the present event. Brechet's idea of epic is informed by the ideas of Goethe and Schiller regarding the mood and character of epic poetry. This is a rational, calm detachment, to which Brechet aspires as a playwright.

Brechet criticises what he calls "Culinary theatre". This is theatre, which merely gives an experience, mental refreshment, as a meal is a bodily restorative. Brechet despises theatre, which provides mental foodstuffs but makes no difference to audience. He believes that the audience should be made not to feel, but to think. (Note that Brechet supposes these two to be in opposition to each other- but this need not be so

best can challenge the head and heart). Dramatic theatre presents events: from the hero's viewpoint (distorting judgement,) and as happening now (preventing calm detachment).

To counter this, the illusion must be broken. Theatre must do this continually. And, therefore, the audience must be made aware that events are not present events (happening now), but past events being represented as narrative, with commentary provided to encourage our own reflection, This is not' unlike the experience of reading a book with critical notes in the margin, or as if a novelist supplied his own comment on a page facing that bearing the narrative, Some modem anti-novelists have done this,

The audience is intended to sit back, relax (hence Brechet's wish for smoking!) and reflect, as did hearers of bards in classical Greece or Anglo-Saxon England. The theatre of illusion creates a spurious present, pretending things are happening now. But the epic theatre is historical: the audience is continually reminded that epic theatre gives a report of events,

The VERFREMDUNGSEFFEKT (V-Effekt)

To discourage audience from identifying with character and so losing detachment, the action must continually be made strange, alien, remote, and separate. To do this, the director must use any devices that preserve or establish this distancing,

While the general use of these is called the V-effekt, when any such device is employed successfully Brechet calls the result a V-effekt. This is Brechet's explanation of how the device works. A child whose mother remarries, seeing her as wife not just mother, or whose teacher is prosecuted, seeing him in relation to criminal law, experiences a V-effekt. These are examples from Brechet's own plays:

In Life of Galileo a long and profound speech by the unheroic protagonist is followed by the bathetic observation: "Now I must eat". This shows the weakness of the man against the strength of the inventor. • In The Caucasian Chalk Circle when Grusche ponders whether or not to take the abandoned baby her dilemma is voiced by the Chorus while she enacts a dumb show. In the Good Person of Sezuan the frequent asides to the audience also achieve a V-effekt.

The Construction of the Plays

In order to achieve unity of action, to build suspense and sustain its naturalistic illusion the dramatic play must be taut, well made and leading to a climax of catharsis. The epic play is freer. Suspense is not needed, and the whole can be loosely knit and episodic - each part making sense on its own.

The later, mature plays do lead to some definite end: Mother Courage's loss of all her children, Azdak's judgement in favour of Grusche or the non-solution of the gods to Shante's problem. But we can isolate episodes that stand alone - Mother Courage being the most simply episodic of the later plays.

In an earlier piece, Fear and Misery of the Third Reich (Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches, 1934-37), this episodic structure is much more marked, The "play" is. in fact, a series of related sketches on the theme suggested by the play's tit

off as five playlets, became eight, then nineteen, grew to twenty-seven and was. At last, cut to twenty-four. In performance one could (and, perhaps, should) present a selection from the total without harm to the work's integrity.

Brechet's Theory of Acting

Brechet's view is that actor should not impersonate, but narrate actions of another person, as it quoting facial gesture and movement.

"The Brechetian style of acting is acting in quotation marks,"

Brechet uses the example of an accident-eyewitness. To show bystanders what happened, he may imitate, say, the victim's gait but will only quote what is relevant and necessary to his explanation. Moreover, the actor remains free to comment on what he shows.

One of modern critic and teacher tested this idea with other students:

> ***"I wanted to let you know that I used the demonstrating of an accident as a rehearsal technique during my peer teaching episode and it worked very well. I started off with an overview of Brechet and his theories and then moved on to the rehearsal technique. I had prepared all example of an accident for people to demonstrate if not enough people had witnessed one. However, lots of people had witnessed accidents and they split into groups to demonstrate them. The discussion. at the end showed that they understood its relevance...Afterwards I had many people say that they had never understood Brechet before and now felt much clearer about his theories …"***(Georgie Sugg)

As the audience is not to be allowed to identify with character, 50, too, the actor is not to identify with him or her. Brechet agrees with Stanislavski that; if the actor believes he is Lear, the audience will also believe it, and share his emotions. But. Unlike Stanislavski, he does not wish this to happen. As he does not wish to put the audience into a trance, just so the actor must keep Himself free from this state: he must be relaxed, not letting muscles be tense. Even if playing someone who is possessed, the actor must not appear possessed. Brecht is opposed to frenetic and convulsive intensity on the stage. The Brechetian actor must always be in control of his emotions. Brechet sees the actor's task as greater than Stanislavsky's merging of character and actor.

This is one important element but it must be complemented by implied comment on the character's actions. The actor must show how these are wise or foolish and express, say, pity or disdain. The actor must show that he foresees where a character's actions will lead, and that his course of action is only one among many possibilities.

Since the actor should show the audience that he has chosen one action, as opposed to another, he must be aware of the presence of the audience, not, as in Stanislavsky's ideal, wrapped up in himself and oblivious of audience.

Finally, there is to be nothing improvised in his delivery: the actor's performance should be the ***"delivery of as finished product"***

This theory is not as complicated as it appears: in the Victorian melodrama, the actor plays the villain in just such a critical way. The audience sees that the actor disapproves of the character, there is no identification of one with the other; there is awareness and enjoyment of the skill in showing villainy; the actor shows that the villain could choose an alternative course of action and that he will come to a bad end.

In the theatre of illusion the actor explores the character, trying to merge with him. Only then does he react to other characters. In the Brechetian theatre the character's inner life is of no importance, save in its effect on outward action. Brechet does not portray human nature in the individual, but human relations. The story is the point of interest, not the characters. The story is the sequence of events that is the social experiment, allowing the interplay of social forces, from which the play's lesson emerges.

The Gestus

This is Brechet's term for that which expresses basic human attitudes - not merely "gesture" but all signs of social relations: department, intonation, facial expression. The Stanislavskian actor is to work at identifying with the character he or she portrays. The Brechetian actor is to work at expressing social attitudes in clear and stylized ways, So, when Shen-Te becomes Shui- Ta, she moves in a different manner, Brechet wished to embody the "Cestus" in the dialogue- as if to compel the right stance, movement and intonation. By subtle use of rhythm pause, parallelism and counterpointing, Brechet creates a "gestic" language.

The songs are yet more clearly "gestic", As street singers make clear their attitudes with overt, grand but simple gestures, so, in delivering songs, the Brechetian actor aims to produce clarity in expressing a basic attitude, such as despair, defiance or submission.

Instead of the seamless continuity of the naturalistic theatre, the illusion of natural disorder, Brechet wishes to break up the story into distinct episodes, each of which presents, in a clear and ordered manner, a central basic action. All that appears in the scene is designed to show the significance of the basic "Gestus". We see how this works in Mother Courage, Each scene is prefaced by a caption telling the audience what is to be the important event; in such a way as to suggest the proper attitude for the audience to adapt to it - for instance (Scene 3):

"She manages to save her daughter, likewise her covered cart, but her honest son is killed."

Non-Literary Elements : Decor, Music and Choreography

These are no longer auxiliaries to text, reinforcing it - they stand alone or in opposition. Songs are not used to heighten emotion at moments of climax; they serve as commentaries, generally leading to a V-effekt thus lyrics may be wry and humorous, melodies may be jazz-influenced, jerky and unromantic, or songs may satirize popular sentiment (There is great irony in the way the public at large missed the satire in The Three penny Opera, and the songs - such as Mackie Messer/ Mack the Knife - became popular classics, though Brechet had intended them as send-ups.)

Stage designers, no longer tied to illusion, can supply non-realistic extra decor to provide background material: • In Galileo projections of maps, documents and Renaissance art works • In Mother Courage and Her Children captions of celebrated events of the Thirty Years War and a statement of what is to happen next, on stage, to Mother Courage.

In the first production of Mahagonny a scene in which a glutton eats himself to death was enacted before a backdrop showing a portrait of him in the act of eating-so the episode is shown twice1the episode is shown twice!

The visual and musical V-effekt has an anti-hypnotic quality - music is not, as in Wagner, a narcotic, reinforcing the stage illusion, For Brechet the music and the action should each make the other appear strange. (It may be that Brechet's dislike of Wagnerian opera is not wholly rational, but made on political grounds- Wagner being associated with German nationalism and the myths of Germany's heroic origin and of Germanic racial purity.)

The result of the V-effekt is a contrast: in dramatic theatre the spectator is moved but has a crushing sense of inevitability and of his own helplessness; in the epic theatre one sees things as if different and so one man try to make things different in the real world. If things can be seen to be changed, then one can attempt to bring about change.

Brechet's Belief is that theatre can show how the suffering of those on stage could be avoided. His illogically consistent Marxism leads him to believe all (not some) human evil to result from unjust social institutions. The plays show how society could be different, if attitudes regarded as sound and unalterable could be changed. This is usually done obliquely by parallels, which are:

- Historical as in II/I other Courage and Galileo,
- Allegorical as in Mahagonny, or
- Pseudo-foreign, as in the Good Person of Sezuan.

So, the clear inadequacy of the final words of the gods in The Good Person of Sezuan makes it clear that to be good and poor (all the time) is impossible. The real solution is not for Shen Te to become Shui Ta, but for wealth to be shared so that the poor are not forced to destroy each other to survive.

Sit and Lighting

Brechet believed the stage should be brightly lit at all times; special effects to create mood were not allowed. (Logically, he could have allowed it, if accompanied by some device to draw attention to it - such as a statement from a character.) The sources of light should be plainly visible - just as those over a boxing-ring (Brechet's comparison).

The curtain is to be used for the display of titles, captions or comments. Placards may be placed in the auditorium, bearing instructions, such as "Don't stare so romantically" (from Drums in the ::-.right).The set behind the curtai

realistic; that is to say, while very authentic props may be used, (as, say, Mother Courage's handcart) there will be no elaborate arrangement of these in a naturalistic stage set

The music, too, must have a visible source - musicians may even be on the stage. Interruptions for song are announced or indicated by projection of a title, or flags and

Rehearsal

Brechet made actor's tum their lines into third person narrative. Actions given in stage directions are narrated: "***Then X entered. After a few silent compliments he sat down on the sofa."***

Dialogue, spoken (in performance) in the present tense, becomes reported speech. For example: ***"Has your excellency seen the new dancing-master?"*** Becomes: ***"He asked whether Madame had seen the new dancing-master."***

Brechet would include in the text spoken in rehearsal, all stage directions. He went so far as to write what he called "practice scenes". These were meant to cast new light on well-known scenes by use of ironic parallels. He wrote, too, what he called "bridge scenes" to be interpolated in the text in rehearsal but omitted in performance. But as these were written for classics that he never produced, their value is questionable.

Oddly, for one who wrote copious theoretical explanations, Brechet rarely referred to his theory during rehearsal, though some of his resulting practice was obviously familiar to the actors (say, the translation into narrative). Brechet claimed that fun application of his theory was impossible in the present state of the theatre. As a result, many of the actors of the Berliner Ensemble when questioned, seemed uncertain what Brechet's preferred style of acting was.

The Survival of Empathy

Brechet wrongly equated empathy, without which no audience will be interested in the stage action, with illusion, which is not at all necessary and comparatively novel, being a feature of naturalistic drama. For feelings that overwhelm the audience Brechet wished to substitute reason. Because naturalistic theatre aroused excessive emotion and ignored reason Brechet supposed these two, reason and empathy, to be mutually exclusive, Yet in Greek tragedy or the plays of Shakespeare both are active. The problem is not empathy as such, but the degree and kind of empathy aroused.

As a playwright Brechet's sense of what works led to the writing of scenes where the audience's empathy for the characters on stage is considerable: the heroic self--sacrifice of the dumb Katrina in Mother Courage is a notorious instance. Martin Esslin points out the psychological flaw in Brechet's reasoning:

> ***"Without identification and empathy, each person would be irrevocably imprisoned within himself."***

Esslin duly points out that his use of the V-effekt shows how conscious Brechet was of the audience's tendency to identification. He did not eliminate it, but modified and weakened it.

Esslin suggests that this is the particular genius of Brechet's theatre, the partial failure of Verfremdungs: this creates a tension between the author's intention and our tendency to identification. We are at the same time able to feel sympathy for a character, while our reason leads us to condemn him or her roundly. In his theoretical attack upon romanticism and emotion Brechet claims to be the advocate of reason. Yet in his writing of plays, Brechet time and again creates scenes that move the audience, in spite of the distancing devices.

Because he seems genuinely to believe that his work is free of strong emotion, Brechet makes no effort to suppress or conceal this element. And because our sympathy is continually rebuffed, when emotion manages to take hold of the audience, it may be all the stronger for that.

The Failed Revolutionary

Brechet hoped in his plays to show the utter rottenness of bourgeois, capitalist society. His belief was that the audience would see that a new society must replace the old and that only Marxist society could deliver justice (and that this social change was inevitable, but that his task was to help usher it in). Brechet, for all his insistence on reason, was here quite irrational in his theory. His plays could lead audiences to many other kinds of conclusion. And, to Brechet's great dismay, they did.

The masses were not roused to revolutionary fervour; indeed, the masses did not flock to any of Brechet's plays, save the Three penny Opera, the irony of which was wholly missed and which was accepted as a happy, sentimental musical of the kind. Brechet was hoping to parody. The political allegory was undetected by the audience.

While Germany descended into Nazism, Brechet fled to the west. The would-be man of the people became the favourite of western liberal intellectuals. After the war Brechet was able to work freely in East Germany, to which he returned. But the communist establishment, which saw, betters than he did, that his work might provoke thoughts dangerous to Marxism, never wholly accepted him. Moreover as the Russian establishment had fostered the Stanislavskian tradition after Lenin came to power, it had become the dominant form of theatre in the Eastern Bloc. Non-naturalistic theatre might, therefore, be seen as the work of a dissident, and subversive of the new revolutionary establishment.

Brechet's Success

Brechet's break with naturalism was not so much a novelty as a return to earlier conventions. Bamber Gascoigne (Twentieth-Century Drama, p.124) notes the use of "alienation" in Greek Tragedy, Medieval Mystery plays, Japanese Noh plays and Jacobean drama. Characters address the audience and introduce themselves in Shakespeare, as do Trinculo in The Tempest or the porter in Macbeth. Brechet's perhaps exaggerated denunciation of empathy was an understandable reaction to bourgeois na

tragedy where empathy is evoked but reason can be exercised, or the neo-classical drama of Corneille and Racine in which decorum is always preserved are not so far from Brechet's drama. Racine, in his preface to Beazer also stresses the importance of distancing.

Brechet's success was in freeing theatre from the limitations of naturalist drama. What Brechet has called "fourth-wall" theatre was confined to a narrow range of subjects and a" one play, to remain naturalistic, could not range widely in the scenes depicted. While some playwrights have accepted particular Brechetian techniques, his general effect, to cause writers to seek new conventions of representing human experience, is more important.

Some writers (such as Robert Bolt in A Man for All Seasons) are openly Brechetian while others may use some of Brechet's techniques without being aware of their provenance. We find the use of narrator or commentator as go-between for audience and characters, and creator of distancing effects in work by many playwrights, such as; • Peter Shaffer (Martin Cruz in the Royal Hunt of the Sun), • Arthur Miller (Alfieri in A View from the Bridge) and • Robert Bolt (the Common Man in a Man for All Seasons).

A less successful Brechetian device in the latter play appears when Thomas Cromwell sings an ironical song about the ship of state, but this jars with the otherwise un-ironic manner of the play and the main characters' archaic-naturalistic speech.

Presumably writer/' directors like those of the National Theatre of Brent, (whose two actors change roles to enact or "show" the Zulu War and use their audience to help with crowd scenes), could also claim Brechet as their theatrical father. Shaffer's The Royal Hunt of the Sun is close to Brechet's own Epic Theatre: •Like Galileo it is set in a historical period in which the church exercised great power; • It is a series of episodes; • It is narrated, and so shown to be in the past, by a character who stands beside his younger self, • It uses music and song, though the singer remains in character.

The play also shows the injustice of the social system and the need for change: imperialism, love of money and the evils of institutional theocracy are all laid bare. Curiously enough, towards the end of his life, Brechet accepted that his theory of Epic theatre was too formal and inadequate to show society's productivity and capacity for change - but Brechet felt unable to replace the theory with a better one.

In effect, he was conceding that the theory is often less adequate than the practice (the plays as interpreted by Brechet's company). In such cases, the practice must stand until a better theory emerges. In a sense, Brechet's critics have so refined the theory.

Brechet's Epic Theatre

Although Bertolt t Brechet's first plays were written in Germany during the 19205, he was not widely known until much later. Eventually his theories of stage presentation exerted more influence on the course of mid-century theatre in the West than did those of any other individual This was largely because he proposed the major alternative to the Stanislavski-oriented realism that dominated acting and the "well-made play" construction t11atdominated playwriting.

Brechet's earliest work was heavily influenced by German Expressionism, but it was his preoccupation with Marxism and the idea that man and society could be intellectually analysed that led him to develop his theory of "epic theatre: Brechet believed that theatre should appeal not to the spectator's feelings but to his reason. While still providing entertainment, it should be strongly didactic and capable of provoking social change.

In the Realistic theatre of illusion, he argued, the spectator tended to identify with the characters on stage and become emotionally involved with them rather than being stirred to think about his own life. To encourage the audience to adopt a more critical attitude to what was happening on stage, Brechet developed his Verfremdungs-effekt ("alienation effect")--i.e., the use of anti-illusive techniques to remind the spectators that they are in a theatre watching an enactment of reality instead of reality itself.

Such techniques included flooding the stage with harsh white light, regardless of where the action was taking place, and leaving the stage lamps in full view of the audience; making use of minimal props and "indicative" scenery; intentionally interrupting the action at key junctures with songs in order to drive home an important point or message; and projecting explanatory captions onto a screen or employing placards.

In the Epic theatre the sources of light should be visible at all times, as they are, say, in a boxing ring (Brechet's comparison). Lighting mould be uniformly bright; effects of colour and dimming are not to be allowed. This is partly explicable in terms of Brechet's taste for simplicity and austerity, partly in terms of his desire to avoid creating emotional effects.

Brechet's plays make extensive use of music in a tremendous variety of styles. He secured the services of distinguished composers, such as Weill, Hindernith, Eisler and Dessau. Music, at first, was used to break the illusion of reality merely by bringing

Variety. Later Brechet evolved the theory that whereas conventionally (as in Wagner) music was a narcotic, reinforcing emotion, in the Epic theatre it should provoke thought, dispel illusion and drive out emotion. This led to the idea of "gestic" music - music, which would inform the audience about the right intellectual response to events depicted in the drama.

In the epic theatre, rehearsal might require presenting a scene from a play other than that to be produced, in order to understand a relationship. Speeches were also, in rehearsal, delivered in the third person with narrative links, or transformed into reported speech, with stage directions also converted into description or narrative. This was supposed to help the actor relax, be aware of the audience - not lost in his character, have muscular control and, eventually deliver a perfect product. From his actors Brechet demanded not realism and identification with the role but an objective style of playing, to become in a sense detached observers.

Brechet's most important plays, which included Leben des Galilei (The life of Galileo), Mutter Courage und rue Kinder (Mother Courage and Her Children), and Der gute Mensch von Sezuan (The Good Person of Szechwan, or The Good Woman of Setzwan), were written between 1937 and 1945 when he was in

regime, first in Scandinavia and then in the United States. At the invitation of the newly formed East German government, he returned to found the Berliner Ensemble in 1949 with his wife, Helene Weigel, as leading actress. It was only at this point, through his own productions of his plays, that Brechet earned his reputation as one of the most important figures of 20th-century theatre.

Certainly Brechet's attack on the illusive theatre influenced, directly or indirectly, the theatre of every Western country. In Britain the effect became evident in the work of such playwrights as John Arden and Edward Bond and in some of the bare-stage productions by the Royal Shakespeare Company. Western theatre in the 20th century, however, has proved to be a cross-fertilization of many styles (Brechet himself acknowledged a debt to traditional Oriental theatre), and by the 1950s other approaches were gaining influence.

The Invention of Scientific Method

Scientific Method, the term denoting the principles, guides scientific research and experimentation and also the philosophic bases of those principles. Philosophy in general is concerned with the why as well as how of things but science occupies itself with the latter question in a very rigorous manner. The era of modern science is generally considered to have begun with the Renaissance but scientific approach to knowledge can be observed throughout the human history.

Three Characteristics of science

(1) Objectivity: Objectivity indicates the attempt to observe things as they are, without falsifying observation in accordance with the preoccupied world view. They (scientists) do not let their feelings get in the way of their observations of real things. They often work in laboratories or in other areas where they can carefully control what they are working on. They always try to report their findings so others can check them out and then utilize them in their own work. They do not clean more than they can prove. They always concern about what is rather than 'What should be' so as to derive objective reality of the things.

(2) Dealing with things not emotion: Science deals almost exclusively with things, not ideas or feeling, and with the external world and its workings, not inner states and their workings, the human body is considered to be a part of the external world, the soul is not. So, scientists work to understand the body but not the soul. Most scientists doubt whether soul exists or not. The solar system and the universe are also part of the external world, so scientists also go through them.

(3) Dealing with special way: Science deals with in a special way, employing special methods and a language for reporting results that is unique to it. At first, they make hypothesis that hypothesis is put under a test in a controlled environment to find out whether it is valid or not. The environment must be carefully controlled so that extraneous elements do not intrude to invalidate the experiment. Scientific method also involves the interplay of inductive reasoning (reasoning from specific observation and experiments to move general hypothesis and theories) and deductive reasoning (reasoning from theories to account for specific experimental results). By such reasoning processes, science attempts to develop the

broad law-such as Newton's law of gravitation that has become part of our understanding of the natural world.

Aristotelian Science: Matter

To invent scientific method, thinkers of the 17th century first had to deal with the world view of the greatest scientist having influence until that time, Aristotle. Two aspects of the world, in particular, concern us: matter and motion.

(1) Theory of Matter: According to Aristotle, every material thing has both a material and a formal aspect. Matter is a thing's potentiality and form is what gives shape to matter. Aristotle found quite different between the world below the moon and the world above the Moon. In the world below the moon which he called sublunary world, there are four kinds of stuff out of which things are made. These elements are fire, water, earth and air. Aristotle said that a man has a good amount of earth in him which makes him heavy, a good amount of water which produce his blood and other internal fluids, a good amount of air which he breathes in and out, a good amount of fire which gives him heat and is in a sense the essence of the life in him. But in the world above the Moon, the planets and Moon are made out of fifth element that he called Quintessence. They are also fusion of formal and maternal aspects but their matter is quite different from that of below the Moon as the Quintessence exists in them in pure form unlike in the sublunary world.

(2) Theory of motion: Regarding the theory of motion, Aristotle had different view about the motion in sublunary world and the world above the moon. The motion of material and immaterial things in the sublunary world is rest. The motion may be natural or violent, but it is seeking for a place to get rest. If the thing moves without external force that is natural state whereas if external force is applied to move the thing that is violent state. When a stone is thrown it drops to stop somewhere though the motion is violent, anyway it searches for place having got rest. Earth, water and to a certain extent air naturally seek a place that is downward, toward the centre of the earth. Fire goes up, yet it is below the sphere of moon. Air, being mixture of fire and water, sometimes goes down and sometime up. But these elements or sublunary world seek a place for getting rest. In the world above the moon, everything is made out of Quintessence so the natural motion of celestial bodies is circular. They move in circle around the earth in every twenty-four hours. Aristotelian theory of motion gives a geocentric world picture which had lasting impact up to the seventeenth century.

The Revolt against Aristotle

During 17th century, Aristotelian, Theory was dismantled by so many scientists and thinkers. He was of the operation that all heavenly bodies move in circular motion around the earth. But Nicholas Copernicus dismantled that view by saying that it is not the sun that moves around the earth. But Nicholas Copernicus dismantled that view by saying that it is the earth that moves around the sun. But at that time he did not say it defying as it meant going against the contemporary belief of the society. Another Danish astronomer Tyco Brace is famous for discovering a new star, having no existence in Aristotelian theory. He discovered that new star in 1572 and observed that over a period of months and in 1573 published a monograph on it that made him instantly famous and instantly controversial. Actually, new starts were not supposed to come into being in the Aristotelian and Christian universe. The world below the moon was chaotic, imperfect and unpredictably changea

above the moon nothing is changed all the celestial or heavenly bodies' continued to reflect God's immutable love for the world and mankind. The contemporary theologians criticized Tycho Brache's monograph but Tycho did not believe that. William Gilbert by studying about lodestones produced the theory of magnetism. He asserted that due to the magnetic quality, planetary bodied come together the found the presence of magnetic force both above and below the moon. But as for Aristotle, in the world above the moon everything is made out of Quintessence, not anything like magnetic force. But for Gilbert, earth itself is big magnet. Gilbert also facilitates the heliocentric world view. Again Kepler brought great change in Aristotelian science. Facilitating the heliocentric world view, he said that heavenly bodies do not move in circular motion as Aristotle asserted but they move in elliptical motion. He also asserted defying Aristotelian concept that when planets are near the sun, they move quickly and vice versa. He also found the mathematical relation between the planets and the distance from the sun. He also believed in the concept of inertia. Galileo also opposed the Aristotelian concept that the surface of the moon is made out of Quintessence. When he saw the moon with the telescope then he found the surface of the moon as that of the earth having rock, mountains, and valleys etc, so, the moon itself is destructible, he said. He also put forward his argument by saying that it is the sun in the center and all planets, move round the sun. Though he dismantled the Aristotelian science, he was accused of being a Bible killer by contemporary theologians. At last he recanted whatever he said before.

Rene Descartes, 17th century philosopher did not believe upon Quintessence as such, he always searched for certainty in everything. His concept was that everything must be doubted so as to derive truth. His famous dictum is: "I doubt therefore I think, I think therefore I am." He also believed that the material universe can be described in mathematical terms. He also believed that human mind always should free from any preoccupied notion and we should also reduce anything mathematically to reach in the heart of the thing. Newton also challenged Aristotelian view of the world. He got influence from Gilbert's magnetism, heliocentric worldview of Copernicus and Descartes' view about doubting. He proposed three laws of motion unlike Aristotle:

1. Everything remains in rest or in motion unless the external force is used upon it. There is no natural state of rest as such as asserted by Aristotle. It is also called the law of inertia. This law discards the so-called Quintessence.

2. The change of motion is directly proportional to the change of force.

3. Each action has an equal but opposite reaction.

These above mentioned laws by opposing Aristotelian science paved way for development of modern science.

Marxism and Literature

Literature is one of the major constituents of consciousness, and should be studied within the framework of history. As much as literature can be used as an oppressive tool to maintain and enforce the master-capitalist hegemony, it can also be used to undermine this hegemony. For Marxism, literature can be viewed in two main ways, regardless of the difference in opinion and practice among various Marxist thinkers and critics such as Lucaks, Brecht, Adorno, Raymond, Jameson and others:

As reactionary narrative that aims at marketing, devoting and enforcing the ruling classes' ideology; yet not without contradictions, that can undermine its basic thematic assumption(s). As a progressive narrative that champions the oppressed in their long and bitter struggle against the decadent bourgeois order. Some traditional Marxist critics including Lukacs stressed the importance of realism in writing and denigrated other modes of narrative like naturalism, post/modernism as less, if at all, representative of class struggle. In defense of their theoretical position, they claim that modernist writers, like Eliot, Joyce, Wolf among others dwell usually in their writings on the personal experiences of demented characters that can hardly be taken to represent the suffering and struggle of the oppressed at large. Traditional Marxists favoured realism because of its total representation of people in real situations trying to improve their social conditions by engaging with the repressive forces in the bourgeois world. They favoured narratives that compromise inherited bourgeois obsolete ethics and values. Other thinkers and writers like Brecht, Adorno, and Althusser among others considered all forms and schools of narratively suitable for exposing human suffering, class conflict and the various ideologies that dominate the world of the text and shape consciousness of the generations.

Marxism: History and Economy

Marxism regards history as a series of conflicts between the dominated majority and the dominating minority to gain power over the means and excess of production. After people have exited from their first state of nature, where they have been equal by default; they have found themselves cast into two main categories. The category of those who spend all their lives laboring in the fields and other places of production; and the category of those who usurp the labour of the working class to increase their capital. If we examine history carefully, we see how the economies of ancient and modern societies are based on slavery and exploitation.

All through human history, the masters made their wealth on the expense of the labour of their subjects. The subject works hard in the field or in the factory. The subject, whether aided by machinery or not, generates commodities through his labour. These commodities are valued according to their market price and not according to any intrinsic value in them. Their value is automatically turned into money in the hands of the master. The master gives little money to cover the minimum basic needs of the subjects; and the rest of the money turns into capital. By doing so, the capitalists ensure that their capital grows bigger and bigger, while their subjects conditions remain at the minimal level possible.

To keep this state of affairs current, the capitalists rely on a network of oppressive tools. And they die hard to keep their tools live and constantly upgraded. Religion, traditions, rigid patriarchal order, high culture, literature, philosophy are among these tools. However, Marxism sees that the capitalist culture is inherently unstable because of the insidious contradictions and conflicts it generates between the classes. Therefore, capitalist culture will come to an end altogether once the workers and the oppressed realize their potential and begin the struggle to own the means of production. Then a new phase in history, without contradictions, will begin and bring everlasting peace.

A Critique of Life of Galileo

It is a volatile point in history: the intersection of science and religion at the height of the Inquisition; it is a time when the Church reigns and a man, a physicist. Must choose life or death, himself or science. Galileo Galilei's legendary dilemma and the circumstances surrounding it are presented in Bertolt Brechet's Life of Galileo from a perspective that is clearly criticizing institutions with such control in this case, the Catholic church while reminding us that men are simply men, no matter how heroic their actions appear. These issues are expounded throughout the play; however, Scene 11 has the most significant role in Galileo's development. As it simultaneously reveals the extent of the Church's control and humanizes Galileo in just a few lines.

Despite his courage to venture into unexplored realms of science and thought, Galileo is not a hero. He is only a man. Scene 11 is the shortest scene in the play and one of only three scenes in which the title character does not appear. Yet it is here that Galileo is made completely human. In the quest for a hero, one might ignore his almost hedonistic desire for food, thought, and fine wine and the sacrifices that he makes to acquire money. These characteristics of Galileo are revealed early in the play, when he plagiarizes another man's telescope invention in order to get a salary raise from the dry (Scenes 1 and 2), and then again in Scene II when the Pope says,

> ***"He has more enjoyment in him than any other man I ever saw. He loves eating and. drinking and thinking, to excess. He indulges in thinking bouts! He cannot say 110 to an old wine or a new thought".***

However, one cannot ignore a hero's cowardice in the face of the physical pain. In this light, he reduced from hero to ordinary man. In this scene, the Pope and the Inquisitor are in the midst of an argument over the pending examination of Galileo by the Inquisition and the torturous methods that may be involved. The scene subtly reveals the evil at the heart of the Inquisition: the Church, which should be Godly in practice, partakes in torturing individuals capable of testing the power of the institution, forcing them to conform to tile Church's will and thereby eliminating any danger of upheaval. The Inquisitor states:

"He is a man of the flesh. He would soften at once"

This describes the basic human instinct to shrink from pain. Every man has his breaking point, the point at which the pain and the fear and the shame are so great that he cannot withstand one moment more. Galileo is no different. Also, Galileo is a man of science; he knows more of how pain can be inflicted than most men. As the Inquisitor later adds,

"Mr. Galilei understands machinery."

With this knowledge added to the fear of physical discomfort, Galileo later does what most men would do under the circumstances: he recants. Because this scene reveals the negative side of the Church and the human-ness of Galileo, the audience is not distracted from the criticism of the institution. If Galileo had been portrayed as a hero, that aspect of the story would have taken precedence over the theme of institutional control; the heroics would linger and the criticism would be forgotten. Brechet is also reminding us

that heroes are unnecessary man is capable of anything if he opens his mind, just as Galileo does.

Brechet clearly disagrees with institutions that hold complete control over the common man. Scene 11 illustrates just how broad and deep the control of the church is at this point in Galileo's life. Here we see only two characters, both officers of the Catholic Church, each on separate sides of the issue. Oddly enough, the individual who relents is the higher in rank, the Pope. He should have complete control because he is second only to God in the Catholic hierarchy; he is a man of science, but he is also a tool of religion, as the Inquisitor reminds him:

> ***"Ah, that is what these people say, that it is the multiplication. Table. Their cry is, 'The figures compel us,' but where do these figures come from? Plainly they come from doubt. These men doubt everything. Can society stand on doubt and not on faith? 'Thou are my master, but I doubt whether it is for the best.' 'This is my neighbour's house and my neighbour's wife, but why shouldn't they belong to me?' After the plague, after the new war, after the unparalleled disaster of the Reformation, your dwindling flock look to their shepherd and now the mathematics turn their tubes on the sky and announce to the world that you have not the best advice about the heavens either up to your only uncontested sphere of influence."***

The Pope's duty is to serve God and tend his flock on earth, and he, like any shepherd, cannot allow God's people to wander from their faith. He must have obedience and loyalty in the name of God, and therefore must censor anything of detriment to the greater cause; despite his personal beliefs, he must do whatever is necessary to uphold the Church and it's control over the people. Thus, even the Pope falls under the cloak of the Church. He is a slave to duty and must answer first to his position and second to his personal feelings. As the Inquisitor tells him, the fate of faith is in his hands:

> ***"Doctors of all chairs from the universities, representatives of special orders of the Church, representatives of the clergy as a whole, who have come believing with childlike faith in the word of God as set forth in the Scriptures, who have come to Your Holiness confirm their faith: and Your Holiness us really going to tell them that the Bible can no longer be regarded as the alphabet of truth?"***

He is under tremendous pressure to save the faith of the people, thereby preserving the foundations of society. The Pope must choose between duty and conscience he is adamantly against Galileo's condemnation, but so many lives would be shattered if the common people were told that there was more to the universe than they could find in the Bible. Like the little monk's parents, they would feel very alone.

> ***"There is no eye watching over us, after all: they would say.' We have to start out on our own, at our time of life. Nobody has planned II part for us beyond this wretched one on a worthless star. There is no meaning in our misery'".***

The people rely on the Church to lead them to a better life in heaven; their faith is all that they know. It is the Pope's duty to preserve the unity that comes from shared faith, and because he is controlled by that which he governs, he cannot refuse to punish Galileo for fear of social collapse.

Brechet cleverly uses Scene 11 to plant seeds of thought in the minds of his audience members. Through the controversy of Galileo's life and the circumstances surrounding his session with the Inquisition, Galileo explores both the dangers of institutional control and the folly of elevating men to a heroic status. One will only be disappointed when both prove fallible.

Major Features of Brechetian Drama

Brechet called his theatre work by a variety' of names, including Epic Theatre, the term now generally used to describe Brechet's plays. His plays tend 10 be episodic, written as a seemingly disconnected, open-ended montage of scenes presented in a non--naturalistic, non-chronological way. The audience needs to arrive at its own conclusion of how the events are linked together. Epic Theatre presents a sequence of incidents or events that are narrated on a grand scale without the restrictions of time, place or formal plot.

Verfremdungseffekt, translated (badly) as "Alienation-effect" and {awkwardly} as "Distantation-effect". More accurately it is "the effect that makes things seem strange or different". The term refers to the use of various devices to make things appear in a new light, so we consider ,them with intellectual objectively, robbed of their conventional outward appearance. When something is presented in a strange or surprising manner and we see it afresh, a Verfremdungseffekt has been achieved. Brechet gives the example of a child whose widowed mother remarries, seeing her, for the first time, as a wife. In the plays a V-effekt may be produced by the comment of a chorus figure (the Singer or Wang) or in ordinary dialogue (as in Galileo's "now I must eat": suddenly he is seen not as the great scientific innovator but an ordinary, hungry man).

Brechet usually left the stage bare in his productions as a means of preventing the audience from experiencing a detailed illusion of reality, of some fictional dramatic location. He exposed stage machinery, opened up the physical staging to the wings and often exposed the back wall. He also exposed the lighting grid above the stage so the audience could see how lights influence the mood of the scene and influence the audience's judgement. In the Epic theatre the sources of light should be visible at all times, as they are, say, in a boxing ring (Brechet's comparison). Lighting should be uniformly bright; effects of colour and dimming are not 10 be allowed. This is partly explicable in terms of Brechet's taste for simplicity and austerity, partly in terms of his desire to avoid creating emotional effects.

The German theatre director, Erwin Piscator, greatly influenced Brechet because he advocated the use of new technologies in the theatre as a means of developing a kind of performance more like the mechanised and accelerated routines of modern life. Brechet used technological effects to fragment the realistic unity of the setting. For instance, he projected films and text on screens above the stage, forcing the audience to relate the action onstage to recent or other historical or social events. (This technique is called

historification. He also used placards that announced the action to take place before the scene began, discordant music, songs, and constructivist scenery such as scaffolding, projected images and films.

Brechet's plays make extensive use of music in a tremendous variety of styles, He secured the services of distinguished composers, such as Weill, Hindernith, Eisler and Dessau. Music, at first, was used to break the illusion of reality merely by bringing variety. Later Brechet evolved the theory that whereas conventionally (as in Wagner) music was a narcotic, reinforcing emotion, in the Epic theatre it should provoke thought, dispel illusion and drive out emotion. This led to the idea of U gestic" music - music which would inform the audience about the right intellectual response to events depicted in the drama.

In the epic theatre, rehearsal might require presenting a scene from a play other than that to be produced, in order to understand a relationship. Speeches were also, in rehearsal, delivered in the third person with narrative links, or transformed into reported speech, with stage directions also converted into description or narrative. This was supposed to help the actor relax, be aware of the audience - not lost in his character, have muscular control and, eventually, deliver a perfect product Brechet also developed his own acting style for his work. He urged his actors not to empathise totally with their characters, but to stand outside them and illustrate their behaviour.

Brechet’s actors were asked to go beyond the Stanislavski system of acting where the actor identifies entirely with their character and represents the character entirely from his or her point of view. Rather Brechet encouraged a more demonstrative acting method, one that enables the actor to present the character from a number of perspectives .

The term gestus or grandgestus as used by Brechet, referred to everything an actor did in terms of gesture, stance, body language, facial expressions and intonations in order to show the significance of a scene. The ideal would be: that the storyline could be: broken down so that each scene can appear as one single action that can be translated into one simple sentence, ,so that the gestus, (the most important message of the scene)' He was also influenced by the theatre of Asia with its use of mime and gesture, clear precise vocal work, symbolic characters and graceful, rhythmic movement. He encouraged his actors to be physically fit and flexible, as his plays sometimes required dance, mime and even acrobatics.

Brechet’s theatre poems demonstrate his ideas of adopting a new acting style. In "On Everyday Theatre” in Poems of the Crisis Years 1929-1933, Brechet advises actors to observe:

> ***"That theatre whose setting is the street. The everyday, thousand fold, fameless but vivid, earthy theatre fed by the daily human contact Which takes place in the street, Here the woman from next door imitates the landlord: Demonstrating his flood of talk she makes it clear How he tried to turn the conversation From the burst water pipe. ..A drunk gives us the preacher at his sermon, referring the poor to the rich pastures of paradise. How useful such theatre is though, serious and funny and how dignified! They do flat, like parrot or ape Imitate just for the sake of imitation, unco***

> ***imitate, just to show that they can imitate; no, they have a point to put across."***

Galileo is Not a Hero but a Common Man

Tragedy of a common man who succumbs to the extreme pressures of society.

It is a volatile point in history: the intersection of science and religion at the height of the Inquisition; it is a time when the Church reigns and a man, a physicist must choose life or death, himself or science. Galilee Galilei's legendary dilemma and the circumstances surrounding it are presented in Bertolt Brechet's Life of Galilee from a perspective that is clearly criticizing institutions with such control in this case, the Catholic Church while reminding us that men are simply men, no matter how heroic their actions appear. These issues are expounded throughout the play; however, Scene II has the most significant role in Galileo's development, as it simultaneously reveals the extent of the Church's control and humanizes Galileo in just a few lines.

Despite his courage to venture into unexplored realms of science and thought, Galileo is not a hero. He is only a man. Scene 11 is the shortest scene in the play and one of only three scenes in, which the title character does not appear. Yet it is here that Galileo is made completely human. In the quest for a hero, One might Ignore his almost hedonistic desire for food, thought, and fine wine and the sacrifices that he makes to acquire money. These characteristics of Galileo are revealed early in the play, when he plagiarizes another man's telescope invention in order to get a salary raise from the city (Scenes 1 and 2), and then again in Scene 11 when the Pope says,

> ***"He has more enjoyment in him than any other man I ever saw. He loves eating, drinking and thinking, to excess. He indulges in thinking bouts! He cannot say no to an old wine or a new thought".***

However, one cannot ignore a hero's cowardice in the face of physical pain. In this light, he is reduced from hero to ordinary man. In this scene, the Pope and the Inquisitor are in the midst of an argument over the pending examination of Galileo by the Inquisition and the torturous methods that may be involved, The scene subtly reveals the evil at the heart a the Inquisition: the Church, which should be Godly in practice partakes in torturing individuals capable of testing the power of the institution, forcing them to conform to the Church's will and thereby eliminating any danger of upheaval, The Inquisitor states:

"He is a man of the flesh. He would soften at once"

This describes the basic human instinct to shrink from pain. Every man has his breaking point, the point at which the pain and the fear and the shame are so great that he cannot withstand one moment more. Galileo is no different. Also, Galileo is a man of science; he knows more of how pain can be inflicted than most men. As the Inquisitor later adds:

"Mr, Galilei understands machinery"

With this knowledge added to the fear of physical discomfort, Galileo later does what most men would do under the circumstances: he recants. Because this scene reveals the negative side of the Church and the human-ness of Galileo, the audience is not distracted from the criticism of the institution. If Galileo had been portrayed as a hero, that aspect of the story would have taken precedence over the theme of institutional control; the heroics would linger and the criticism would be forgotten. Brechet is also reminding us that heroes are unnecessary man is capable of anything if he opens his mind, just as Galileo does.

Brechet clearly disagrees with institutions that hold complete control over the common man. Scene 11 illustrates just how broad and deep the control of the church is at this point in Galileo’s life. Here we see only Iwo characters, both officers of the Catholic Church, each on separate sides of the issue. Oddly enough, the individual who relents is the higher in rank, the Pope. He should have complete control because he is second only to God in the Catholic hierarchy; he is a man of science, but he is also a tool of religion, as the Inquisitor reminds him:

> ***"Ah, that is what these people say, that it is tile multiplication table. Their cry is, 'The figures compel us,' but where do these figures come from? Plainly they Come e from doubt, these men doubt everything, Can society stand on doubt and not on faith? 'Thou are my master, but I doubt whether it is for the best,' 'This is my neighbour’s house and my neighbour’s wife, but why shouldn’t they belong to me?' After the plague, alter the new war, after the unparalleled disaster of the Reformation; your dwindling flock look to their shepherd and now the mathematicians turn their tubes on the sky and announce to the world that you have not the best advice about the heavens either up to now your only uncontested sphere of influence"***

The Pope's duty is to serve God and tend his flock on earth, and he, like any shepherd, cannot allow God's people to wander from their faith. He must have obedience and loyalty in the name of God, and therefore, must censor anything of detriment to the greater cause; this despite his personal beliefs, he must do whatever is necessary to uphold the Church and its control over the people. Thus, even the Pope falls under the cloak of the Church. He is a slave to duty and must answer first to his position and second to his personal feelings. As the Inquisitor tells him, the fate of faith is in his hands:

"Doctors of all chairs from the universities, representatives of special orders of the Church, representatives of the clergy as a whole, who have come believing with childlike faith in the word of God as set forth in the Scriptures, who have come to hear Your Holiness confirm their faith: and Your Holiness is really going to tell them that the Bible can no longer be regarded as the alphabet of truth?"

He is under tremendous pressure to save the faith of the people, thereby preserving the foundations of society. The Pope must choose between duty and conscience he is adamantly against Galileo’s condemnation, but so many lives would be shattered if the common people were told that there was more to the universe than they could find in the Bible. Like the little monk's parents, they would feel very alone.

"There is no eye watching over us, after all,' they would say, 'we have to start out our own, at our time of life. Nobody has planned a part for us beyond this wretched one on a worthless star. There is no meaning in our misery'"

The people rely on the Church to lead them to a better life in heaven; their faith is all that they know. It is the Pope's duty to preserve the unity that comes from shared faith, and because he is controlled by that which he governs, he cannot refuse to punish Galileo for fear of social collapse.

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Life of Galileo: Main Conflicts of the Play

Life of Galileo is mainly concerned with age long conflict between science and theology.

The figure of Galileo, whose 'heretical' discoveries about the solar system brought him to the attention of the inquisition, is one of the Brechet's most humane and complex creations. Brechet's presentation of the phenomenon is not only one of vindictive rather it deals with lasting contention between authority and originality, science and theology, and tradition and modernity. The Life of Galileo expounds this thesis persuasively, and makes us realize some of the basic truths that rise from the interaction human being with society.

It is as clear as daylight from the history, that when, on earth, science digs up a prospect to make headway, the holy orders always situate obstructions in its way. Whosoever ventured to denude the lechery of the Church like Wycliffe and Gower, he had to face the music. Only a decade before Galileo, Guordano was burnt by the third degree for the same scepticism about the macrocosm as that of Galileo.

Spar between science and theology is the quintessence of the "Life of Galileo". This play manifests the innovative theories and discoveries about solar system of a paramount scientist and then his apostasy from his ideas as they do not accord with the Holy Writ and Aristotle's pre-set ideas. Galileo is proclaimed to be a blasphemer and heterodox by the papacy, so, as a result, he has to recant.

In the times of Galileo, The Lord's house was the most influential authority. The clergymen were more curious in sitting on the throne than performing their religious obligations. The religious order was so outrageous and anxious to be at the helm that Barberini a representative of clergy remarks candidly.

> ***"It is my own mask that permits me certain freedoms today. Dressed like this. I might be heard to murmur. If God did not exist, we should have to invent him."***

The slate of the art scientific hypotheses of Galileo were turned over in our minds as:

"Vandalising the Holy Scriptures, the bus mess of the holy church and the men of the cloth".

The life of Galileo, every inch, highlights the Brechet's life and his own tight comer as he also had to suffer the same fate. That seems 10 help Brechet in capturing the innermost feelings and reactions of a man who is on the opposite pole of the authoritative, monarchs. His expatriation from Germany by the Nazi militia after the World War II put rum out of the circulation so that he could only carry on his opposition from abroad in a roundabout way. He and Galileo face the same quandary, though Galileo was much nearer the centre of the storm.

Brechet was fascinated to the subject by the clash of ideologies which it represented with Galileo as the champion of a new spirit on empiricism and untrammelled scientific enquiry and the house of the Lord as the defender of faith. The church acceded to the scholastic or Aristotelian view of the world and to the Ptolemaic system, both of which employed to reconcile the Biblical and the conspicuous universe.

The church, however, is by and large treated here as a lay establishment. It specific dogma is being examined in the light of its functions as a probe to practical rule. Galileo a compassionate scientist, not only feels assertive, but also becomes high and mighty for his modem theories about the rotation of the earth. It looks like that his faith in science is firm to the end. He arrogantly declares to his pupil, Andrea:

"Earth is rolling cheerfully around the sun and the fishwives, merchants, princes, cardinals and even the pope are rolling with it."

And his assertion here formulates him more a man of scientific sighting and its upholder than a man of flesh, his proclamation is that of a rational being whose basic education is that of science, he remarks:

"The universe has strayed from its centre overnight and waken up to find, it has countless centres so that one call now be seen as the centre or none e at all, suddenly there is a lot of room".

Galileo also satirizes the men of the cloth for laying down the law by saying:

"This has created a .draught which is blowing up gold embroidered skirts of the prelates and princes revealing the fat and skinny logs underneath, legs like our own. The heavens, it turns out, are empty."

Neither Galileo nor divinity goes against each other but it is the rigidity of the religious order, which only wants to safeguard the law of the jungle. They are not absorbed in their religion; they only employ the ruse to screen their perks. With the succour of science, new horizons of progree of mankind and of reason mar open. Galileo makes a supposition to wear the crown by outdoing others in Florence through his science. One of the several boo boos, he makes in the play, is on the strength of his newly acquired hard evidence.

Galileo gives an emphasis on the original of his thesis and as well as refuses Aristotelian and Biblical belief about the centre of the universe as sun. Consequently, he is taken to task by tile inquisition of the court of Pope.

The clergy falsifies his theories. The grand inquisitor recognises in him a man of flesh with no resistance to torture and Pope discerns a direct connection between Galileo's physical and intellectual appetites.

> ***"His thinking springs from sensuality. Give him an old wine or a new idea and he cat! Not say no."***

As Homo-sapiens, he has brown trousers corporeal torment by the instruments which are shown to him in the court. After being a gaol bird for twenty four days, he is in a fit state to abjure. Galileo's recantation is a trespass in Brechet's eyes as "an inferior cunning for survival. Recantation astonishes his pupil, Andrea yells at him:

> ***"Wine pump! Snail eater! Did you save your precious skin?"***

Brechet's introductory canto insinuates that Galileo' s apostasy put the age of reason on the back burner, but authentically, it is true that Galileo is a milestone in the chronicles of science and not a comer stone as Brechet implies.

To put our discussion in a nutshell, we can conclude that Galileo has been presented as a scientist in the first version of the play who falls foul of a tight ship and under the menace of torture, counterfeits his scientific findings. This flabbergasts his apprentices and assistants and perplexes tile world of science but it is brought 10 light at tile end of tile play to be a strategy for survival,

Life of Galileo: As an Epic Drama

The literary term 'Epic Theatre' is customarily applied to a form of opus in which the author recounts a story, using as many episodes and characters as a comprehensive account of his subject cries out for. "Life of Galileo" by Brechet is a play pregnant with all the stipulations of an epic drama. The play is a beauteous addition in the world of Epic Theatre with narrative idiosyncrasies, storyline ins and outs, high-principled theme and the term "Epic Theatre" which was first manipulated in Germany in the 1920's and has become implicitly associated with tile name of Brechet. From the beginning of his Brechet had to be skirmish in the face of battle against the prevalent theatre of his day which he dismissed as 'culinary' since like connoisseur, it delighted tile sense of taste without encroaching on the mind.

For Brechet, the traditional or dramatic theatre was a place where the audience were absorbed into a comforting fallacy which played on their emotions and left them haggard, but with a sense of satisfaction whim biased them to accept the world as they found if what he himself was looking for, was a theatre that would help to metamorphose tile world.

So, Life of Galileo is an interpretation of Brechet's Thespian thought. Narration has been given before starting any scene that is a major characteristic of an epic drama. In this play, tile author relates an account in a way that invites tile on lookers to consider the events involved and then to make their own evaluation of them.

The epic drama has been fabricated as a montage of independent incidents, whim shows a process taking place. It moves from scene to scene by curves and jumps which keeps tile audience on the ball to the way in which things are happening. So that, they may, at length, be capable to judge whether that is in right way. For an instance, in tile first scene, Galileo succinctly hints at telescope but in fourth and fifth scene, it is described point by point. Moreover, role of monks proceed scene to scene.

Change for the amelioration lies at the centre of Brechet's thinking. It shows his ripened sagacity. This propounds that the hero of the play should not be a fixed character. Galileo in the play has been presented as a round character. He, in the first version of the play, appears to be an ardent satirist and a supercilious scientist who is fully assertive of his new theories that will change the entire world, but in due course, he himself declares his scientific verdicts to be null and void under the menace of torture.

Another characteristic of "Life of Galileo" as an epic drama is that man's thinking is insured by his social situation and will change if that changes. When Sagredo puts Galileo on the alert that his discovery is theological dynamite, Galileo insists jubilantly, "Humanity will accept rational proof." But in the end of the play, the state of affairs and situations changes his outlook. It makes us feel that hero is forced to be decisive.

As an epic play, "Life of Galileo" is ample with arguments. Galileo, as well as men of the cloth make arguments on their behalf to substantiate their ideas right. Galileo gives arguments to a mathematician,

> ***"Gentleman to believe in the authority of Aristotle is one thing, tangible facts are another. You are saying that according to Aristotle, there are crystal spheres up there, so certain motion just cannot take place because the stars would penetrate then~ But suppose, these motions could be established? Might not that suggest to you that those crystal spheres do not exist? Gentleman, in all humility, I ask you to go by the evidence of your eyes."***

Unlike traditional drama, in his play, arguments have been given with ratiocination in lieu of experiences and feelings. In this play, Brechet portrays a world that is tangible, limitless and in the strength of reality that is adaptable and able to alter. It turns the spectator into an observer and instigates him for actions.

At the end of the play, the discrepancy between the scientific and other developments of Galileo's time and the straight local social structures that prevented them from being taken for a ride, for the general benefit would have left the audience with unequivocal questions about the nature of society. Like a masterpiece epic drama language in "Life of Galileo" varies with character.

Galileo strikes a scientific and logical tone. He uses aphoristic and figurative language; it is intentionally made striking to lend force to his damnation. By contr

language is occasionally fairy while that of the Florentine Mathematician and philosopher is in fun chichi and double-edged. Galileo's change with Andrea and Mrs. Sarti are direct and laconic as well as taciturn. Vanni introduces the vocabulary of manufacturing industry into the play. The Life of Galileo is replete with a number of literary, Biblical allusions and quotations from Dante, V Roe and Einstein. This stylistic choosing of the references also lend colours to its recognition as an epic drama.

In epic theatre the stage setting of the play was always a general, traditional and historical. Props (including doors) and furniture were to be purely realistic and above all of social and historical interest, costumes were to be individualised and to look threadbare. The props and pieces of scenery for "Life of Galileo” were portable and easy to assemble and remove. The bareness of the stage brings the action to light in a cool atmospheric space which was intended to counter-balance the relative lack of Epic form in the writing.

Lastly, "Life of Galileo" is an above board effort of Brechet in writing an Epic in which he goes through with flying colours. Epic theatre cuts across the traditional divisions completely and brings the people to the point of recognition

Life of Galileo : Plot Construction

Plot is the combination of incidents in a play or narrative. In the "Poetics" Aristotle puts into words that a good plot has desirable alpha and omega and he further says that it should be so constructed that no incident can be displaced or omitted, without destroying the unity of the whole. Whatever are fundamental arrangements, a plot by and large comprises of a conflict yields a base for the action. Thus, characters are exhorted to move from incident to incident. Thus, a plot is a story or play in which incident comes first than character and assigns the vital grounds to the play.

Bertolt Brechet's Epic Drama “Life of Galileo’ possesses a convincing, dynamic and emergent plot. The plot makes its wav sequentially and never lets even a single incident loose during its progression till the end. The plot of the play is in the region of flush with all the degrees of excellence that a powerful and successful play should have.

Brechet has split the play into scene in lieu of acts as an epic drama weight. The plot of the play turns over a new leaf with the chronicle of the motives of the protagonist of the play. As an epic drama, its theme has been narrated at first scene as Galileo; the eminent scientist of the age is on duty to throw light on his thesis of the rotation of the earth round the sun to his pupil Andrea. Beginning of the plot is already elevated and lends a helping hand to the plot to go onward.

"Life of Galileo” contains fifteen acts of un-identical prolixity. In first two acts, Galileo's Copernican theory has been explained, Introduction of Galileo's relevants has been made over. Next four scenes are from the top to bottom developed. Galileo's theories come out of the four walls to the higher jurisdiction of the country. The inquisition puts Copernican doctrine on the index:

These scenes make Galileo's character more apparent. He is so fervent about his teachings. He is a "great but restless man." So I am enforced to fill the gaps in my knowledge." The authorities come into sight as critics and put the obstacles in hero's way. Author's style is adamant in these scenes and plot is still going on towards climax.

From seventh to ninth scene, a conflict and clash between science and theology has been described in the shape of Galileo's and clergy's logger heads. Galileo's character becomes more distinct. Author presents him in these scenes as wholehearted scientist who is committed to corroborate his hypothesis. He presents strong argument in his favour. He has also been presented as quick witted, haughty and fully assertive. He suggests,

> ***"People will accept rational proof someone who turns a deaf ear to the truth is just thick headed. But someone who does not have familiarity with it and calls it a crook."***

Role of the men of God becomes as solid as rock in these scenes. Their real objectives and rigidity have been brought to light Bellarmin, a man of cloth, conceitedly lays the black sheep of the order bare by saying.

> ***"It is my own mask that permits me certain freedoms today: If God does not exist we should have to invent him"***

The ornate and grandiose language lends beauty and originality to the play. Poignant arguments are offered from both sides. Music and melody is also an essence of Epic Drama. The tenth scene is pregnant with poetic beauties that are every inch pungent and sarcastic and it adds to the elaboration of the situation.

In eleventh and twelfth scene, plot gains its acme with the ardour of the situation. The inquisition summons the world's famous scientist at Rome. Here plot's form is not sombre and it moves by looking sharp. Controversies from protagonist and antagonist put them forward in their boon. Galileo says to Virginia,

> ***"Every Local Tom, Dick and Harry with a grind wants to be his spokesman, particularly in places where it is not exactly helpful to me. I have written a book about the mechanics of the universe that, all what people make of it or do not make of it is not my business. The inquisitor also insists on his own creed. It is the restlessness of their own brain which these people have conveyed to the unmoving earth."***

Scene of clash and cross-examination from both sides is going on and Galileo is overwhelmed by that.

The plot of the play ebbs when Galileo subdues the opposite party. He is dressed on to abjure from his theories that are absolutely on the strength of true hypotheses. Galileo is set forth torture instruments, so being a man of flash and blood, he declares after deviating from his way.

> ***"I Galileo Galilei, teacher of mathematics and physics in Florence, abjure what I have taught, namely that the Slur is the centre***

static and earth is 1I0t a centre and not motionless. I foreswear, detest and curse with sincere heart and unfeigned faith, all these errors and any further opinion repugnant to Holy Church."

After recantation, the author himself condemns Galilee's "low cunning for survival" and considers it a sin that has perplexed all the world of science and has delayed many of the scientific discoveries.

To sum up or discussion, we can confidently conclude that the plot of "Life of Galileo" is logical, powerful and developing though it ends at tragic feelings.

Brechet's Long-Winded Themes as a Dramatist

Bertolt Brechet is one of leading epic dramatists of twentieth century. The term "epic theatre" which was first manipulated in Germany in the 1920's and since then it has become implicitly associated with the name of Brechet. From the beginning of his career, Brechet had to be skirmish in the face of battle against the prevalent types and forms of theatre of his day, which he booted out as 'culinary' since like connoisseur, it delighted the sense of taste without impinging on the mind.

Bertolt Brechet was born on 10th of February 1898 at Augsburg where his father was a blue-collar worker and later director of a paper mill. Brechet's life falls into three distinct phases demarcated by his involuntary banishment from his native Germany during the Hitler's murderous period. From 1898 to 1933, he is in Germany, and then he is in expatriation in various parts of the world. In 1947, he comes round again to Europe, first in Switzerland then to the heart of Germany (Bertley). The first performance of the "The Rise and fall of the city of Mahogany" by Brechet led to a revolt against Nazi, Hitler's Army and he was urged by force to take to his heels with his family to Prague.

The aftermaths of his exile can be manifestly seen in his literary compositions. There is a kind of clash between individual and society or authorities, mutinies, thinking. Turbulence sublimity of character and theme of deportation are central to his work as he himself led his life in iron-fisted conditions.

His famous literary compositions are: "The Measures Taken", "The Rise and fall of the City of Mahogany", "Life of Galileo Galilei", "The Private Life of the Master Race", "The Mother", and "Trumpets and Drums". All these plays are composed in the style of Epic Theatre. These Epic plays set a new epoch in the world drama.

For Brechet, the conventional, Thespian theatre was all abode where the onlookers were absorbed into a comforting fallacy which played on their motions and left them haggard, but with a sense of contentment which biased them to accept the world as they found it. What he himself was looking for, was a theatre that would lend a helping hand to metamorphose the world. U-turn for the amelioration lies at the centre of Brechet's thinking. His plays are the interpretations of his suppositions.

While discussing, his dramatic style of approach, narration comes first of all. He elucidates before starting any scene of his every play, about situation and characters that is

going to be performed on the stage. He narrates a story in a way that leads the spectators to consider the events involved and then to make their own assessment of them.

Brechet's play has been fabricated as a montage of independent incidents, which shows a process-taking place. It moves from scene to scene by curve and jumps which keeps the audience on the ball to the way in which things are happening. So that they may at length be capable indeed, be compelled to judge whether that is in the right way. For an instance, Galileo in "Life of Galileo" succinctly hints at a telescope and religious orders. In forthcoming scene, the man of letters brings them to light point by point Elucidation of situation and them in curves and jumps is also a major technique of Brechet's work.

Brechet does not bear down his heroes with sensations and feelings. Entirely, unlike traditional heroes, his hero is not an inevitable character, rather a round one. In "Life of Galileo", in the very first version of the play, the hero is an enthusiastic satirist and a toffee-nosed scientist who is fully assured of his new theories that will change the world but in due course, he himself declares his scientific verdicts to be null and void under the menace of torture.

Another technique of Brechet's plays is that his plays have been divided into 'scenes' in lieu of acts. He does not segregate his plays into three or four acts as traditional dramatists do, but Brechet recounts a story, using many episodes and characters as a comprehensive account of his subject cries out for.

Brechet's every scene is unabridged in itself. He does not make his observers wait till end. With its consummation, every scene sows the seeds of the capacity of onlookers for action; it is a mutable and able to be altered and so spectators' eye are fixed at the course. They also brought the observers to the point of recognition.

Irony is also found in Brechet's play "Life of Galileo". With the use of this technique, Galileo was fully confident that his thesis would be held in esteem by the religious authorities of his day.

> ***I understand that Collegium Romanum had given his blessing to my observation "So that each one can now be seen as the centre or none at all. Suddenly, there is a lot of room." It is ironical to his part that in the end of the play, he had to back out of his ideas."***

Brechet's plays have eloquent and developing as well as persuasive plot. His plots have appropriate alpha and omega. They never slacken their stability for a moment. If there is any trifling or piddling matters discussed, it is demand of the subject. Brechet's culmination of his plots is sublime but its declining points are not without grandeur and verisimilitude. The observers become a part of the plot and want to act themselves on the stage because of its fascinating power.

Brechet's art of characterisation and dialogues are also in a class by itself. He does not give any unnecessary details about lineament, robes and appearances. It is the dialogue that exposes his characters. Galileo always talks about science. Mrs. Sarfi is a household lady who treads the boards like the housewives. Andrea authenticates

strenuous and fervid through his holy dialogues, ecclesiastical order speaks the language related to their incentives.

> ***"The inquisitor: It is the restlessness of their own brain which these people have transferred to the unmoving earth."***

For the Epic Dramas, Brechet sets stages quite historical as the story demands. For the American production, Brechet and Loughton established certain parameters for the design.

Forming an opinion of the discussions, we can remark that Brechet is a beacon in the world of "Epic Theatre", He set an up to date epoch in drama, He denunciates the traits of traditional dramatic theatre and introduces entirely a unique and new mannerism and techniques that are abreast 10 cause and reason and rationality, So, consequently, Bertolt Brechet is the fabulous dramatist.

Galileo as a Scientist

Galileo Galilei, a top and high-ranking historical figure was born with zealous soul and marvellous human seat of intellect with restless nature. His oeuvre opened a new epoch in the world of science. He was a maverick who shattered the predominant ideas prevailed about the rotation of the earth. He pioneered the Copernican system as an element in the new thinking that is about to revolutionise science and society,

With the Dutch invention, telescope, Venetian Galileo explored the extra-terrestrial phases and corroborated that Copernican theory was bang on. He migrated to Florence in search of more cure and scope, For research as he had no means to aggrandise his wherewithal and research in Ptolemaic system in Venice.

> ***Galilee was "great but discontented man. Dissatisfaction is a necessary evil for a scientist who always looks around the prevailing universal phenomena sharply".***

Galileo's brainy research on a mere hypothesis turned the table of ever set idea about the revolution of the sun and centre of the earth that had the kosher favours of theology. Galileo said;

> ***"Yes, I felt that first time I saw one of those, we are not the only ones to feel it. Walls and spheres and immobility! For two thousand years, people have been believing that the sun and all the stays of heaven rotate around mankind, but, now we are breaking out of it, Andrea at full speed, Because the old days are over and this is a new time."***

Galileo had the calibre and zealot to metamorphose the whole world overnight. Like a first rate intellectual or philosopher denounced and despised the sloth and inefficacy to explore the universal truth of the layman, He handed out brickbats the society in these words,

> ***"Our cities are cramped and so are men's minds, superstitions and the plague. The universe has lost its centre overnight and woken up to find it has countless centres. Suddenly, there is a lot of room."***

Galileo's heretical discoveries about the solar system brought him to the attention of the inquisition. When the Vatican Research Institute, the Collegium Romanum proves Galileo's explorations, the theological gentry immediately react against him and he is summoned up in total court for inquisition. In the court, he experiences an excruciating trail and is compelled to apostatize his theories and inventions. -'

Here a debility of his spunk comes to our knowledge that only "to save his skin" he comprises with the prevailing circumstances and perpetrate recantation. His apprentices were dumb founded by his reaction, Andrea said,

> ***"Like a man in the street, we said he will die but he will never recant! You came back."***
>
> ***Galilee replies, "I have recanted but 1am going to live. Your hands are stained"***

In reality, this illustrious man was forced to abjure his theories publicly in papal court. Everyone, Tom, Dick and Harry, treated him as a blasphemer who exchanged theological beliefs, Because of this astronomy, they were left two millenniums behind.

After backing out of his theories, this great man carried on his work privately, eventually, smuggling his work out of his country by his pupil, Andrea, but he could never be recognised by the society.

Brecht's Dramatic Technique in Galileo

Brecht's theory of theatre known as 'Epic Theatre' is an anti-illusionist theatre that runs counter to Aristotelian 'Theatre of Illusion'. It is in the light of this 'Epic Theatre' that we need to understand his dramatic technique. By using long pauses, harsh lightening, empty stages, episodic plot, placards announcing the change of scenes, concept of anti-hero, alienation effect or estrange3ment, narrative form and violation imposed by traditional dramatic form.

Brecht's dramatic technique is intended to create an effect of estrangement among the audience by making the characters declare boldly that whatever the audience is watching is only play-an illusion not reality. The audience is urged to remain intellectually vigilant and not identify with the characters of the play. The audience will have to maintain a critical stance. The long pauses in the play obstruct the smooth flow of the plot. Use of harsh lighting won't allow anything to be hidden so that the façade of illusion is dismantled. Empty stage makes the audience stop and think curiously about what is to follow. Unity of plot is not emphasized. The play cannot be seen as a whole where the parts serve to create an organic whole. Parts can stand on their own self. Their significance is judged in isolation and their existence doesn't depend on their contribution to the whole. This idea of the episodic plot gives against Aristotelian idea of unity of plot. Use of placards to announce the change of scene helps to remind the audience of the illusion of theatrical performance. Galileo is an anti-hero because

he acts like a coward fearing the instruments of torture. He doesn't fulfill our expectations from a hero as we have traditionally understood him. He doesn't have the courage and the power to prove himself as a great figure. Rather he acts like a person who runs away from the threats and dangers. He, in short, is very anti-heroic.

Aristotelian theory of theatre laid a great emphasis on the adherence to unities of time, place and action. In Galileo, there is violation of these unities. The events of the plot cover decades and are shown to have taken place in places that are far away from one another. The hero is not a person pursuing a single action with commitment. The play talks about many actions that do not coalesce into a single uniform action. Galileo uses narrative form in that it takes past events as a material for dramatization. The play is a dramatization of past events and thus carries a sense of historical facts being narrated. It is opposed to the idea of imaginary present of drama which unfolds before us as if it were happening in front of us for the first time. The play Galileo demands the special relation between the characters and the audience. The audience are not demanded to show empathy towards the characters and be lost in sentimentality. They are urged to maintain a distance between themselves and what happens on the stage. A greater sense of detachment and critical response is demanded of them.

Significance of telescope in Galileo

Galileo, the character who has been given a central role in the play with the same name is a scientist credited with the invention of telescope and the instrument stands for the spirit of science. Telescope is a tool used by astronomers to find out the facts about the heavenly bodies and their movement. It is the window through which scientists can get the objective knowledge of the world. It is opposed to religions orthodoxy which stands for superstition, blind faith and ignorance as well as status quo. What Galileo does with the telescope is the key to understand the conflict in the play. The tension is between science represented by Galileo and telescope and the orthodoxy of religion represented by church and the different people of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

The play refers to a time in European history when the church was the caretaker of truth. Scientific truth or the spirit of scientific inquiry was suppressed. The role of religion was very great. The scientists had to fact danger to life and were kept under observation. The church was the arbiter of truth I all areas of knowledge. However the fervour for scientific inquiry was gaining ground. If religion doesn't test established truths and holds fast to them science examines established truth. The role of telescope is very great but it was seen with suspicion by the popes and other church men. It had to be used secretly because of the hostile religious environment. Telescope in the play Galileo poses threat to religious faith and the authority by challenging earlier scientific theories and the belief held by church. In the conflict between science and the religion science has suffered. However when 'Discourse' is smuggled out of Italy into Holland, it reaches the masses and they finally know what truth. In a way it is the victory of Telescope. Thus, telescope occupies a great place in the play Galileo.

Brecht's Galileo: Hero or Anti-Hero?

"Unhappy is the land that breeds no hero."

No, Andrea: "Unhappy is the land that needs a hero."

The lines, Galileo responding to the parting words of his pupil, Andrea Sarti, who is furious and betrayed by his teacher's recantation, are from the American version of Bertolt Brecht's monumental biographical play about the great astronomer, currently onstage at the Classic Stage Company in New York, in a lean and sober production starring F. Murray Abraham. It's a production very worth seeing, both as an introduction to a rarely-staged modern classic and as a demonstration of how even the most principled of artistic visions can turn back upon themselves, if pursued with honesty.

Brecht wrote the first draft of his play in 1938, at a moment when Nazi ascendancy justified a deep pessimism about progressivism and rationality's ability to triumph in the world, when the world really did seem to need heroes for the cause of reason more than cold-eyed rationalists. He wrote the American version (in collaboration with Charles Laughton) shortly after the Americans dropped the first atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, a moment that justified apprehension at a minimum about whether the progress of science as such was good for the progress of human flourishing. In different ways, each was a moment when the themes that Galileo represented—progress, science, reason—could be questioned. Would they triumph? Should they triumph?

A critical questioning of principles by examining the historical forces that underlie them is central to Brechtian theatre. But in this case, the principles being questioned are the very ones that Brechtian theatre aims to promote.

Brecht's notion of the epic theatre was founded on the concept of the Verfremdungseffekt, usually translated as alienation or distancing effect. This was Brecht's rebuke to Artistotle's theory of drama, founded on the concept of catharsis, an emotional purging that takes place through identification with a character when he comes to a full understanding of the tragic inevitability of his fate. Brecht rejected this identification because he rejected tragic inevitability. His was to be a progressive theatre, a theatre that liberated the audience by alienating them from apparently familiar characters and situations, forcing them to confront the oppressive social structures that are, in his view, the real cause of what appears to be inevitable tragedy.

This alienation is sometimes achieved by means of what one could call theatrical tricks—direct address to the audience, for example, which reminds the audience that it is at a play, not watching real people. The use of song to comment on, rather than advance, the action has a similar purpose. But alienation is also the product of the ironic spirit that animates Brecht's greatest characters and stories.

Galileo provides an excellent illustration of this ironic spirit. The title character is a heroic figure, and would seem tailor-made for boulevard-theatre treatment, the kind of play in which a principal character struggles toward some great accomplishment and we, identifying with her, come to believe that it is we who have gone through the struggle, and leave the theatre feeling very proud of ourselves for what we've done. (The Miracle Worker is an archetypal example of the genre.) He'd be a hero in the Mosaic or Christological mold, who doesn't reach the promised land/usher in the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth—but, you know, he blazed the trail, those who come after will carry the torch further, etc. etc. But Brecht complicates this picture. His Galileo is a notably selfish hero—willing to steal other people's inventions, indifferent to his daughter (who he never teaches), seeking after glory and constantly talking about how he likes to eat well—but this isn't the main thing; that co

single-minded determination to advance the cause of science, his indifference to any other ethical concern. The heart of the matter is that his recantation is an act, Brecht makes clear, of cowardice—from the perspective of his pupils, but also from his own perspective.

But what does this mean, that this is the heart of the matter? It means that the heart of the matter is a question of virtues. At that moment in history, Brecht is suggesting, the world needed a hero—a hero for science, for the idea of a truth that is not determined by social and political constraints, a truth whose liberation is, in Brecht's view, actually a precondition to any real improvement in those constraints. (In the play, the Church opposes the new science because it would lead to social disorder, as poor people realize that their suffering has no transcendent purpose, whereas the advance of science and technology offers the only practical means to end that suffering.) The world needed a hero because it needed inspiration, a figure for progressive forces to identify with and rally around. It needed an Antigone to stand up to the Church's Creon, even in the face of death.

But isn't this exactly what Brechtian theatrical principles say is an impediment to political consciousness? Isn't identification with a virtuous but tragic hero exactly what Brecht wants to deny us in the theatre?

It's worth comparing "Galileo" with another play about a solitary intellectual hero being crushed by the political establishment for holding to the truth as he sees is: Robert Bolt's "A Man For All Seasons." Bolt's Thomas More is, apparently, not a hero of science but a hero of the Church—a man whose religious convictions would not let him assent to Henry VIII's divorce, much less his Reformation, who tried to thread the needle of remaining loyal to his sovereign and to his conscience, and who was killed for it precisely because the sovereign couldn't bear being reminded that there was a needle to be threaded in this matter. But precisely because Bolt makes More's convictions a matter of his private conscience, he becomes an existential hero. As More himself says in the play, "what matters is that I believe it—or rather, no, not that I believe it, but that I believe." Bolt was not writing a brief for fidelity to the Church—indeed, the Church was supposed to be an allegorical stand-in for the Comintern, the play a parable about the persecution of Communists in the West. It didn't matter to Bolt's play that the institutional commitments of the Church and the Comintern were radically opposed—it didn't matter because he was making a play about a hero of conscience as such—and for that purpose, it doesn't really matter what his conscience actually held. At the end of the play, we see More as a hero—defeated by forces smaller than himself, but cosmically the victor precisely because in his martyrdom he showed them to be small. This is why, for all the Brechtian touches of Bolt's play—most notably, the Common Man character who is the audience stand-in, and who addresses the audience directly to comment on the action—the play is fundamentally acting contrary to the Brechtian spirit of alienation.

"Galileo," meanwhile, is a play that turns Brecht back upon himself. The play indeed shows us the social forces that drove the tragic outcome. There's a marvellous scene of the Pope getting dressed that is a synecdoche for the whole play—the new Pope is himself a scientist, and Galileo is counting on this bit of biography to ensure his personal safety as he pursues his forbidden research. Well, before he gets dressed, when he's just himself, the Pope demands that Galileo be left alone. But as vestment layers on vestment, and the man is buried in the office, institutional imperatives overwhelm conscience, and the Pope agrees to threaten

Galileo with torture to achieve the necessary recantation. We see all this—but we long for Galileo to stand against this. We long for a hero—as do Galileo's pupils. And we don't get it.

And then Brecht gives himself an out. Galileo, after his recantation, continues to work in secret on his Discorsi. When his now-hostile old pupil Andrea visits him, Galileo passes him the secret book, and Andrea repents of his hostility. He gets it—his longing for a hero was just silly pre-scientific un-progressive thinking. Galileo preserved his life—and therefore was able to continue his work. And the work is all that matters. We don't need heroes—we need progress.

But Brecht won't take the out he gives himself. Galileo says: he didn't recant out of calculation that he'd be more good to progress alive than dead. He was just a coward. And Andrea's political calculation is wrong: the world did indeed need a hero, and Galileo wasn't one.

True to Brecht's goals, watching the play is an alienating, not a cathartic experience. F. Murray Abraham isn't the physical type of Brecht's Galileo—it's strange to hear this lean and hungry actor go on about feeding his belly—but he has the requisite frigid aloofness, particularly from his daughter. His early expressions of hope for progress, confidence that man will always believe the direct evidence of his senses, come off not so much as naïve as dismissive of alternative possibilities. He doesn't actually have faith in human reason, because he doesn't really have any profound human relationships that would ground faith in any aspect of the human character. Rather, he has faith in his own reason—not in his omniscience, but in the clarity of his own mind. Irrationality, whether perverse or interest-driven, isn't a concern of his, because it's just plain wrong. (Murray's Galileo bears some resemblance to our contemporary "New Atheists" in this.) But when he returns home after the recantation, he's poleaxed by fear, clutching his groin as if he'd been threatened with castration—or as if the recantation was exactly that. And after that, his one note is bitterness and self-reproof.

But all of these emotions are understated in performance; Abraham never really lets us identify with his Galileo emotionally. The supporting cast paints in bolder colors (with the exception of Amanda Quaid, who is very nearly emotionally invisible as Galileo's daughter, Virginia), with moving moments from in particular from Galileo's pupils: Aaron Himelstein as the Little Monk, Jon Devries as Federzoni, and Andy Phelan as Andrea. And the set is understated as well, except for a vast circular screen upstage on which we see depicted the objects of Galileo's study: the sun, the moon, the stars of the universe. These, not the human drama below, inspire awe. We, with Galileo's pupils, are left wanting more from our hero. Which may well be how Brecht wanted us to feel.

How far do you think Brecht is successful in applying his theories about drama in Galileo Galilei? (P.U. 2007) OR Do you think the play, Galileo Galilei, presents a conflict between the authority and free scientific inquiry, both on the institutional level and within Galileo's own character? (P.U. 2006)

Europe in the early 1930's was a cauldron of social and political unrest. Literature sought not to provide accurate images but instead provoked change and encouraged thought and evaluation. Bertolt Brecht, a renowned German playwright, attempted to highlight the undeniable triumph of reason and knowledge and emphasised victory over authoritarian oppression.

The Life of Galileo is a play that, although being set in the past, concentrates on presenting contemporary implications and consequences of the remarkable account of the struggle between Galileo's scientific discoveries and the extraordinary power and influence of the Catholic Church. The foundations of world literature have always been based on the attitudes and values of society. Authors, playwrights and poets are influenced fundamentally by the Ideologies around them. All of Brecht's plays were a form of social and political instruction. He did not consider drama to be a form of entertainment, and instead portrayed important images to the people of Europe, showing them the potential for social, political and economic change. Being a Marxist, having grown up in an ordinary German family and having seen the progress of several regimes of European history, including the ascendance of Adolf Hitler and the effects of government ideology on people, Brecht became a respected social commentator. He seldom conformed with the views of the government, and many of the ideologies the that playwright questions in *The Life of Galileo* were prevalent in governments in Europe at the time. It's not difficult to realize why his texts were banned from Germany not long after they became widely read. His support for the empowerment of the common man and those marginalized in society is clear, and his endorsement of socialism is outright.

In the mid 1930's, Europe was undergoing significant change. Legal, social and political traditions were being swept away by the onslaught of totalitarianism. Governments were introducing policies of restricting individual freedom and seeking to subordinate all aspects of the individual's life to the political ideology of the time. The, promises that the industrial revolution proclaimed, were unfulfilled and people were disillusioned. Fascist and totalitarian governments were taking over most of Europe, particularly in Italy, under Benito Mussolini, in the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin and in Nazi Germany under Adolf Hitler. Each government pursued its own special goal, and anything that could foil the goal would be rejected, often at significant social and humanitarian cost. In Germany, the Nazi government sought to purify the German race and champion the common man.

In order to ensure their political longevity, governments in Europe at the time of Brecht influenced the people into believing that they were perched on the dawn of a new age. Through shocking reforms and proclamations of a bright future for all, rulers in several parts of the continent led everyone in their country to believe they were on the verge of huge changes and reforms for the better. The Nazi government successfully indoctrinated its people. The chant "Now a new age is dawning" was repeated throughout Germany. By ensuring that citizens were dazed and remained dreaming of the endless possibilities that the new age would bring, successive governments could do as they pleased in the name of change. The very first sentence of Brecht's notes on *The Life of Galileo* express the importance of this ideology in the text.

"It is well known how felicitously people can be influenced by the conviction that they are poised on the threshold of a new age."

Undoubtedly Brecht was aware of this policy of the Nazi planned to use his theatre to question it. Use of the words 'felicitously' and 'influenced' show that the new age of which Brecht was speaking was artificial and induced only by the evils of politics. In *The Life of Galileo,* however, he chooses to present a historical situation where there was potential for a new age to dawn, an age brought about by the convictions of the people, not false claims by the government. Brecht presents the character of Galileo not as a hero, but as a real and flawed human being.

Galileo's recantation put on hold for years the progress he had made and allowed the Catholic Church's teachings and values to continue unquestioned. The silent message from Brecht Is that we should put society before ourselves, just as Galileo should not have recanted to continue the momentum of thought and evaluation set against the 15th century social system. It is human nature to change and progress – in very few societies in the modern world has equilibrium been maintained. Brecht was telling those seated in the theatre to strive to change and question what they saw around them in the way that they wanted by not conforming with the views of others and not simply accepting what is set down by the government. He also pointed out the catalysts for further, genuine change in society – after all, the influence of several great reformists was spreading in the mid-1930's – Marx, Freud and Einstein, among others. Even though Galileo was presented as far from perfect, he was a man who desired change and progress. Despite Sagredo's warning that man is not 'amenable to commonsense' and predictions of Galileo being burnt at the stake; despite the onslaught of the Plague; despite Bellamarin claiming that Galileo's teachings are 'foolish and heretical'; despite all possible adversity, Galileo proclaims a new age.

"Andrea and I have made discoveries which we can no longer withhold from the world. A new era has dawned, a great age in which it is a joy to be alive."

In addition to Brecht presenting his audience with images of the Dawn of a New Age in *The Life of Galileo*, he similarly questions a core political ideology of the time. In 1933, Adolf Hitler came into power in Germany, Brecht's homeland. He began a campaign that included suppressing all literature that in any way questioned the beliefs of the government. He had all of Brecht's plays, poetry and books burnt in an attempt to keep the public uninformed about the potential for change in their government. Subsequently, Brecht was deported from Germany and had his passport removed. These events in the playwright's life undoubtedly had an affect on his writing and impelled him to write plays that questioned the creed of the government. *The Life of Galileo*, particularly the initial version written in 1939, presents the genius scientist Galileo as a man who, despite blindness, outsmarts the inquisition and ensures that his life's workings are not suppressed. In doing so, Brecht was subtly pointing out that suppressing knowledge will always be futile.

Throughout the play, Galileo sustained his belief in mankind's sense of reason. He perceived that our innate curiosity and desire to explain the universe must prevail over everything else. He remarks, "Knowledge will become a passion and research an ecstasy". The final scene of the play is particularly significant in understanding Brecht's stance on the suppression of knowledge and discovery. As Andrea, Galileo's student, heads off beyond Catholicism and into new areas, he takes with him Galileo's Discorsi, the product of a lifetime of research and experimentation. He crosses a border post with the manuscript hidden under his coat, prepared to spread Galileo's teachings throughout the world. Despite the inquisition putting Galileo under guarded house arrest and despite the Catholic Church's

maintain its dominance, knowledge and reason won. Brecht saw in Galileo's case a historical precedent for successfully spreading the truth despite the adversity of the Gestapo and secret police in Germany. With every step outside of Italy, Andrea enacts how new ideas are irrepressible. The final line of the play demonstrates the implications of the new discoveries and an optimistic view of the future with Galileo's knowledge changing the face of the earth.

"We are really only at the beginning."

Brecht had strong Marxist convictions. Living in a time when the industrial revolution had taken its toll – working and living conditions were poor for millions of Europeans, Marxism offered the promise of improvements for the working class. A socialist system was particularly attractive for the masses in Germany – instead of their lives being controlled by a totalitarian government as a result of which they felt like pawns, socialism offered the potential for everyone to contribute to the country. In *The Life of Galileo,* Brecht conveyed several strong Marxist ideals. Galileo was portrayed not only as a scientist, but a humanitarian who could change the face of not only science, but society too. This is most abundantly clear towards the end of the play, where Ludovico points out that Galileo's discoveries could incite a revolution among the peasants, not because of scientific fact, but because the well-established social and political system could finally be questioned and changed.

"… your treatise on the satellites of Jupiter in no way disturb our peasants. Their work in the fields is too arduous. Yet it could disturb them to learn that frivolous attacks on the sacred doctrines of the Church now go unpunished."

In the 15th century, the wealthy and advantaged had dominance over their servants and workers. The peasants worked freely, but they led a limited, unenlightened life. This was *mainly due to the fact that they were intellectually cut off from the rest of the world – all*major publications were in Latin, which they were not able to read. Galileo insisted that all of his findings be published in the Vulgate so that everyone would have access to them. People believed that this could have disastrous consequences for the equilibrium in Italy. Not only would Galileo's teachings undermine the main ruling body, the Catholic Church, but each person previously suppressed would realise that the world was undergoing both scientific and social change, and that they need not be treated differently to their masters. All of the peasants were born into their role, the upper class intentionally keeping them focused only on their work and ensuring that they were kept illiterate, uneducated and totally dependant on those in control.

Until Galileo's time, the study of science and philosophy was combined. Science was not interpreted objectively, but the workings of the world were analysed according to the philosophical beliefs of the time. Ever since Aristotle had handed down the Ptolemaic system, its supremacy was unquestioned because it was protected by the combined entity of science, religion and philosophy. The Catholic Church adopted Aristotle's philosophy, and for decades it reigned unchallenged. Bellarmin remarks, 'Science is the legitimate and dearly beloved daughter of the Church, Signor Galilei'. Galileo questioned this age-old system, maintaining that science should not be related to philosophy. A group consisting of both scientists and philosophers visited Galileo in Florence to discuss his new discoveries. They refused to look into the telescope to evaluate Galileo's work, despite his constant pleading, `But really, you

gentlemen need only look through the instrument!'. In a famous quote from the play, Galileo challenges the obstinate outlook of the scholars.

"The world of knowledge takes a crazy turn
When teachers themselves are taught to learn."

Instead of supporting new developments and change, the philosophers and scientists are completely unconcerned with scientific truth. As the philosopher remarks furiously to Galileo, 'The truth may lead us absolutely anything!'. Even Cardinal Barberini, the man who subsequently becomes Pope must uphold the status quo despite being a scientist and appreciating Galileo's discovery. Brecht naturalizes the upper class' inconsiderate outlook towards the working class. In the first scene, Ludovico remarks:

"My mother thinks that a little science is necessary. All the world takes a drop of science in their wine nowadays, you know"

Ludovico, an upper class gentleman, was sent to Galileo to 'take a drop of science' his position in society dictated that he should have a basic understanding of the workings of the world. Galileo made a miraculous change to Europe's approach to science. Instead of science being something handed out to only the upper class with their wine, by the end of the play, everyone in Italy and Europe had access to science through a language they could read and even through entertainers on the street! Galileo transformed expensive wine to water affordable to all, Brecht drawing clear parallels with Marxism which endorsed a classless system.

The gulf between the quest for knowledge and absolute religious faith can be very wide, and has caused problems at many points in history. Galileo's doctrines which proclaimed that the sun, rather than the earth, is at the centre of the universe displaced the accepted position of the heavens and the supremacy of the Catholic Church. When his trusted friend Sagredo asks him, "where is God In your cosmography?", Galileo responds, "Within ourselves or nowhere". In the early 20th century, when Darwin's theory of natural selection and evolution became widely studied, science once again came in conflict with the Catholic Church. The conflict between such ideologies is unmistakable in *The Life of Galileo.* Just as the political ideologies of Germany deported Brecht and had his literature burned, the ideologies entrenched in the Catholic Church destroyed the brilliant scientist Galileo. The similarities between the lives of Galileo and Brecht run deep in the text and were a prime motivation for Brecht writing the play. Just as he continued reforming theatre long after he was deported from his homeland, Galileo continued to secretly compose his Discorsi despite blindness and being under heavily guarded house arrest.

"We need a type of theatre which not only releases the feelings, insights and impulses possible within the particular historical field of human relations in which the action takes place, but employs and encourages those thoughts and feelings which help transform the field itself."

Brecht rose to the occasion of transforming the social field inEurope. Change around him and his strong political convictions unquestionably had an impact on his writings. In a single performance, Brecht manages to succinctly yet powerfully challenge the belief that knowledge can be suppressed and simultaneously endorse the belief of a

society. In combination with his strong Marxist ideals, Brecht produced a performance that had extensive social and political significance. The ideologies of the people, the ideologies of the government and the ideologies of some of the world's greatest thinkers come together in Brecht's *The Life of Galileo* to provide an astonishing insight into our social reality.

"...It is a play what contains very little element of caricature. This does not turn his Galileo into the self-portrait it is sometimes alleged to be..." What is your opinion? (P.U. 2004)

The conflict between Galileo and the Church took place within a densely charged political atmosphere. The new science threatened both the Church's traditional role as aribter of doctrinal truth and its position as a great European power. What were the political issues at stake in the debate over Copernicanism? We can approach this question from two directions, asking (a) what political interests did the Church have vested in the traditional worldview; and (b) what interests did the Galileans stake in Copernican worldview. Given the profoundly human dimension of this conflict, we should also ask: what were Galileo's choices?

The first question, the Church's political investment in the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic cosmology, is about Counter-Reformation politics. In the century-and-a-half prior to Galileo's trial, Italy and the Church suffered a succession of severe setbacks. The French invasion left Italy in a state of political wreckage and set the stage for a poisonous rivalry between the Holy Roman Emperor, the Papacy, and the King of France. At the same time, the Church faced dissension within its own ranks. When the sixteenth century opened, scarcely anyone in Europe doubted the need for reform of the Church. Most called for a reform from within, but Luther, that Papal Bull-burning German, crossed the Rubicon. Breaking completely with the church, he split Christendom into two belligerent blocs, and added a vicious ideological element to the Cold War of the sixteenth century.

The Council of Trent, called ostensibly to answer the Protestant challenge, created a new, toughened Church. To combat the Protestant Heresy, the Council redefined the Church's doctrine and established iron-fisted mechanisms to enforce the creed, including the Index of Printed Books and the Inquisition at Rome. One of the most important debates at the Council of Trent was over the Question of Scripture vs. Tradition. Does religious truth rest upon the word of God alone, or does it rest upon the dual foundations of scripture together with the apostolic and ecclesiastical traditions? Since the Church was the source and guardian of tradition, its religious and political authority weighed in the balance. Years of debate and thousands of scudi went into answering this question, but the conclusion was determined by political necessity: Scripture and Tradition together, not Scripture alone, were the win bulwarks of the faith.

Galileo's trial hinged upon the Church's rigid adherence to this doctrine. Galileo did not just defend a new astronomical system; he proclaimed science to be a new criterion of authority, and hence undermined the bedrock of Roman Catholic authority.

The philosophy of Aristotle was fundamental to the new scholasticism that emerged after Trent. Arguments based upon Aristotle's physics explained and justified some of the

central dogmas that separated Roman Catholics from Protestants- the Church's interpretation of the Eucharist, for example. But the issue was not simply one of physics, theology, or astronomy. The issue, as Brecht rightly portrays it, was "pernicious doctrines," which was what the inquisition was formed in the first place to deal with, and was matter with which, by the time of the trial, the Holy Office had gained a great deal of practical experience.

The carnival scene in the Life of Galileo, where the people claim their right "to say and do just what one pleases," may seem slightly contrived from an historical point of view, but it captures the essential point that in the time of Galileo the Church was engaged in a two-front war: one against high culture, which resisted conforming to Counter-Reformation patterns, and another against the people, who often perverted doctrine in aggressively original ways.

There are many historical examples of the originality of popular culture. The best know (thanks to a recent book on the subject by Carlo Ginzberg) was miller called Menocchio, of the Friuli region in northern Italy, who was denounced to the Inquisition in 1583. Menocchio owned a few books. None of them were heretical, but his reading of them was shockingly so. He became convinced for example, that the sacraments were human inventions and just so much merchandise. He said you may as well confess to a tree as to a priest; and that all men are equal because the spirit of God is in everyone. He constructed a wholly materialistic cosmology that all but denied God the creator.

Whenever Menocchio got the chance, he insolently exercised his freedom of judgment. Menocchio was brought to trial in 1599, just as proceedings against Giordano Bruno were drawing to a close. In the same year Tommaso Campanella was thrown into prison for fomenting a rebellion in Calabria. Campanella languished in prison for more than twenty years. Bruno and Menocchio went to the stake for heresy. The trial and execution of these two mean, a philosopher and a miller, symbolizes the war the Church waged against high and low cultures in an effort to impose doctrines promulgated by the Council of Trent. And it is not insignificant that Bruno and Campanella both vigorously supported Copernicus and Galileo respectively.

The attack on Galileo commenced in 1614, when the Dominican preacher Tommasco Caccini delivered a sermon denouncing mathematics as a diabolical art, mathematicians as enemies of the state and Galileo as the propagator of cosmological absurdities. Copernicus's book was placed on the index in 1616. Cardinal Bellarmino, stating the Church's position, declared that until the Copernican theory was demonstrated, a literal reading of scripture must be taken as a matter of faith. Construing the Trent decree in a narrow, bureaucratical way, Bellarmino declared that it would be extremely imprudent to rewrite Scripture in light of an unproven scientific theory – which was in fact the status of Coppernicanism in 1616. Despite Galileo's eloquent plea for separate standards of scientific authority, Bellarmino's position remained the Church's until the time of the trial.

Brecht makes Galileo's recantation the central problem of the play, rendering it as a capitulation to the authorities. Historical analysis probably cannot help us decide whether Galileo was a coward or a hero. But it may help us to decide whether or not he had a choice in the matter. Indeed, by changing the ending of his play, Brecht himself forces the question. Galileo I is about the necessity of fighting for the liberty to teach the truth. Galileo II, on the other hand, is about the social responsibility of the scientist. This can only mean that for

Brecht the scientist must not just seek the truth; he must also see to it that the truth does not get into the wrong hands. Where does this leave Galileo? Did he have a choice?

One choice, a typically Renaissance option, can be illustrated by reference to one of Galileo's contemporaries – a scientist who might in fact have supplied Brecht with a more suitable model for the conception of science he advocates in Galileo II.

Giambattista Della Porta was twenty-nine years older when Galileo. He was born in Naples in 1535, and died in 1615, when Galileo was at the peak of his career, eighteen years before the trial. The two scientists knew each other; both belonged to the Academia dei Lincei, the scientific academy that sponsored Galileo's books, and they communicated with one another about Galileo's research with the telescope. There is another similarity between Galileo and Della Porta. In 1574, and again in 1590, Della Porta confronted the inquisition and was forced to recant his scientific views.

However, Galileo and Della Porta represented two very different scientific traditions. Whereas Galileo stood for the tradition of mathematical physics, Della Porta was Europe's most famous champion of natural magic. According to Della Porta, nature was a great repository of occult forces, which science can exploit for beneficial purposes. Natural magic was sixteenth-century

Italy's version of the utilitarian science was advocated by Francis Bacon and later Brecht. It promulgated a utopian image of science as the foundation for reforming society and manners.

Della Porta's major scientific discovery was that all supposed "magical" phenomena are in reality the results of natural causes, and it was his radical stance not his science of occult qualities that got him into trouble with the Inquisition. For the Church, in order to work its magic, had to maintain a monopoly over access to the occult. Indeed, the church was a vast reservoir of magical power, which it was capable of deploying for a variety of secular purposes. Della Porta, who insisted that science can exploit occult powers, thus struck a blow at the Church's monopoly over the supernatural, just as Galileo challenged the Church's monopoly over interpreting the book of nature.

Della Porta, like Brecht, was tremendously impressed by the potential of science. He knew it could do good, but also great harm. Because of this he maintained that sometimes it is necessary to write obscurely, speaking in riddles and symbolic language, lest knowledge get into *the wrong hands. Although he published a popular work entitled Natural Magic, he withheld* publication of his most precious secrets, the "quintessence of his science," on the grounds that they might be abused or corrupted by the people. He sent a manuscript of this work only to Rudolf II, the Holy Roman Emperor, imaging that Rudolph, whom he thought the most enlightened prince in Europe, would use it for the best ends.

The distance in attitudes toward the 'secrets of nature' between Della Porta and Galileo is almost the same as the distance that separates us from the Renaissance. For Della Porta, only a magus could rightfully penetrate into the secrets of nature. Galileo, on the other hand, declared nature to be an open book that anyone can read, provided he knows the language in which it is written, mathematics. For Della Porta, the pearls of science were too precious to be fed to swine; for Galileo, public confirmation of his discoveries was an essential component of the scientific method.

Galileo, given the style of science he practiced, took the only choice available to him. To have taken the route advocated by Della Porta, and presumably also Brecht, would have meant doing a completely different kind of science. Since the Copernican issue could not be settled in strictly scientific terms, and had necessarily to be debated on theological grounds, Galileo argued the debate in that treacherous territory. Perhaps, in light of these historical circumstances, the most appropriate dramatic form for the trial of Galileo is not epic, but tragedy.

Brecht has portrayed a conflict between the individual and the world in his Play Life of Galileo?

Most of the time Brecht portrayed a clash between the ends means between the past rational way and the present Reality or we can say the conflict between the individual and the world. It energy through different ways as a conflict between the old order and the new world, as far as Brechtian style is concern he showed the collision between the two irreconcilable ideologies.

In the plays he showed the stagnant traditional view of religion and also the pasteurization of the moral standards with an unaccommodating ideas of the established tradition but it is a human need to redefine all the rigid ad orthodox nations street's Galileo is a historical personality but its prior concern is to change the whole rigid old structure of the society is based on the so-called religious beliefs.

Galileo character seemed the representative of new scientific view, which is apposed by the obsolescent elongation of the church. The whole depiction of the church in `life of Galileo' is dictatorial one, which has a complete hold over the political matters and also on science. It seems that the domination on both classes as a opposition for the new world order or you can say free research.

'Science is ruined and church is sitting on it with fat behind'

So we can say that Galileo's new invitation is challenging because it shows the new idea about science and it became a threat to the social standards. The protagonist is of the opinion that in his day's astronomy has reached the market place and has thus broken the monopoly of an exclusive coterie. In this play when the balled singer announced that the earth is hot the center of the sun, than whole order of the society turned upside down. The builder will keep his building for himself and the woodchopper will burn his own fuel whereas.

'Princes will have to wax their own boots'

The emperor can bake his own bread for orders the soldiers want care two hoots

They'll go for stroll instead'

The whole scenario of Galileo society was so much stagnant that if they start to thuck about the new idea that awards questions arises from them. The sees the topsy-turvy Copernican macrocosm as a working model for their own social microcosm. It seemed that old order felt

a threat this dread is of an existential nature like that of a little mimic's company peasants who without a divinely appointed order will begin to say;

'There is no meaning in our misery hunger is simply not having eaten and not a Test of strength'

The language or linguistic change is refocused in scene 4 when the Aristotelian philosopher commences an arid disputed by Galileo that his lens-polisher will not be able to follow the argument.

Brecht's Anti-villain hero Galileo breaks an age old age idea about the universe but also shatters the traditional concept of a hero because he accepts not virtue but martyrdom.

In the end we can say that Brecht does not simply dismiss religion as kind of pre-scientific superstition and also its necessity. In the clash between religion and. Marxism Brecht not only reconcile religion with dialectical materialism but also to develop human socially in which religion necessity is denied.

Q.7. Discuss the portrayal of the church in Life of Galileo?

For the theatre it is important to understand that this play must lose a great part of its effect for its performance is directed chiefly against the Roman Catholic Church.

Of the dramatis personae, many wear the church's garb. Actors who, because of that, try to portray these characters as odious would be doing wrong. But neither, on the other hand, has the church the right to have the human weaknesses of its members glossed over. It has all too often encouraged these weaknesses and suppressed their exposure. But in this play there is also no question of the church being admonished: 'Hands off science!' Modern science is a legitimate daughter of the church, a daughter who has emancipated herself and turned against the mother.

In the present play the church functions, even when it opposes free investigation, simply as authority.

Since science was a branch of theology, the church is the intellectual authority, the ultimate scientific court of appeal. The play shows the temporary victory of authority, not the victory of the priesthood. It corresponds to the historical truth in that the Galileo of the play never turns directly against the church. There is not a sentence uttered by Galileo in that sense. If there had been, such a through commission of investigation as the Inquisition would undoubtedly have brought it to light. And it equally corresponds to the historical truth that the greatest astronomer of the Papal RomanCollege, Christopher Clavius, confirmed Galileo's discoveries (scene 6). It is also true that clerics were among his pupils (scenes 8, 9 and 13).

To take satirical aim at the worldly interests of high dignitaries seems to be cheap (it would be in scene 7). But the causal way in which these high officials treat the physicist is only meant to show that, by reason of their past experiences, they think they can count on ready complaisance from Galileo. They are not mistaken.

When one looks at our bourgeois politicians, one cannot but extol the spiritual (and scientific) interests of those politicians of old.

The play, therefore, ignores the falsifications made to the protocol of 1616 by the Inquisition of 1633, falsifications established by recent historical studies under the direction of the German scholar Emil Wohlwill. Doubtless the judgment and sentence of 1633 were thereby made juridical possible. Anybody who understands the point of view outlined above will appreciate that the author was not concerned with this legal side of the trial.

There is no doubt that Urban VIII was personally incensed at Galileo and, in the most detestable manner, played a personal part in the proceedings against him. The play passes this over.

Anyone who understands the standpoint of the author will realize that this attitude implies no reverence for the church of the seventeenth, let alone of the twentieth century.

Casting the church as the embodiment of authority in this theatrical trial of the persecutors of the champions of free research certainly does not help to get the church acquitted. But it would be highly dangerous, particularly nowadays, to treat a matter like Galileo's fight for freedom of research as a religious one; for thereby attention would be most unhappily deflected from present-day reactionary authorities of a totally unecclesiastical kind.

Heart of Darkness

Joseph Conrad; 1857-1924

Joseph Conrad grew up in the Polish Ukraine, a large, fertile plain between Poland and Russia. It was a divided nation, with four languages, four religions, and a number of different social classes. A fraction of the Polish-speaking inhabitants, including Conrad's family, belonged to the szlachta, a hereditary class in the aristocracy on the social hierarchy, combining qualities of gentry and nobility. They had political power, despite their impoverished state. Conrad's father, Apollo Korzeniowski, studied for six years at St. Petersburg University, which he left before earning a degree. Conrad's mother, Eva Bobrowska, was thirteen years younger than Apollo and the only surviving daughter in a family of six sons. After she met him in 1847, Eva was drawn to Apollo's poetic temperament and passionate patriotism, while he admired her lively imagination. Although Eva's family disapproved of the courtship, the two were married in 1856.

Instead of devoting himself to the management of his wife's agricultural estates, Apollo pursued literary and political activities, which brought in little money. He wrote a variety of plays and social satires. Although his works were little known, they would have tremendous influence on his son.

A year into the marriage, Eva became pregnant with Joseph, who was born in 1857. The Crimean War had just ended, and hopes were high for Polish independence. Joseph's family moved quite a bit, and he never formed close friendships in Poland.

After Apollo was arrested on suspicion of involvement in revolutionary activities, the family was thrown into exile. Eva developed tuberculosis, and she gradually declined until she died in 1865. The seven-year-old Conrad, who witnessed her decline, was absolutely devastated. He also developed health problems, migraines and lung inflammation, which persisted throughout his life. Apollo too fell into decline, and he died of tuberculosis in 1869. At age eleven, Joseph became an orphan.

The young boy became the ward of his uncle, who loved him dearly. Thus began Joseph's Krakow years, which ended when he left Poland as a teenager in 1874. This move was a complex decision, resulting from what he saw as the intolerably oppressive atmosphere of the Russian garrison.

He spent the next few years in France, mastering his second language and the fundamentals of seamanship. The author made acquaintances in many circles, but his "bohemian" friends were the ones who introduced him to drama, opera, and theatre. In the meantime, he was strengthening his maritime contacts, and he soon became an observer on pilot boats. The workers he met on the ship, together with all the experiences they recounted to him, laid the groundwork for much of the vivid detail in his novels.

By 1878, Joseph had made his way to England with the intention of becoming an officer on a British ship. He ended up spending twenty years at sea. Conrad interspersed long voyages with time spent resting on land.

When he was not at sea, writing letters or writing in journals, Joseph was exploring other means of making money. Unlike his father, who abhorred money, Conrad was obsessed by it; he was always on the lookout for business opportunities.

Once the author had worked his way up to shipmaster, he made a series of eastern voyages over three years. Conrad remained in the English port of Mauritius for two months, during which time he unsuccessfully courted two women. Frustrated, he left and journeyed to England.

In England in the summer of 1889, Conrad began the crucial transition from sailor to writer by starting his first novel, Almayer's Folly. Interestingly, he chose to write in English, his third language.

A journey to the Congo in 1890 was Joseph's inspiration to write Heart of Darkness. His condemnation of colonialism is well documented in the journal he kept during his visit. He returned to England and soon faced the death of his beloved guardian and uncle. In the meantime, Conrad became closer to Marguerite, an older family friend who was his closest confidant. For six years he tried to establish intimacy with her, but he was eventually discouraged by the age difference and the disparity between their social positions.

Then, 1894 was a landmark year for Conrad: his first novel was published; he met Edward Garnett, who would become a lifelong friend; and he met Jessie George, his future wife. The two-year courtship between the 37-year-old Conrad and the 21-year-old Jessie was somewhat discontinuous in that Conrad pursued other women during the first year of their relationship, but his attention became strongly focused on Jessie by the autumn of 1895. Garnett disapproved of the match, especially since Jessie was miles behind Joseph in education. Nonetheless, they married in March 1896.

The children who followed the union were not warmly welcomed by their father; an absent-minded sort, he expressed surprise each time Jessie delivered a baby. His days were consumed with writing, a struggle no doubt exacerbated by the gaps in his knowledge of the English language.

The major productive phase of Conrad's career spanned from 1897 to 1911, during which time he composed The Nigger of the Narcissus, Youth, Heart of Darkness, Lord Jim, Nostromo, The Secret Agent, and Under Western Eyes, among other works. During this period, he also experienced serious financial difficulties, often living off of advances and state grants, there being little in the way of royalties. It was not until the publication of Chance in 1914 that he experienced some level of commercial success.

As the quality of his work declined, he grew increasingly comfortable in his wealth and status. Conrad had a true genius for companionship, and his circle of friends included talented authors such as Stephen Crane and Henry James.

Still always writing, he eventually returned to Poland, and he then travelled to America, where he died of a heart attack in 1924 at the age of 67. Conrad's literary work would have a profound impact on the Modernist movement, influencing a long list of writers including T.S. Eliot, Graham Greene, Virginia Woolf, Thomas Mann, Andre Gide, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and William Faulkner.

Heart of Darkness : Plot Summary

Heart of Darkness opens on the deck of the yawl, Nellie, which is anchored along the Thames awaiting the return of the tide. Five individuals are on her deck, each exchanging a few lazy words. There is the owner of the boat, a lawyer, an accountant, the narrator -- who remains ambiguous in profession, and Marlow, the only one of the group who still works at sea. Looking to the river, Marlow describes what it must have been like for ancient travelers to Britain and how the area must have seemed like the end of the earth. He ponders how they tackled the "darkness" and overcame the "mysterious life of the wilderness that stirs in the forest, in the jungles, [and] in the hearts of wild men" (Conrad 69). He then tells the group about his time spent as a fresh-water sailor -- his time in the "darkness."

He explains how he had just returned to London after life on the sea in the Far East, and how he became tired of his long vacation and tried to find another ship. His aunt knew of an ivory trade company in Africa and suggested he inquire. His aunt's influence paid off and he became employed as a steamboat captain on the Congo River.

He departed from Europe on a French steamer down the coast of Africa. The ship he was on seemed to make an infinite amount of stops. On these stops, Marlow became entranced by the endless coastline and the isolation created by the unfamiliar people. When the boat would stop and the black men would come out to trade with the ship, Marlow was fascinated by their presence and the reality they seemed to convey in contrast to the dreamlike features of his journey so far. Marlow realized his journey would be anything but normal. "For a time I would feel I belonged still to a world of straightforward facts; but the feeling would not last long" (p. 78).

Marlow's journey on the French steamer came to an end at the river's mouth, where he transferred to a river boat commanded by a Swede. The captain told Marlow of the corrupted government and country he was entering, and he added that an earlier passenger of his hanged himself up river for no apparent reason. Nearly one hundred miles upriver, the boat landed at the company's Outer Station. The station was littered with abandoned equipment rusting away in the grass. Accompanying the valuable equipment were groups of black workers chained to each other and the dead bodies of others. Marlow was troubled at the sight before him.

Marlow moved up to the company buildings where he met the company's chief accountant. His dress was immaculate as were his quarters -- a complete contrast to the confusion that defined the rest of the station. Here, Marlow learned of a man named Kurtz for the first time. The man told Marlow that Kurtz was an amazing man who was in charge of the inner, and most important, station. He said that it wouldn't be long before Kurtz made it into administration, as he had sent more ivory down river than any other agent.

After spending ten long days at the Outer Station, Marlow headed toward the Central Station over land with a caravan of sixty blacks and a white man. Fifteen days and two-hundred miles later, Marlow made it to the station exhausted from his journey. Adding insult to injury, he discovered his awaiting steamboat at the bottom of the river. The manager of the station made no acknowledgment of Marlow's long journey and went on and on about the wreck and how it would take three months to get it running again. The manager began talking about Kurtz and how no one knew if he was dead or alive.

Marlow quickly determined that the manager "was a chattering idiot" (p. 89) and not worth his time, so he isolated himself from those who resided at the station. He decided to focus all of his time toward raising the steamboat. While he was there, however, he noticed the "pilgrims," white men who carried staffs and constantly spoke of the ivory trade, and he couldn't help overhear the constant talk of Kurtz.

One evening, the brick maker of the station invited Marlow to his room. The agent's quarters were a marvel compared to the rest of the station, just as the accountant's had been at the Outer Station. It did not take long for Marlow to realize the agent's motive. He was trying to extract information about Marlow's influential friends and sources back in Belgium. The agent was convinced Marlow knew of the company's plans for Kurtz, as Marlow and Kurtz shared recommending sources. Marlow revealed nothing and instead questioned the agent about Kurtz after discovering a painting by him. The agent expected a promotion for Kurtz soon, but said nothing more. Marlow soon realized the agent resented Kurtz, as he continued to pry information out of him.

Later, Marlow told the agent that he needed rivets to repair the steamboat. Weeks passed, but there were no rivets. Marlow knew that supply convoys came in from the Outer Station, and he knew there were rivets there as he had almost tripped on bags of them earlier. The only supplies that came, however, were cheap trade goods. Marlow, demanded rivets, but the agent acted indifferently towards his "forgetfulness."

As Marlow continued to wait, a group known as the Eldorado Exploring Expedition came into the station. The group was headed by the manager's uncle. One evening, as Marlow was lying in the shadows on the deck of the steamer, he overheard a conversation between the manager and his uncle. He discovered the manager had purposefully neglected to send supplies to Kurtz's Inner Station. A clerk of Kurtz's, while delivering a shipment of ivory, informed the manager that Kurtz was ill, and from then on, no news was heard from him again.

Finally, after months of waiting, rivets arrived. Marlow repaired the steamboat and began his journey upriver with a crew of about twenty natives, a few of the "pilgrims," and the manager. They progressed slowly over two months and encountered many native villages along the way. Marlow was determined to get to Kurtz and discover for himself the true nature of the man. The journey was difficult for "the snags were thick, the water was treacherous and shallow, [and] the boiler seemed indeed to have a sulky devil in it" (p. 107).

A few miles from the Inner Station, after clearing through a snag, the steamer was showered with arrows. Chaos ensued as men from the boat "squirted lead into the bush" (p. 117). Marlow's helmsman was killed in the attack, and a few of the crew were wounded. Speculation of whether Kurtz was still alive at this point was abundant. The manager, who became frightened by the attack, insisted they turn around. Just as he said this, however, the Inner Station came into view.

When they pulled to the bank, they were greeted by a rather peculiar looking Russian. He told Marlow that Kurtz's health was failing, so the manager and the "pilgrims" headed out to find him and return him to the steamer. Marlow discovered from the Russian that Kurtz, without goods to trade with, had rounded up his recent supplies of ivory at gunpoint. He had become a god to the surrounding natives, and the Russian later informed Marlow that Kurtz was the one who ordered the attack on the steamer. When Marlow asked why, the Russian responded, "They don't want him to go" (p. 126). The Russian, who was obviously devoted to Kurtz, was nearly shot by Kurtz as he was aiding him to recovery.

When the group found Kurtz, he was in horrible physical condition, but his speech was amazingly strong. They carried him to the steamer under the watchful eyes of the natives, who seemed to silently protest the move. An ominous looking woman in the tribe stood out from the woods and made her presence known to the group.

Later that night, Marlow discovered Kurtz had escaped from the steamer. After locating him, Marlow carefully approached him. Kurtz was watching the natives perform one of their ceremonies, and Marlow saw the apparent torment Kurtz experienced. Marlow carried him back to the steamer, and they set out downriver the next day.

As they traveled down river, Marlow watched Kurtz's decline, and he developed a kind of partnership with him. Kurtz entrusted his private papers and a photograph of a woman to Marlow, because he knew anyone else would exploit his findings. Not long after, Kurtz died speaking his final words, "The horror! The horror!" (p. 147), and was buried in the jungle.

After the event, Marlow returned to Europe to recover from an illness. A few men inquired information on Kurtz's papers, but he denounced their value and told them they were for his mourning love. Marlow took the papers to the woman, who was in obvious pain and distress over her loss of Kurtz. She questioned Marlow intently, but he evaded her questions as he did not have truthful answers about the man he hardly knew. He could not get Kurtz out of his mind, though, and thought constantly of Kurtz's situation

and how he had separated himself from the world into an entirely different existence. Marlow ended the woman's sorrow by assuring her that her name was Kurtz's last word. Marlow was incensed that he lied to the woman, but did nothing and left her.

Finally, the scene returns to the present deck of the Nellie where silence ensues with the end of Marlow's story. The men share no feelings of the emotional story they have just heard and are more or less indifferent. They just sit afloat on the Thames, which seems to flow into the endless "darkness" of the horizon.

"Heart of Darkness" : A Critical Appreciation

Conrad's agonizing Congo experiences of 1890 were re-worked nine years later into Heart of Darkness which is generally regarded as one of the greatest short novels in the English language.

It is a crucial work in the development of modem literature, in that it establishes the dominant theme of twentieth-century writing: fear and disillusion about the western man's place in the world and the values by which he lives. The narrator and central character, Marlow, travels up the Congo to meet the demonic trader, Kurtz. He witnesses the violence and hypocrisy of his colonizing culture and his faith in the western world, and even his own sanity is threatened.

Heart of Darkness is based upon **Conrad's own experiences** of the Belgian Congo when he visited that country in the year 1890. It is a largely personal and autobiographical book. Being based upon what Conrad actually witnessed during his travels through what he calls the "heart of darkness", the book has the stamp of authenticity. Knowing Conrad's integrity as a writer, we have to accept Heart of Darkness as a truthful account of the conditions in which the savages of the Congo, a country of the dark continent of Africa, lived under the imperialist rule of the white man, and also a truthful account of the behaviour and the attitudes of the white men who went to that country as traders or as the agents of a trading company, or as explorers. The fictitious character called Marlow, who narrates the story, is Conrad himself in disguise. Most of the experiences of Marlow, and most of Marlow's reactions to what he beheld in the Belgian Congo, were Conrad's own experiences, observations, and reactions.

The **theme** of Heart of Darkness is the **conditions** prevailing in the Congo under the **imperialist** rule of the Belgian KingLeopald II. These conditions include the impact of the white traders and explorers on the life of the African savages, and the influence of the native way of life on the white men, with special reference to one man who is given the name of Kurtz. (Kurtz is a German word meaning "short"). There is another theme also which is equally important for the thoughtful reader i.e.**reality versus dream**. As Marlow voyages to the Belgian Congo by a French steamer, he observes closely the sights on the coast and falls into a meditative mood. The sights which he witnesses now, and those which he beholds subsequently, appear to him to be half real and half unreal. The unreality of these sights becomes the basic condition of Marlow's experiences.

Heart of Darkness is **replete with symbolism**. The very **title** of the novel has a symbolic meaning, in addition to its literal meaning, Literally, “Heart of Darkness” means the interior of a dark country, namely the Congo. Symbolically, the title means the depths of the human mind or the human consciousness. The book describes not only **Marlow’s** exploration of the Congo but also his exploration of his own mind and of the deeper layers of his mind. Then there are other symbols in the novel also. The women, knitting wool, symbolize the Fates of ancient classical mythology. Mr. **Kurtz**, who is the dominating character in the novel, is a symbol of the modem western man’s lust for power and pelf. The chief accountant of the Belgian trading company is as telling an image of modem man as the demonic Mr. Kurtz and there are other symbolic suggestions in the novel also.

Heart of Darkness is a **remarkable** book by virtue of its **imagery** also. Conrad here gives us ample evidence of his **descriptivepowers**. The imagery in this book is **remote** and **wild**; but it is described in such a **graphicmanner** that we begin actually to visualize it. There are, first of all, the sights which Marlow witnesses along the coast as he sails by a French steamer. Then there are the sights which Marlow witnesses on landing from the Swedish captain’s sea-going steamer. These are memorable sights indeed. We can never forget the boiler lying uselessly in the grass, the steep path, and the several pieces of decaying machinery and the rusty rails, the blasting of the rock, the clanking of the chain-gang criminals, and so on. Soon afterwards, Marlow feels as if he had stepped into the gloomy circle of some Inferno and thus the description and the imagery continue throughout the novel.

Heart of Darkness is a profound book. Part of its **profundity** is due to its **philosophicalcharacter** and to the writer’s **psychologicalinsight**. There are a large number of philosophical passages in the book. Marlow is not only a man of action and an adventurer, but also a thinker and a kind of philosopher. He tends to reflect and meditate upon whatever he observes and beholds. At the very time of setting out on his voyage, he makes the remark that he felt for a second or two as though, instead of going to the, centre of a continent, he was about to set off for the centre of the earth Now, this is a philosophical remark, though not a deeply philosophical one. Soon afterwards, he makes the remark that, as he entered into a grove near the Company’s first station, he felt as if he had stepped into the gloomy circle of some Inferno. But a more philosophical remark comes when he says that, at one point, in the course of his experience, he found it difficult to distinguish between reality and dream. When the brick-maker is talking to Marlow about Kurtz, Marlow feels that he does not at this moment see Kurtz. In fact, it seems to him at this time that he is seeing a dream and experiencing a dream-sensation. Then Marlow goes on to make the following philosophical observation: **“It is impossible to convey the life-sensation of any given epoch of one’s existence that which makes its truth, its meaning, its subtle and penetrating essence. It is impossible. We live, as we dream alone”.**

There is also plenty of **psychological analysis in Heart of Darkness**. In the course of his narration, Marlow gives us a peep into the minds of the various characters, at the same time making it possible for us to look into his own mind as well. Much of the interest of this book lies in its psychological studies of the various characters. For

instance, Marlow gives us a penetrating portrayal of the chief **accountant** of the Company. That man is able to maintain a neat and tidy appearance even in the midst of the chaotic conditions around him. Everything at the station is in a muddle (disorder), but the accountant's clothes and his account-books are being excellently maintained. Similarly, Marlow gives us a penetrating portrayal of the **manager** of the Central Station. He makes a significant remark when he says that perhaps there was nothing "within" the manager, and that, after commenting upon the effect of the climate on the white visitors to this region, the manager smiled in a manner which showed as if his smile had been a door opening into a darkness which the manager had in his keeping. Again, Marlow enables us to look into the working of the **brick-maker's** mind. Marlow quickly perceives that the brick-maker wants to know exactly where Marlow stands in relation to the higher officials of the Company which has sent him to the Congo. But it is in his descriptions of **Kurtz** that Marlow shows his real psychological insight. He skilfully, subtly, and effectively brings to our notice **Kurtz's passion for ivory**, Kurtz's passion for power, Kurtz's influence over the savages, Kurtz's secret ambitions, Kurtz's surrender to the rites and customs of the savages, Kurtz's love for his "intended", and so on. Indeed, we are able to form a comprehensive picture of Kurtz's moral character and his mental make-up' though Kurtz still remains a mysterious figure to us.

Heart of Darkness is an interesting **mixture of the traditional and the modem** in several ways. The Company's doctor, who examines Marlow before Marlow leaves for the Congo is, for instance, very much a modem figure. This doctor is something of a psychiatrist, having an interest in analysing the mental changes of individuals. The sciences of psychology and psychiatry are modern sciences which were being developed in Conrad's own time. And Marlow, in the course of his narration, himself shows a keen interest in tracing the mental processes of the various persons with whom he comes into contact. At one point in the story; Marlow speaks of the mental change going on within himself. Here he remarks that he was becoming a fit subject for scientific study by a psychologist. Furthermore, Marlow experiences a feeling central to the literature of modernism. He experiences the anarchy and the futility of modem life. He keenly experiences the truths of the modern western world whose products include its colonialism and a sense of racial superiority. The "powers of darkness" to which Marlow refers at one point are the powers of European culture to which Kurtz belongs, and which Kurtz had imbibed. In this context Marlow says that Kurtz would be claimed by the powers of darkness to whom he really belonged. These powers of darkness, according to one interpretation, are the influences of European culture on Kurtz: **"All Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz."** The trader Kurtz is a demonic person who writes and speaks with inspiring eloquence but who yet performs rites of unspeakable savagery. **Kurtz** is also the **embodiment of the colonial appetite** for **possessions** and **power**. At the same time this story has to be read as a myth. The mythical elements in it belong to tradition. There are the two ominous women knitting black wool who suggest the Fates of classical mythology. There is Marlow's journey through a certain region of the Congo which resembles Dante's Inferno. Such elements in the novel suggest that it should be read as we read a myth. Thus looked at, the novel would seem to be a statement on the timeless problems of mankind in its existence on the planet known as the earth.

Heart of Darkness has an **unusual kind of structure**. Conrad was an innovator so far as the structure of most of his novels was concerned. The structure of Heart of Darkness is very complex. In the first place, there are two narrators in this novel. The first narrator appears before us at the very beginning of the book. It is this first narrator who tells us about the boat "Nellie"_ lying anchored in the river Thames and about the men on the deck of this boat. It is this first narrator who introduces to us the second narrator. While the name of the first narrator is not given to us, the second narrator's name is given as Marlow or Charles Marlow. Now, the real story comes from the lips of this second narrator; and yet the first narrator also, intervenes occasionally in the course of the novel. This mixing up of the two narrators confuses the average reader. It is not really necessary for a novelist to adopt a device of this kind except as a point of departure from the traditional way of telling a story.

Heart of Darkness is a**masterpiece of an unusualkind**. It is a profound book, and it is at the same time a starkly realistic book. It excels both in respect of external description and imagery, and in respect of its analysis of the mental processes of its characters and its probing of the conscious and the sub-conscious mind.

Heart of Darkness : Main Ideas Explained

Alienation and Loneliness: - Throughout Heart of Darkness, which tells of a journey into the heart of the Belgian Congo and out again, the themes of alienation, loneliness, silence and solitude predominate. The book begins and ends in silence, with men first waiting for a tale to begin and then left to their own thoughts after it has concluded. The question of what the alienation and loneliness of extended periods of time in a remote and hostile environment can do to men's minds is a central theme of the book. The doctor who measures Marlow's head prior to his departure for Africa warns him of changes to his personality that may be produced by a long stay in-country. Prolonged silence and solitude are seen to have damaging effects on many characters in the book. Among these are the late Captain Fresleven, Marlow's predecessor, who was transformed from a gentle soul into a man of violence, and the Russian, who has been alone on the River for two years and dresses bizarrely and chatters constantly. But loneliness and alienation have taken their greatest toll on Kurtz, who, cut off from all humanizing influence, has forfeited the restraints of reason and conscience and given free rein to his most base and brutal instincts.

Deception: - Deception, or hypocrisy, is a central theme of the novel and is explored on many levels. In the disguise of a **''noble cause,''** the Belgians have exploited the Congo. Actions taken in the name of philanthropy are merely covers for greed. Claiming to educate the natives, to bring them religion and a better way of life, European colonizers remained to starve, mutilate, and murder the indigenous population for profit. Marlow has even obtained his captaincy through deception, for his aunt misrepresented him as **''an exceptional and gifted creature.''** She also presented him as **''one of the Workers, with a capital [W] … something like an emissary of**

light, something like a lower sort of apostle,'' and Conrad notes the deception in elevating working people to some mystical status they cannot realistically obtain. At the end of the book, Marlow engages in his own deception when he tells Kurtz's fiancée the lie that Kurtz died with her name on his lips.

Order and Disorder: - Conrad sounds the themes of order and disorder in showing, primarily through the example of the Company's chief clerk, how people can carry on with the most mundane details of their lives while all around them chaos reigns. In the larger context, the Company attends to the details of sending agents into the interior to trade with the natives and collect ivory while remaining oblivious to the devastation such acts have caused. Yet on a closer look, the Company's Manager has no talent for order or organization. His station is in a deplorable state, and Marlow can see no reason for the Manager to have his position other than the fact that he is never ill. On the other hand, the chief clerk is so impeccably dressed that when Marlow first meets him he thinks he is a vision. This man, who has been in-country three years and witnessed all its attendant horrors, manages to keep his clothes and books in excellent order. He even speaks with confidence of a Council of Europe which intended Kurtz to go far in **''the administration,''** as if there is some overall rational principle guiding their lives.

Sanity and Insanity: - Closely linked to the themes of order and disorder are those of sanity and insanity. Madness, given prolonged exposure to the isolation of the wilderness, seems an inevitable extension of chaos. The atmospheric influences at the heart of the African continent—the stifling heat, the incessant drums, the whispering bush, the mysterious light—play havoc with the unadapted European mind and reduce it either to the insanity of thinking anything is allowable in such an atmosphere or, as in Kurtz's case, to literal madness. Kurtz, after many years in the jungle, is presented as a man who has gone mad with power and greed. No restraints were placed on him—either from above, from a rule of law, or from within, from his own conscience. In the wilderness, he came to believe he was free to do whatever he liked, and the freedom drove him mad. Small acts of madness line Marlow's path to Kurtz: the Man-of-War that fires into the bush for no apparent reason, the urgently needed rivets that never arrive, the bricks that will never be built, the jig that is suddenly danced, the immense hole dug for no discernible purpose. All these events ultimately lead to a row of impaled severed human heads and Kurtz, a man who, in his insanity, has conferred a godlike status on himself and has ritual human sacrifices performed for him. The previously mentioned themes of solitude and silence have here achieved their most powerful effect: they have driven Kurtz mad. He is presented as a voice, a disembodied head, a mouth that opens as if to devour everything before him. Kurtz speaks of **''my ivory … my intended … my river … my station,''** as if everything in the Congo belonged to him. This is the final arrogant insanity of the white man who comes supposedly to improve a land, but stays to exploit, ravage, and destroy it.

Duty and Responsibility: - As is true of all other themes in the book, those of duty and responsibility are glimpsed on many levels. On a national level, we are told of the British devotion to duty and efficiency that led to systematic colonization of large parts of the globe and has its counterpart in Belgian colonization of the Congo, the book's focus. On an individual level, Conrad weaves the themes of duty and

responsibility through Marlow's job as captain, a position that makes him responsible for his crew and bound to his duties as the boat's commander. There are also the jobs of those with whom Marlow comes into contact on his journey. In Heart of Darkness, duty and responsibility revolve most often about how one does one's work. A job well done is respected; simply doing the work one is responsible for is an honourable act. Yet Conrad does not believe in romanticizing the worker. Workers can often be engaged in meaningless tasks, as illustrated in the scene where the Africans blast away at the rock face in order to build a railway, but the rock is not altered by the blasts and the cliff is not at all in the way. The Company's Manager would seem to have a duty to run his business efficiently, but he cannot keep order, and although he is obeyed, he is not respected. The Foreman, however, earns Marlow's respect for being a good worker. Marlow admires the way the Foreman ties up his waist-length beard when he has to crawl in the mud beneath the steamboat to do his job. (Having a waist-length beard in a jungle environment can be seen as another act of madness, even from an efficient worker.) Section I of the novel ends with Marlow speculating on how Kurtz would do his work. But there is a larger sense in which the themes of work and responsibility figure. Marlow says, **''I don't like work—no man does—but I like what is in the work—the chance to find yourself.''** It is through the work (or what passes for it) that Kurtz does in Africa that his moral bankruptcy is revealed. For himself, Marlow emerges with a self-imposed duty to remain loyal to Kurtz, and it is this responsibility that finally forces him to lie to Kurtz's fiancée.

Doubt and Ambiguity: - As reason loses hold, doubt and ambiguity take over. As Marlow travels deeper inland, the reality of everything he encounters becomes suspect. The perceptions, motivations, and reliability of those he meets, as well as his own, are all open to doubt. Conrad repeatedly tells us that the heat and light of the wilderness cast a spell and put those who would dare venture further into a kind of trancelike state. Nothing is to be taken at face value. After the Russian leaves, Marlow wonders if he ever actually saw him.

The central ambiguity of Heart of Darkness is Kurtz himself. Who is he? What does he do? What does he actually say? Those who know him speak again and again of his superb powers of rhetoric, but the reader hears little of it. The Russian says he is devoted to Kurtz, and yet we are left to wonder why. Kurtz has written a report that supposedly shows his interest in educating the African natives, but it ends with his advice, **''Exterminate all the brutes!''** Marlow has heard that Kurtz is a great man, yet he suspects he is **''hollow to the core.''** In Marlow's estimation, if Kurtz was remarkable it was because he had something to say at the end of his life. But what he found to say was **''the horror!''** After Kurtz's death, when various people come to Marlow representing themselves as having known Kurtz, it seems none of them really knew him. Was he a painter, a writer, a great musician, a politician, as he is variously described? Marlow settles for the ambiguous term **''universal genius,"** which would imply Kurtz was whatever one wanted to make of him.

Race and Racism: - The subject of racism is not really treated by Conrad as a theme in Heart of Darkness as much as it is simply shown to be the prevailing attitude of the day. The African natives are referred to as ''**niggers**,'' ''**cannibals**,'' ''**criminals**,''

and ‘‘**savages**.’’ European colonizers see them as a subordinate species and chain, starve, rob, mutilate, and murder them without fear of punishment. The book presents a damning account of imperialism as it illustrates the white man's belief in his innate right to come into a country inhabited by people of a different race and pillage to his heart's content.

Kurtz is writing a treatise for something called the **‘‘International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs.’’** This implies the existence of a worldwide movement to subjugate all non-white races. Kurtz bestows a kind of childlike quality upon the Africans by saying that white people appear to them as supernatural beings. The natives do, indeed, seem to have worshipped Kurtz as a god and to have offered up human sacrifices to him. This innocence proceeds, in Kurtz's view, from an inferior intelligence and does not prevent him from concluding that the way to deal with the natives is to exterminate them all.

Early in his journey, Marlow sees a group of black men paddling boats. He admires their naturalness, strength, and vitality, and senses that they want nothing from the land but to coexist with it. This notion prompts him to believe that he still belongs to a world of reason. The feeling is short-lived, however, for it is not long before Marlow, too, comes to see the Africans as some subhuman form of life and to use the language of his day in referring to them as ‘‘**creatures,’’ ‘‘niggers,’’ ‘‘cannibals,’’ and ‘‘savages**.’’ He does not protest or try to interfere when he sees six Africans forced to work with chains about their necks. He calls what he sees in their eyes the ‘‘**deathlike indifference of unhappy savages.’’** Marlow exhibits some humanity in offering a dying young African one of the ship's biscuits, and although he regrets the death of his helmsman, he says he was **‘‘a savage who was no more account than a grain of sand in a black Sahara.**’’ It is not the man he misses so much as his function as steersman. Marlow refers to the **‘‘savage who was fireman’’** as **‘‘an improved specimen.’’** He compares him, standing before his vertical boiler, to **‘‘a dog in a parody of breeches and a feather hat, walking on his hind legs.’’**

Violence and Cruelty: - The violence and cruelty depicted in Heart of Darkness escalate from acts of inhumanity committed against the natives of the Belgian Congo to **‘‘unspeakable’’** and undescribed horrors. Kurtz (representing European imperialists) has systematically engaged in human plunder. The natives are seen chained by iron collars about their necks, starved, and beaten, subsisting on rotten hippo meat, forced into soul-crushing and meaningless labour, and finally ruthlessly murdered. Beyond this, it is implied that Kurtz has had human sacrifices performed for him, and the reader is presented with the sight of a row of severed human heads impaled on posts leading to Kurtz's cabin. Conrad suggests that violence and cruelty result when law is absent and man allows himself to be ruled by whatever brutal passions lie within him. Consumed by greed, conferring upon himself the status of a god, Kurtz runs amok in a land without law. Under such circumstances, anything is possible, and what Conrad sees emerging from the situation is the profound cruelty and limitless violence that lies at the heart of the human soul.

Moral Corruption: - The book's theme of moral corruption is the one to which, like streams to a river, all others lead. Racism, madness, loneliness, deception and disorder, doubt and ambiguity, violence and cruelty—culminate in the moral corruption revealed by Kurtz's acts in the Congo. Kurtz has cast off reason and allowed his most base and brutal instincts to rule unrestrained. He has permitted the evil within him to gain the upper hand. Kurtz's appalling moral corruption is the result not only of external forces, such as the isolation and loneliness imposed by the jungle, but also, Conrad suggests, of forces that lie within all men and await the chance to emerge. Kurtz perhaps realizes the depth of his own moral corruption when, as he lays dying, he utters, **''The horror! The horror!''**Marlow feels this realization transferred to himself and understands that he too, living in a lawless state, is capable of sinking into the depths of moral corruption The savage nature of man is thus reached at the end of the journey, not upriver, but into his own soul.

Heart of Darkness : Significance of Title

"Heart of Darkness" is a short novel by Polish novelist Joseph Conrad, written as a frame narrative, about Charles Marlow's experience as an ivory transporter down the Congo River in Central Africa. The river is "a mighty big river, that we can see on the map, resembling an immense snake uncoiled, with its head in the sea, its body at rest curving afar over a vast country, and its tail lost in the depths of the land". In the course of his travel in central Africa, Marlow becomes obsessed with Mr. Kurtz. The phrase **"Heart of Darkness"** has two meanings. Literally, the title refers to the dark continent of Africa known as the Congo. **"Heart of Darkness"** is an appropriate title for the novel because Marlow describes his experiences of the interior region of the continent which was known as Congo. The events at the beginning and at the close of the novel occur outside Congo but the major and the most significant events of the story take place in the Congo and on the river Congo. The savages really belong to the heart of darkness.

There are other features of the novel too, justifying the title **"Heart of Darkness".** One such feature is the **description of the wild scenery of the thick, impenetrable jungle, and the suggestive picture of the natives not fully visible to the white men sailing over the river Congo**. At one point in the novel Marlow says that sailing up the river Congo was like traveling back to the earliest beginnings of the world. He then refers to the great silence of the impenetrable forests where the air was warm, thick, heavy and sluggish. Marlow perceived no joy in the brilliance of the sunshine in that region. The long stretches of the water-way ran on into a mob of wooded islands. One could lose one's way on that river as one might lose one's way in a desert. The stillness prevailing there was not the stillness of peace but of a relentless force brooding over some mysterious purpose. Now, a description of this kind occurs later when Marlow tells us that the night came suddenly and seemed to strike him blind. Then, about three in the morning, Marlow heard a loud splash as though a gun had been fired. When the sun rose, there was a white fog, very warm and damp, and more blinding than the night. The fog remained there like something solid. A little later in the morning the fog lifted as a shutter lifts. Marlow then had a glimpse of the towering multitude of trees, of the

immense jungle, and of the blazing little ball of the sun hanging over it, all perfectly still. And then the white fog came down again. There are other descriptive passages of the same kind in the book, too.

The **barbarism of the natives** reinforces the effect of these descriptive passages and **intensifies the atmosphere of mystery and fea**r. Reading about the natives, we get an even stronger impression that we are in the midst of darkness. On one occasion, the natives, seeing Marlow's steamer sailing up the river, draw near the river-bank in order to launch an attack upon the intruders. Marlow on this occasion hears a muffled rattle, then a very loud cry. This cry gives rise to a feeling of terror in the hearts of all the white men. Then the attack by the natives actually begins. The white men then hit back by firing their rifles. In the fighting, the helmsman of the steamer is killed with a spear hurled at him by a native. It is the **backwardness** and the **ignorance** of the natives which **creates the effect of darkness**. The natives have merely attacked the steamer because they have received instructions to do so from their supremo, Mr. Kurtz. The personality of Mr. Kurtz is very important because it is he who sums up the whole essence of the barbarism and the savagery of the natives. Marlow has conveyed to us the demonic character of Mr. Kurtz by the use of highly suggestive phrases. Instead of civilizing the natives, Mr. Kurtz has himself become barbarian. Mr. Kurtz has begun to identify himself with the savages. He has been presiding over their midnight dances which always end with **"unspeakable rites"**. In Marlow's opinion, Mr. Kurtz has taken a high place among the devils of the land. He has been experiencing **"abominable satisfaction"**, and he has been gratifying without restraint his **"various lust"**. In short, Mr. Kurtz has become part of the darkness of the Congo.

The phrase **"Heart of Darkness"** has yet another meaning. It also stands for an exploration of the depths of Marlow's own mind or soul. The human mind may also be regarded as a kind of Dark Continent whose exploration is even more difficult than the exploration of Congo. The book called **"Heart of Darkness"** may be treated as a **journey** by Marlow into **his own sub-conscious mind or into the sub-conscious mind of all mankind**. The novel called **"Heart of Darkness"** is symbolically the story of an essentially solitary journey involving a profound spiritual change in the voyager. Marlow prepares us for such a journey at the very outset. But it is, at the same time, a **psychological** and **mysticaljourney**. Marlow also tells us indirectly that, by paying close attention to the surface reality of the story and its external details, we would be able to arrive at an **inner meaning**. Thus Conrad is here able to blend morality and adventure in a unique manner, as he has done in some of his other novels as well.

There are many passages in the course of Marlow's narration in which he gives us glimpses of his own mind. At one point he tells us in explicit terms that he has always hated and detested lies because he has always found a taint of death and a flavour of mortality in lies. In the same context, Marlow also says that it is not possible for any man to convey to others the life-sensation of any period of all existence. He says:**"We live, as we dream – alone."**

At another point Marlow says that the mind of **man is capable of anything** because everything is in it. In order to endure the stark realities of human life, a man should

possess an inner strength. What a man needs is a deliberate belief, at yet another point in the novel, Marlow tells us of the effect on his own mind of the savage sight of human skulls hanging from the tops of the posts fixed to the ground outside Mr. Kurtz's residence. Later, Marlow tells us of the effect on his mind of Mr. Kurtz's arguments defending his action in slipping away from the ship's cabin into the jungle. Towards the end of the novel, Marlow tells us the working of his own mind when several persons come to him, one after the other, claiming the packet or papers and the photograph which, Mr. Kurtz had given him for safe custody; and he also reveals to us the working of his mind when he goes the meet Mr. Kurtz's Intended. In all these cases, Marlow tells us not about his conscious thoughts but also tries to probe his sub-conscious mind. This subconscious mind is also the heart of darkness which Marlow or Conrad tries to explore.

Finally the **"darkness"** is many things: it is the unknown; it is the subconscious; it is also a moral darkness; it is evil which swallows up Mr. Kurtz and it is the spiritual emptiness which he sees at the centre of existence; but above all it is mystery itself, the mysteriousness of man's spiritual life.

Heart of Darkness : Theme of Evil

Evil has a tangible reality in "Heart of Darkness" and it dominates the novel manifesting itself in several ways. At the very outset Marlow refers to the ancient Roman conquest of Britain who used only brute force. They grabbed what they could get. It was just **"robbery with violence, aggravated murder on a great scale".** Marlow then says that the conquest of any territory by any nation means the taking that territory away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than the conquerors. This talk by Marlow pertains to the evil of conquest, and to the brutality and the slaughter which any military conquest necessitates.

There is a hint of evil in Marlow's reference to the city of Brussels as a **"whitedsepulcher".** The phrase **"whited sepulcher"** means a place which is outwardly pleasant and righteous but which is inwardly corrupt and evil. The evil character of this city is emphasized when Marlow points out that the Belgian conquerors were running an over-sea empire in the Congo and making no end of coin by trade. Then there is a hint of evil in Marlow's description of the two women knitting black wool. "**In the outer room the two women knitted black wool, feverishly."**

These knitting-women remind us of the mythological Fates constantly busy in spinning the yarn of human destiny. They seemed to him to be guarding the door of darkness and knitting black wool as of to make a shroud. When Marlow is about to set out on his voyage, he feels that, instead of going to the centre of a continent, he is going to the centre of the earth. Such a remark also hints at the evil which exists in this universe.

Marlow's descriptions of the natural scenery which he witnesses in the course of his voyage have a strong suggestion of evil in them. Indeed, the wilderness and the thick forest seem to be the abode of evil. Marlow sees a huge jungle, so dark-green as to be almost black. The sun is fierce and the land seems to glisten and drop with steam. He

speaks of the empty stream, the great silence, and the impenetrable forest in which the air is warm, thick, heavy and sluggish. There is no joy in the brilliance of the sunshine here. "**And the river was there – fascinating – deadly – like a snake."**

Marlow's steamer penetrates deeper and deeper into the **"heart of darkness"** and the very earth seems unearthly. Marlow's narration heightens our sense of evil which is lurking in the forest behind the millions and millions of trees.

The other sights also suggest the existence of evil. At one point, Marlow sees a warship anchored off the coast and firing its guns without having any target in view. The firing seems to be absolutely aimless and futile. He sees several trading posts where **"the merry dance of death and trade" goes** on **"in a still and earthy atmosphere"** resembling that of an over-heated tomb. He sees a lot of people, mostly black and naked.**"A lot of people, mostly black and naked, moved about like ants."**

At one place, a rock is being blasted with gunpowder even though this it does not stand in the way of the railway line which is to be laid. Then he sees the horrible sight of a chain-gang. Men in this chain-gang are criminals who have been sentenced to hard labour.

"I could see every rib, the joints of their limbs were like knots in a rope; each had an iron collar on his neck, and all were connected together with a chain whose bights swung between them, rhythmically clinking."

Marlow remarks that he had previously seen the devil of violence, the devil of greed, and the devil of hot desire. He was seeing the **"devil of rapacious and pitiless folly".**

The white men, whom Marlow encounters in Congo, by no means provide any relief to Marlow. These men, cowardly civilized, are actually degenerate fellows. There is no goodness in them at all. The manager of the Central Station is a wicked fellow who can inspire neither fear, nor love, nor respect but only uneasiness. Marlow says that there was "nothing within" this man. The white agents are seen loitering about idly, talking maliciously and scheming against one another. The brick-maker is the manager's spy who keeps a watch upon the other white men at the Central Station. Marlow describes this man as **a "papier-mâché Mephistopheles"** meaning that his man is a veritable devil, but a follow kind of devil. The white men, who have come to civilize the natives, are only exploiters having no regard for the welfare of the savages.

Evil is the keynote of the latter portion of the novel in which Marlow records his impressions of Mr. Kurtz. He has been told that Mr. Kurtz is a **"remarkable man"** who is expected to rise at a very high position because he has been collecting more ivory than all the other agents taken together. Ivory had become a passion and an obsession with Mr. Kurtz which showsthe man's extreme greed. He has begun to identify himself with the native savages. He presides over their midnight dances which always end with **"unspeakable rites".** This means that he has begun to take pleasure in the shedding of the blood of human beings, in sexual orgies, in sexual perversions and in similar other practices. In short, Mr. Kurtz has become evil incarnate. Even when Mr. Kurtz is being

taken to Europe for medical treatment, he slips away from the ship into the jungle. When Mr. Kurtz is dying, he utters the words:**"The horror! The horror!"**

The portrayal of Mr. Kurtz is perhaps even more important in this novel for this portrayal of a civilized man is meant to convey Conrad's own ideas about evil. Conrad believes that there is much evil in the savages. He does not believe in the existence of the **"noble savage".** The barbarian customs of the savages are certainly horrifying to him. Because of his prolonged stay with the savages Mr. Kurtz become a devil. Conrad says that the western man should beware of falling a prey to the barbarism of the savages whom he conquers. Conrad depicts the savages in a favourable light too, but it is fully alive to the obnoxious customs of the savages and warns the western white men against the menace of those customs. Conrad's other message is that the white man should civilize the savages instead of exploiting them to fulfill his own greed.

Heart of Darkness: Theme of Self Restraint

Self-restraint (self-control) is certainly one of the themes of the novel **"Heart of Darkness"**. Self-restraint is only a subsidiary or secondary theme. This theme has been handled by Conrad very skillfully, and almost subtly, so that it does not project itself on our attention or undermine the other themes.

The **white men** who have gone to the Congo for trade show no **self-restraint** but **unlimited greed**. They are all there to **collect ivory**; and ivory has begun to **dominate** their **thoughts**. Ivory has become their **obsession**. The manager has begun to feel jealous of Mr. Kurtz because Mr. Kurtz collects more ivory than all the other agents put together. The desire of these men for ivory knows no bounds.

Then, all these men **seek power and authority**; and they show **noself-restraint** in this aim. The most striking example of greed is to be found in Mr. Kurtz who knows no self-restraint at all. Mr. Kurtz becomes the embodiment of the passion for ivory and for power. Many times he was heard saying:

"my ivory, my station, my intended, my career, my …"

Indeed, Mr. Kurtz has become a **devil seeking wealth** in the form of **ivory** and **seekingpower** in the form of **controlover** the **natives**. He has collected all the ivory in the Congo. On one occasion he got ready even to kill his friend, the Russian, because he was having a small quantity of ivory which he did not wish to part with and which Mr. Kurtz had demanded from him. Mr. Kurtz's passion for power also knows no bounds. He has been acquiring more and more power over the savages till he has become in their eyes a god. If any native rebels against his authority, Mr. Kurtz has him executed. The time comes when nothing on earth can prevent him from killing whomsoever he wants to kill. And he still has more plans for his self-aggrandizement.

Nor does Mr. Kurtz show any **self**-**restraint** in the **satisfaction** of his **primitive** instincts which have begun to **dominatehim**. Mr. Kurtz has become an active sharer in

the demonic practices of the savages. He presides over their midnight dances which always end with "unspeakable rites" including sex-orgies, sadistic and masochistic practices, human sacrifice and other obnoxious acts. He indulgence in all such proceedings has assumed vast scope and has begun enjoying "abominable satisfactions". He now gives a free outlet to his "monstrous passions" in the company of the savages.

Mr. Kurtz shows no **self**-**restraint** even in his desire for **possessingthings** and for **owningthings**. Indeed, his sense of ownership and proprietorship has assumed abnormal proportions. He has developed a feeling that everything belongs to him. And yet there is emptiness in his soul. His mind is by no means insane, but his soul has certainly gone mad. He is "hollow at the core", as Marlow puts it. And yet this man is able to stir feelings of friendship and respect in Marlow. Here we are faced with a paradox.

There is also a **lack of self-restraint** in the **Russian** who has developed an attitude of worship towards Mr. Kurtz. The Russian, a highly intelligent and well-educated man, begins to adore Mr. Kurtz. According to the Russian, Kurt's has taught him many things and has enabled him to look into the essence of things. The Russian regards Mr. Kurtz as one of the immortals. Surprisingly Marlow himself develops an attitude of respect towards Mr. Kurtz. He has discovered that Kurtz is hollow at the core and has taken a high place among the devils of the land. And yet Marlow himself falls under Mr. Kurtz's influence. When Mr. Kurtz has slipped away from the ship's cabin into the forest, Marlow follows him to bring him back. Marlow writes:

"I did not betray Mr. Kurtz – it was ordained. I should never betray him – it was written I should be loyal to the nightmare of my choice."

Marlow also says that Mr. Kurtz had **conquered** his soul which is totally untainted by selfishness. Marlow interpret Mr. Kurtz's last words as indicative of Mr. Kurtz's victory over the evil within him. Thus we can safely affirm that even Marlow shows a **lack** of self-**restraint** in his feelings of **admiration** and regard for Mr. Kurtz.

This **theme of self-restraint finds expression** also in the manner in which Marlow has depicted the **cannibalcrew** on his **steamer**. These cannibals were very **hungry**, and they could easily have killed some of the white men on board the steamer and consumed their flesh but they **showed self-restraint**. **This self-restraint on the part of the cannibals is quite puzzling and highly commendable, though surprising.** In respect of self-restraint the cannibals score a **point over the civilized white men**. Even the white manager of the Central Station shows restraint in his mental make-up. He refrains from giving orders to Marlow and says that Marlow has the right to decide whether he should continue the voyage to the Inner Station or stop for a few hours to find out whether the savages would attack the steamer.

According to an eminent critic, restraint or self-restraint is a major theme in "Heart of Darkness". Mr**. Kurtz hasno restraint** because he has no urgent work to do and has no belief. Mr**. Kurtz's extremism and faith are the opposite of true belief which is needed to tackle darkness.** On account of this lack of moral equipment and his greed

of money and power, Mr. Kurtz is unable to cope with the forces of savagery and evil within him. Mr. Kurtz's only defence is his eloquence but this is not enough. These heads, stuck to the poles show that Mr. Kurtz lacked restraint in the gratification of his various lusts. The native helmsman, steering Marlow's steamer, also showed a lack of restraint which results in his murder.

"In fact nobody in the story has any real restraint except the most savage of all men, the half-starved cannibals on board the steamer who amaze Marlow by the fact that they restrained themselves from tucking into the pilgrims."

This true restraint on the part of the cannibals is incomprehensible to Marlow. Marlow's failure to solve this mystery and many other mysteries in the story is linked to a lack of restraint in the language which Marlow uses. Marlow occasionally employs excessive rhetoric, thus showing his lack of restraint in the use of language also.

Heart of Darkness : Theme of Isolation

"Heart of Darkness" has a multiplicity of themes interwoven closely and produces a unified pattern. The theme of isolation and its consequences constitute a theme in this book, though a minor one. **Marlow and Mr. Kurtz illustrate this theme**, dominate the novel and have symbolic roles. Both **thesemenstand** for **muchmorethantheindividuals** which they certainly are.

Marlow strikes us from the very start as a **lonely** figure. Although he is a member of a small group of people sitting on the deck of the streamer called the "Nellie". He is, at the very outset, differentiated from the others. He sits cross-legged in the pose of a Buddha preaching in European clothes without a lotus-flower. Then he begins his story, and nowhere in his narration does he appear to be feeing perfectly at home among other people. He seems to have the temperament of a man who would like to stay away from others, though he would certainly like to observe others and to mediate upon his observations.

When Marlow goes to Brussels for an interview, he depicts himself as an alien who has stepped into an unpleasant environment. The city of Brussels makes him think of a **"whited sepulcher".** This feeling clearly shows that he has nothing in common with the people of this European city, though he is himself a European. Then he finds something ominous in the atmosphere of the office of the Company. The two knitting-women strike him as mysterious and sinister beings. **"In the outer room the two women knitted black wool, feverishly."**

Even the doctor tells him that he is the first Englishman to have come under his observation. Marlow says: **'The old doctor felt my pulse, evidently thinking of something else the while. "Good, good for there," he mumbled, and then with a certain eagerness asked me whether I would let him measure my head.**

There seems to be a distance even between Marlow and his aunt who has got him the job. She is enthusiastic and cordial enough, but Marlow has his reservations. He thinks that she is a most unrealistic woman. She is under the impression that the white men go into the backward regions to confer benefits upon the savages. But, in Marlow's opinion, this view of the white men is entirely wrong.

When **voyaging** upon the sea in order to get to the Congo Marlow found himself to be perfectly **idle** and **isolated** from all the others on board the steamer because he had no point of contact with them. The sound of the sea-waves was the only source of comfort to him because these sounds seemed to be like "the speech of a brother". He finds a kinship with the sea-waves but no kinship with the human beings on board the steamer.

Marlow'ssense of **loneliness** increase when he sees certain **sightsin theCongo**. These sights convey to him the futility of the white man's exertions and activities in the Congo, and miseries of the black natives. His realization by him of white man's cruelty creates a kind of barrier between him and the white men living in Congo. When he has to deal with the individual white men, his isolation is further emphasized. He finds absolutely no point of contact with the manager of the Central Station, with the manager's uncle, and with the brick-maker. The manager is a man who inspires no fear, no love, no respect and there is "nothing within this man". The manager's uncle is an intriguer and plotter as the manager himself. The brick-maker is described by Marlow as a "papier-mâché Mephistopheles" and a devil who is hollow within. The only man, whom Marlow can respect, is the chief accountant who keeps his account-books in apple-pie order and is always seen dressed neatly and nicely; but perhaps Marlow is speaking here ironically. Actually none of the white men seems to have any merit in him. Marlow does discover some good points in the natives but none in the white men. The cannibal crew of his steamer shows an admirable self-restraint and are hard-working but the white agents seem to be useless fellows and to them he gives the nickname of the "faithless pilgrims". It is only when Marlow meets Mr. Kurtz that some sort of contact is established between him and the chief of the Inner Station of the Company.

The **effect of isolation** upon Marlow is **profound**. He is by nature somewhat unsociable. He is a kind of philosopher who meditates upon whatever he sees. Isolation further heightens his meditative faculty. Finding no point of contact with others, Marlow becomes more of a **thinker** and more of **aphilosopher**-**cum**-**psychologist** and studies the character and habits of Mr. Kurtz; and it is because of his isolation that he falls a victim to the influence of Mr. Kurtz whom he has himself described as a devil. This isolation can have grave consequences.

Mr. Kurtz is **anotherisolatedfigure**. He has become an **absolutelysolitary man** after his **prolongedstay** in the Congo. He is not solitary in the sense that he does not mix with other. In fact, he **has begun to identify himself with the savages and has become a sharer in their activities and in their interests**. He participates in their **"unspeakable rites"** and he gratifies, without any restraint, his various lusts and his monstrous passions.**"The wilderness has caressed him, loved him, embraced him, entered his blood, consumed his flesh and has taken complete possession of his soul."**

In the case of Mr. Kurtz, it is isolation which proves the man's undoing. Being **cut offfrom** all **civilized society** at the Inner Station of the Company, Mr. Kurtz begins slowly to fall **under the influence of the savage till he becomes one of them**. Gradually he acquires great power and begins to be regarded as a god by them. Thus now he has to keep himself at a distance even from them. He "**presides**" over their midnight dances which end with "**unspeakablerites**".

But he is a **solitary figure** in the context of his **western education and European upbringing**. Even among the savages, he stands far above them. The savages regard him as a man-god. Mr. Kurtz is indeed a deity for the savages, and therefore he is a solitary figure even among them. Perhaps the savage closest to him under these conditions is the native woman who is his housekeeper and also perhaps his mistress. But the evil within him has already acquired huge proportions. Thus **the effects of isolation in Mr. Kurtz's case are disastrous**.

Heart of Darkness : White Imperialism

Heart of Darkness is a short novel, and yet it has several themes. It is indeed strange that such a short book should deal with so many themes.

There is in this book the theme of self-restraint. Then there is the theme of the working of the sub-conscious mind of man. There is the theme of the exploration of a little-known continent. There is the theme of the influence of barbarism and primitivism on a civilized man when he is cut off from civilized society. And there is, of course, the obvious theme of the imperialist exploitation of a backward country. Thus Heart of Darkness is a masterpiece which, in its brief compass, deals with a number of important ideas. Conrad's treatment of the theme of white imperialism was influenced by his own visit to the Congo and his exploration of that dark country; and his rendering of Marlow's conscious and sub-conscious thoughts was also based upon his own reactions to what he had himself witnessed in the course of his travels through the Congo.

Marlow's Reference to the Ancient Roman Conquest of Britain: -The keynote of the theme of imperialism is struck at the very outset of Marlow's narration. Marlow speaks at the very beginning of the ancient Roman conquest ofBritain, and says that the ancient Romans were conquerors using brute force. The ancient Romans, says Marlow, grabbed what they could get. Their conquest of Britainwas "robbery with violence"; and the violence in this case meant murder on a large scale. The conquest of another country, says Marlow, mostly means the taking away all things from those who have a different complexion or who have flatter noses than the conquerors have. Such a conquest is unpardonable. What can, however, excuse such a conquest is the idea at the back of it: not a sentimental pretence but an idea, and an unselfish belief in the idea. What Marlow here wishes to say is that conquest can be excused only if the conquerors perform some constructive work in the backward country which they have conquered. Marlow here does not use the phrase "the white man's burden;" but he has evidently that concept in his mind. The white man certainly has a duty to the savages whom he dues, and whom he begins to govern. The test of the white man's intentions lies only in

his performance of this duty. If he fails in this duty, his government of the backward countries cannot be justified.

Ivory a Symbol of Imperialist Greed and Commercial Mentality: - Marlow's (or Conrad's) experiences in the Congo clearly show that the white man there had failed to perform his functions. Instead of civilizing the savages, the white men who went there became exploiters, pure and simple. The Congo was at that time being governed by the Belgian King, Leopold II; and the Belgian trading companies were sending their agents into the Congo for trading purposes. The chief commodity which these Belgians found worth their pains was ivory. Ivory was of no use to the natives, themselves, while the white men collected ivory and sent it to Europe where it could profitably be used for the making of numerous ornamental articles. Now, as we go through this book, we find that ivory is being constantly mentioned. Ivory dominates the thoughts of the manager of the Central Station, the thoughts of the brick-maker, the thoughts of the several white agents who loiter around the Central Station and to whom Marlow gives the name of "faithless pilgrims." Subsequently we find that ivory not only dominates the thoughts of Mr. Kurtz but has become an obsession with him. The manager of the Central Station tells Marlow that Mr. Kurtz collects more ivory than all the other agents taken together; and the Russian tells Marlow that, on one occasion, Mr. Kurtz had threatened to kill him if he did not surrender to Mr. Kurtz a small quantity of ivory which the Russian had received as a gift from a native tribal chief. Thus ivory becomes a symbol in the book. Ivory symbolizes the white man's greed and the white man's commercial mentality. The white man's chief concern in the Congo is to collect ivory and send it to Europe. The greater the ivory collected by an agent, the greater is his achievement in the eyes of his employers, and the higher is the promotion which he can expect Ivory, becomes a source of revenue to the trading company which can, therefore, afford to invest a lot of money in sending its agents into the Congo. Nowhere do we find any mention of any service being rendered by these white men to the natives of the Congo.

The White Man's Callousness towards the Natives: - The sights seen by Marlow, when he has got down from the Swedish captain's steamer, are of a very depressing kind. These sights depict the wretchedness and the misery of the natives of the Congo, and the sheer futility of the white man's seemingly useful work. Marlow sees a lot of black people, mostly naked, moving about like ants. Later he sees half a dozen men chained. to one another, and each wearing an iron collar on his neck. These men are criminals, who have violated the laws and are being punished with hard labour under the orders of the white rulers of the country. Marlow feels deeply upset to see this sight. Going further, he sees black figures crouching under the trees, leaning against the trunks, and clinging to the earth. These men, says Marlow, were dying slowly. These men were not enemies; they were not criminals; they were only black figures representing disease and starvation, and lying in a state of confusion in the gloom of the trees. Here Marlow feels as if he has entered into the gloomy circle of some inferno. Now, it is made obvious to us that the white man's indifference and his unconcern are responsible for this state of affairs. These sights have been described by Marlow in order to convey to us the callousness of the white man towards the natives.

A Waste of Time and Effort by the White Man: No Rivets: - Accompanying all these sights are a few others which clearly indicate the hypocrisy of the white men who are simply wasting time and effort to show that some kind ofconstructive work is going on. There is a project to build a railway line in this region. But Marlow sees that a rock is being blasted with gunpowder even though this rock does not stand as an obstruction in the way of the railway line. Likewise, he sees a boiler lying unused in the grass. Then he comes upon some pieces of decaying machinery, and a large heap of rusty rails. Similarly, before landing here, Marlow had seen a warship anchored close to the land, and firing its guns into the forest aimlessly. Marlow had found a touch of madness in this firing of guns to no purpose at all. Outwardly, of course, the warship was frightening away the savages; but actually it was merely a waste of ammunition. This waste of effort and the unused machinery lying in the grass offer a sharp contrast to the starving natives. The whole effort of the white man is completely misdirected. It is a sad commentary on the efficiency of the white man that Marlow should not be able to get any rivets to repair the wrecked ship for weeks when these are needed badly.

The Meanness and Pettiness of the White Colonizers: - The futility of the white man’s endeavours in the dark country called the Congo becomes even more evident when we meet certain employees of the trading Company which has sent Marlow here. The manager of the Central Station has been described by Marlow in scathing terms. Marlow makes us despise this man who could inspire neither respect nor love nor fear, and who could inspire only uneasiness. Marlow found nothing within this man. Marlow’s description of the brick-maker is equally satirical and critical. He describes the brick-maker as a “papier-mache Mephistopheles” because of this man’s cunning. The brick-maker is here, but he makes no bricks. His function is to act as a spy for the manager. The men, who are loitering around the Central Station, are idlers having no work to do but only to gossip, to speak ill of one another, and to hatch intrigues. When the manager’s uncle turns up as the leader of an exploring expedition, he turns out to be a seasoned schemer and plotter. The manager’s mind is full of fear lest he should be superseded by Mr. Kurtz. If such are the colonizers in the dark continent ofAfrica, what possible benefit can they confer upon the savages there? Conrad conveys his strong disapproval and disapprobation of these white, men to us most effectively, so that we begin to look upon these white men with the greatest possible contempt.

The Shabby Treatment, Meted Out to the Black Crew: - It is equally disgusting for us to watch the manner in which the cannibal crew of Marlow’s steamer are being treated by the white owners of the steamer. The cannibal crew are most efficient, hard-working, and sturdy fellows who deserve every possible encouragement. But the pity of it is that they are not fed properly. It goes to the credit of the cannibal crew themselves that they are exercising self-restraint and are not attacking the white men on board the steamer in order to kill them and eat their flesh. Thus the white men, led by the manager, are absolutely unconcerned about the welfare of the very men on whose labour and toil they depend. Without this cannibal crew the steamer could not have gone ahead at all; and yet the white bosses do not bother whether or not these men are properly fed.

The Lamentable Failure of Mr. Kurtz to Uplift the Savages: - Even Mr. Kurtz, who has begun to identify himself with the savages, and who had at one time held that the white man should confer huge benefits upon the backward people, has done nothing for the uplift of the natives. Instead of improving their mode of life, he has himself become a savage in their company. He has miserably failed to exercise any self-restraint, and has begun to satisfy his various lusts without any limit. Even in his prime of life, when he had supported the view about the white man's civilizing role, he had written down the following words conveying an opposite message: "Exterminate all the brutes." In fact, Mr. Kurtz has now become brutalized, and even dehumanized. Such is the irony of the achievement of Mr. Kurtz who had once upon a time believed that the white man could prove himself to be the Messiah of the natives.

Conrad's Exposure of the Belgian Imperialist Rule: - Heart of Darkness conveys to us in a 'nutshell the deceit, fraud, robberies, arson, murder, slave-trading, and general policy of cruelty of the Belgian rule in the Congo. There is an incident of fire in the story, and there is the long trek during which the natives have to carry a heavy load on their heads in the service of their white masters. The portrayal of the Company's chief accountant is in itself a grim commentary upon the white man who can afford to dress flawlessly when the natives around are disease-stricken and starving. (Marlow of course admires this man but to us this admiration seems to be ironical). Indeed, in this novel the brutal futility of the Belgian imperialist rule is memorably captured in image after image: a natural ravine is clogged with a wanton smash-up of imported drainage-pipes; and the grass grows through the ribs of a trader's corpse in a village abandoned in panic upon his accidental killing, colonialist and local community destroyed equally by their encounter.

The Wider Implications of This Novel: - We can go so far as to say that Conrad is here not only exposing the hollowness and the weaknesses of the Belgian imperialist rule over the Congo but also indirectly reminding us of British imperialism in various countries of the world of his time. Today the picture-of the world is widely different from what it was in Conrad's time. Today white imperialism has crumbled; and most of the countries of Asia and Africa have become independent. But in Conrad's time all the African countries were still a part of the dark continent, and most of the Asian Countries were being governed by their white rulers, chiefly the British. Therefore his picture of imperialist misrule and callousness in, the backward countries had in those days an undeniable relevance. Conrad's denunciation of imperialist rule in the Congo had a valuable message for both the exploiters and the exploited. Today, of course, this message has only a historical interest. Now all the subject-countries have become independent, though independence has brought new problems for them. The evil of imperialist rule has ended, but other evils have come into existence.

Heart of Darkness : Pessimism in the Novel

A pessimist generally ignores the bright side of life, and concentrates on the dark and depressing side. Conrad very rarely speaks about the joys of life and about man's victories and triumphs in this world. He is aware of the grandeur of human nature. But

he chiefly dwells upon the short-sightedness, corruption, egotism, and fanaticism which govern human life. The general trend of his thinking is pessimistic, and he feels especially troubled by the mystery of fate. Almost all his novels and stories lay stress onthe numberless varieties of human suffering. The weaknesses of human nature everywhere dominate his novels. Conrad is of the opinion that the fundamental selfishness of man turns him into a wolf. He is certainly aware of the virtues of loyalty, fidelity, and integrity which are found in human beings; but the emphasis in his novels is upon the misery and the misfortunes which afflict human life.

Heart of Darkness is a sombre and grim novel. The title of this book is Heart of Darkness, and the book deals with the dark continent. But the story itself is also essentially dark and bleak. There is very little in this book to relieve the darkness which prevails. After reading this novel, we rise from our seats with very heavy hearts; and for days together we find ourselves unable to recover from the sadness which had begun to oppress us.

Marlow's Opening Remarks: - Marlow's very opening remarks about the Roman conquest of Britain centuries ago have a touch of sadness about them. He tells his listeners that all conquest is "robbery with violence," and that violence in this context means "aggravated murder on a great scale." Powerful nations and communities strive to grab whatever they can get by attacking the weaker nations. Marlow is here undoubtedly hinting at the imperialist rule of the modem western nations also. In this context, we must remember that Marlow's voice is essentially the voice of Conrad himself. When Marlow criticizes and censures the ancient Roman conquest of the backward countries like Britain, it is Conrad who is censuring the Belgian, the Spanish, and the British conquerors who had established their own empires in modem times. These opening remarks by Marlow bring before us scenes of the reckless slaughter of the backward people and the establishment by the invaders of their own governments in the conquered territories.

The Sight of the Knitting-Women and the Talk of the Doctor: - Marlow's comments upon the two women who sit knitting black wool in the Company's office also have -a tinge of sadness in them. These knitting-women appear to Marlow to represent the Fates who keep busy spinning the yarn of the destiny of human beings on this earth. After seeing these women, Marlow speaks in terms of shrouds and dead bodies. They bring to his mind the spectacle of gladiators getting killed in the arena where bloody contests used to take place for the amusement of emperors and commoners. Thus the sight of these women is ominous and suggests dark thoughts. Even the Company's doctor, who examines Marlow and who is by nature a jovial man, says something which has a hint of tragedy in it. The doctor says that he, as a scientist, would very much like to study the changes that take place in the mind of a white man who goes into a dark and unexplored country like the Congo. Evidently, the doctor is aware of the fact that a white man would almost go crazy in a country where he meets only savages and has to deal with them. Subsequently we learn that no white man has been able to spend more than three years in the Congo. Everyone, who went there, fell ill and had to be sent back to Europe. The manager of the Central Station is, of course, a man with an exceptional

stamina; and he can withstand the rigours of the climate of theCongo; but most of the white men have been unable to do that.

The Sights of the Suffering and Misery of the Natives of the Congo: - Marlow's feeling of isolation is conveyed to us very effectively when he is sailing towards the Congo by a French steamer. In this context, Marlow tells us that he was a lonely man on that steamer because he had no point of contact with any member of the crew, and also because he had no duties to perform. The sights which Marlow witnesses on reaching the Company's very first trading post are of a kind which would depress and sadden any visitor. Marlow sees a number of black men held together by means of a chain, and each wearing an iron collar around his neck. This chain-gang of criminals gives rise to awful thoughts in Marlow's mind. The other sights, which Marlow sees here, make him feel that he has entered the gloomy circle of some inferno. He finds large numbers of black men sitting in groups, close to the tree-trunks, and dying slowly of starvation and disease. These sights are intended by Conrad to convey to us the white man's total indifference to the needs of the black natives of the Congo, and the white man's self-centeredness. The white man was supposed to ameliorate the conditions of life for the savages; but the white man is absolutely unconcerned with the indescribable sufferings and misery of these black men. The white man evidently makes full use of the labour and toil of the backward and ignorant natives but pays no attention to their uplift.

Depressing Portrayals of the White Men Working in the Congo:- Conrad also shows his pessimism in the manner in which Marlow portrays the white men whom he meets at the Central Station. The manager is described by Marlow as a man who could inspire neither love nor fear nor respect but who could certainly inspire "uneasiness." There was "nothing within him." In other words, the manager was a man with a barren soul. Conrad's purpose here is to convey to us the spiritual emptiness of the white men who went to the backward countries for purely trading purposes. The manager's chief anxiety is to collect as much ivory as possible, though at the same time he feels jealous of Mr. Kurtz who is achieving an enormous success in collecting ivory. The white agents, who are seen by Marlow loitering about the Central Station, seem to be idlers who have no work to do and who merely spend their time in talking ill of one another and in hatching intrigues. These men are described by Marlow satirically or ironically as "pilgrims". Then there is the brick-maker who earns Marlow's strong disapproval by his cunning. This man talks a lot, but there is little meaning in his talk. Marlow describes him as a **"papier-mâché Mephistopheles."** Naturally we feel greatly depressed by Marlow's sketches of these men who have come to the Congo as the ambassadors of progress and enlightenment but each of whom is cutting a sorry figure.

The Most Pessimistic Part of the Novel:- The most pessimistic part of the novel, however, is that which deals with the character and deeds of Mr. Kurtz. This man had at one time given evidence of possessing a highly progressive and liberal outlook. In the prime of his life, he had believed in the great benefits which the white men could confer upon the backward peoples of the earth. But, after having stayed among the savages, this man has himself become a savage. Instead of civilizing the beasts, he has himself become a beast. He certainly retains his identity as a civilized man, but he gives evidence of that identity only when he is spending some time at his headquarters at the

Inner Station. When he goes into the interior to collect ivory, he begins to participate in the life of the savages and to share all their activities. He has now become a powerful man and is worshipped by the savages as a kind of deity. He now presides over their midnight dances which always end with "unspeakable rites." He has now begun to gratify his various lusts without restraint, and he is now giving a free outlet to his monstrous passions. Marlow frankly says that Mr. Kurtz has now taken a high place among the devils of the land. Such is the effect of a savage environment on a civilized man when he is cut off from civilized society. Mr. Kurtz has now become a barbarian, giving a free vent to his primitive instincts which have risen to the surface under the influence of the savages. A large number of posts are fixed to the ground outside his residence are; and on the top of each post there is a human head or skull. These heads and skulls are of those natives who had incurred Mr. Kurtz's displeasure and who had been executed under his orders. In short, the spectacle of an enlightened man falling a prey to the evil influence of barbarism has an intensely depressing effect on us. We begin to feel that civilization is only a thin veneer which wears off soon under adverse conditions of life. Beneath his refinement and culture, a human being continues to be essentially a primitive. In fact, a change has begun to occur even in Marlow; and, if Marlow had stayed among the savages in the Congo for any length of time, he too would have morally degenerated and become a savage.

Heart of Darkness : Symbolism

Symbolism means a **deepermeaning** in **what has been written than meets the eye**.The complexity with profundity of most of the modern writers leads them to fill their wirings with greater significance than we find on the surface. "**Heart of Darkness" is repletewithsymbols**. Every person and everything means more than what we find on a superficial view. The novel is based on the facts of history as well as on the facts of Conrad's own life; but Conrad has tried to convey the evasive and elusive truth underlying both the historical facts and his personal experiences.

Almost every character in "Heart of Darkness" has some symbolic significance. The central figure **Mr. Kurtz,firstly**, symbolizes the **greed** and the **commercial** and **corrupt** mentality of the **westerncountries**. **Secondly**, he symbolizes the **white man's love for power**. Power corrupts man and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

Thirdly, **the change**, which comes over him during his stay among the savages, symbolizes the **influence of barbarism** upon a civilized man. It also symbolizes the **irresistible influences of barbarism upon a civilized man cut off from civilized** society. Where there is no check on a man, the worst of him may come out.

Finally, Mr. Kurtz symbolizes the **repentantsinner**. Mr. Kurtz's desire to collect the maximum quantity of ivory conveys the exploitation of the backward people of Congo by the white colonizers.

Marlow too has a symbolic role in the novel. **Firstly**, he symbolizes the **spirit of adventure and a love of knowledg**e. **Secondly**, he **symbolizes the thoughtful**

observer of human life and the thoughtful student of human nature. He also **symbolizes** a philosophical approach to human life by constantly meditating upon what he observes. To some extent, he too **symbolizes** the **influence** of **savagery** because his own primitive instincts have been awakened when he heard a lot about Mr. Kurtz's way of life and then by his close personal contact with that man.

The subsidiary characters too possess symbolic significance. There is the **manager of the Central Station**. It is wrong to say that he symbolizes inefficiency. If he had been inefficient, he would not have been able to continue at his post. He **symbolizes spiritual emptiness.** If he is unable to inspire respect or love or fear, it is because he is spiritually barren and has no originality and no solid ideas in his head, though he can do his manager's work like a machine.

The **brick-maker** acts as a "**papier-mâché Mephistopheles" and symbolizes cunning and trickery.** There are numerous white agents or traders loitering around the Central Station because they are idle. These men are described by Marlow as "faithful pilgrims".

The **cannibal crew** on Marlow's steamer really symbolizes **efficiency** because they do not shirk work. More than efficiency, they symbolize **self**-**restraint** because they do not try to satisfy their hunger by killing and eating white men's flesh.

The **knitting women** in the beginning of the story **symbolize** the **Fates** who determine the future of every human being on the earth. These knitting women symbolize the danger which lies in store for Marlow.**In the outer room the two women knitted black wool, feverishly.**

The **majestic-looking native woman**, who appears on the riverbank when Mr. Kurtz is being taken away, symbolizes a **woman's strong devotion and steadfast loyalty** to her lord and lover.

Mr. **Kurtz'sfiancée** also symbolizes **loyalty** but her **loyalty is that of an innocent**, inexperienced woman who is deluded by false appearances and does not know the ways of the world. The fiancée symbolizes the hold of an illusion upon a woman's mind.

The **Russian** symbolizes **inquisitiveness or the desire to learn**. But he also **symbolizes loyalty and fidelity**, the two virtue which Marlow also symbolizes.

Many **sights seen by Marlow** also possess symbolic significance. The **French warshipfiring** aimlessly into the forest, and the rock being blasted with gun powder but without any purpose **symbolizethe sense of futility and an aimless endeavour**. **Ivory** symbolizes the white men's greed.

Then there is the sight of one over-worked and starved native labourers dying slowly of disease and starvation. The condition of these men symbolizes the sufferings of the natives who do not receive any sympathy from the white colonizers.**They were dying**

slowly … They were not enemies, they were not criminals, they were nothing earthly now, - nothing but black shadows of disease and starvation.

The chain-gang with half a dozen native men chained to one another, and each wearing an iron collar round his neck, symbolize the white man's sway over the ignorant backward people without any concern for their welfare.**"… the joints of their limbs were like knots in a rope; each had an iron collar on his neck, and all were connected together with a chain whose bights swung between them, rhythmically clinking.**

The description of the **natural scenery** also serves a symbolic purpose. The scenery is wild and awe-inspiring. The silence of the woods and the abundance of trees symbolizes**mystery and horror**. Marlow has given us many pictures of the thick, dense, matted forests.**And the river was there – fascinating – deadly – like a snake.**

The **city of Brussels symbolizes** the **inner corruption and degeneracy** of **whiteman'scivilization**. Brussels seems to Marlow to be the white sepulchre – something outwardly pleasant and holy but inwardly rotten.

Finally, Marlow's whole **journey into the Congo** has symbolic significance besides its literal meaning. It may be regarded as a **journey into subconscious** mind of Marlow in particular and of mankind in general. "**Heart of Darkness" is the story of a journey involving spiritual change in the voyager.** Symbolically, Marlow's journey into the Congo is an arduous physical activity or adventure. The literal meaning of 'heart of darkness' is the inmost region of Congo; but symbolically this phrase means the inmost region of man's mind or soul. As Marlow stands for Conrad, the novel becomes a kind of Conrad's exploration of his own mind during his visit to the Congo in 1890.**In the business of exploration, both exploiter and exploited are corrupted.**

In short, the imperial exploitation of the Congo has effectively been conveyed through a symbolic description of numerous scenes and situations.

The papier-mâché Mephistopheles is the name Marlow gives the brick-maker of the Central Station. He, at first glance, appears to be a kind soul, but it doesn't take long for Marlow to discover that he isn't: he is a "devil", more than an enabler or the grim-reaper, but less than Lucifer (who, I anticipate, is Mr. Kurtz himself). This is therefore the second level of the "Inferno". He is in papier-mâché because he is not real, though he could very well be: he is not really Mephistopheles, merely because he wants to be wants to be this type of character.

Heart of Darkness: Autobiographical Elements

Many of Conrad's works are based upon Conrad's own experiences in life. Heart of Darkness definitely, belongs to the category of autobiographical works. This novel is actually a record of Conrad's own experiences in the course of his visit to the Congo in 1890. Conrad was only nine years old when, looking at a map of Africa of the time, he said to himself.**"When I grow up, I shall go there."**

In Heart of Darkness the fictitious character, Charles Marlow, also tells his friends on the deck of a steamboat that, in his boyhood, he had been greatly attracted by the African country known as the Congo, and that the river Congo flowing through' that country had exercised a particular fascination upon him.

In 1890, **Conrad actually travelled to the Congo**. As a grown-up man, Conrad felt even more interested in going to the Congo because of the exploits of the explorer named Henry Morton Stanley. His exploration of the dark continent had led to the Belgian King Leopold II taking control of the region to which was given the name of the Congo Free State. As a result of Stanley's exploration, certain trading stations and administration centres were also established by Belgian Companies. Conrad's interest in Africa was greatly increased by Stanley's exciting experiences and discoveries. By the time Conrad reached the Congo, it had almost become the private property of King Leopold II and it had begun to be exploited by the Belgian trading companies in the name of Christianity and civilization.

Conrad's Unpleasant Experiences: - In order to go to the Congo, Conrad had to take the help of an aunt who was by vocationa writer of novels. Through her influence, Conrad obtained a job with a trading company as the captain of a steamboat which was to take an exploring expedition led by AlexandreDelcommune to a place called Katanga in the Congo. Conrad felt very pleased with the prospect of being able to visit the region of his boyhood dreams. However, Conrad's pleasure was greatly marred by a quarrel which he had with AlexandreDelcommune's brother who was functioning as a manager under the same trading company at a trading station on the way. Conrad formed a very adverse opinion about this manager whom he blamed for the many things which went wrong with his voyage on the river Congo, especially the delay in his arriving at his destination. Conrad had many other unpleasant experiences as well. Most of Conrad's experiences in the course of this visit were recorded by him in a diary to which he gave the name of theCongo Diary. One entry in this diary informs us that hardly sixty per cent of the Company's European employees stayed in the Congo for more than six months because of the diseases which overtook them. Hardly seven per cent of the Europeans could withstand the climate of the Congo for more than three years. Thus Conrad began to feel disillusioned with this region in the very early part of his visit. He felt also disappointed to find that most of the Europeans spoke ill of one another, and had very little else to do. In the course of his visit, Conrad had to walk over rocky territory in the scorching sun, camping at night in the damp and cold, and facing threats of mutiny from the porters. Finally, Conrad arrived at a station where the company's ships were assembled or repaired.

An Agent Called Klein, the Original of Mr. Kurtz: - Conrad's main duty now was to bring one of the Company's agents whose health had been failing. The name of this agent was Klein. This man had arrived in the Congo late in 1883 and had been placed in command of the Company's station at Stanley Falls in 1890. He subsequently died aboard Conrad's steamship by which he was being brought. It was this agent, by the name of Klein, who is transformed into Mr. Kurtz in Heart of Darkness. During this time Conrad's own health began to be damaged by the unwholesome climate and environment. Hence he decided to give up his job and return to Europe. However, he

stayed on as long as he could; and, by the time he returned, he was a broken man. In fact, he never afterwards regained his normal health. And it was as a consequence of this permanent impairment of his health that he gave up voyaging altogether, and turned to writing as a profession.

"Heart of Darkness," Largely a Record of Conrad's Own Experiences: - In Heart of Darkness the character named Marlow is largely Conrad himself. AlexandreDelcommune's brother becomes the manager of the Central Station in Heart of Darkness. In the novel, Marlow makes very unfavourable comments on the manager of the Central Station because Conrad had formed an adverse view of AlexandreDelcommune's brother with whom Conrad had quarrelled. Similarly, in Heart of Darkness, Marlow says that the white men at the Central Station had very little work to do and spent much of their time plotting and intriguing against one another. Marlow, like Conrad, experiences a strong sense of disillusionment and disappointment after observing the behaviour of the white traders and also the conditions of life of the natives. The colonial exploitation of the dark continent by the white traders in ivory, as witnessed by Conrad himself, is described by Marlow in scathing terms. Marlow also records the disastrous effects of the climate of the Congo upon the white traders and agents who were sent by the Belgian Companies to this region. Only the manager of the Central Station has the stamina to withstand the rigours of climate here, while most other agents had to go back to Europe after spending a short period of time here (in theCongo). Furthermore, Marlow experiences the same sense of enlightenment and the same process of maturing through disillusion and defeat which Conrad himself underwent during his travels in the Congo. It has therefore to be recognized that Heart of Darkness is, to a large extent, an autobiographical book because, in most of the essentials, Marlow's experiences and feelings are very much the same as Conrad's own had been. There is a lot of resemblance between Conrad's Congo Diary and the contents of the novel Heart of Darkness to justify such an assumption. Conrad's experiences in the Congo have been described by a critic as exasperating, frustrating, and humiliating; and Marlow's experiences in his contact with most of the white men in the Congo are of the same kind. Marlow undergoes an extreme personal crisis; and this crisis is very much the same through which Conrad himself underwent in the Congo. Thus, both in externals and in terms of the inward mental life, Marlow meets the same fate which Conrad had met.

The Difference between Marlow and Conrad: - However, the autobiographical character of the novel should not be over-emphasized. There are certain substantial differences between Conrad's personal experiences and Marlow's experiences as described in the novel. Conrad's own experiences have served only as the raw material for the story of the novel. Marlow's development from idealism to disillusion and his greater understanding of life is very much the same as that of Conrad himself had been during his exploration of the Congo. But the differences are also noteworthy. Marlow is presented in the novel as being sceptical from the very beginning, as we see in his hesitation and his suspicion of the enterprise in Brussels, while for Conrad the opportunity to go to the Congo was the idealized reality of a boy's ambition. In other words, Marlow is doubtfully and apprehensive in the very beginning, while Conrad had been full of idealistic and romantic notions at the time of his departure for the Congo.

Marlow at the very outset feels that he is not going to the centre of a continent but to the centre of the earth itself. Conrad, on the other hand, had gone to the Congo with bright expectations.

The Difference between Mr. Klein and Mr. Kurtz: - But more important than this fact is Marlow's portrayal of the character of Mr. Kurtz, which does not correspond to anything that Conrad had actually witnessed and experienced. The character of the agent called Mr. Klein does not much resemble the character of Mr. Kurtz as portrayed in the novel. Conrad had not, in the course of his travels, met anybody who can be compared to Mr. Kurtz. Mr. Klein can be regarded only as a starting-point for the subsequent portrayal of Mr. Kurtz in the novel. During his personal travels through the Congo, Conrad had certainly gone to rescue the ailing Mr. Klein, but Conrad had not found in Mr. Klein that embodiment of evil which Marlow fords in Mr. Kurtz. Conrad in his diary does not dwell upon the character of Mr. Klein at such great length as Marlow does in the novel while speaking about Mr. Kurtz.

Marlow, the Mouthpiece of Conrad: - In conclusion, we may add that Marlow's outlook upon life or his philosophy of life is very much the same as Conrad's own was. Marlow appears as a pessimist in the novel; and Conrad himself was a pessimist too. Marlow recognizes the existence of certain virtues in human beings just as Conrad himself did. But, on the whole, Conrad had formed certain depressing ideas about life in general, and Marlow too expresses similar ideas about life. Marlow's reactions to most people, whom he meets in the course of his travels, are unfavourable and disappointing; and so were Conrad's own reactions to the people whom he met in the course of his voyage. Besides, we can read Conrad's own mind in Marlow's in such utterances as Marlow's declaring that he hates and detests a lie not because he is straighter than other people but simply because a lie appals him. Similarly we can read Conrad's own mind in such remarks as the following: **"We live, as we dream alone."** Marlow is more or less a lonely, isolated figure despite the presence before him of four of his associates to whom he tells his story; and Conrad himself was a lonely figure too.

Conrad's use of irony "Heart of Darkness"

Irony always arises from a contrast of some kind. The contrast may be between things, as they appear to be, and as they actually are. A man may say something and mean just the opposite. When that happens, we say that he has made an ironical remark. Then we may expect something to happen, but find that just the opposite has happened. In such a case there would be irony in what we had expected.Similarly, we may expect a man to behave in a particular way, and we may then find that he has behaved in just the opposite way. In such a case, there would be irony in our expectation of that man's behaviour. Irony is one of the most common, and one of the most effective, weapons in the hands of a writer. Conrad was an adept in the use of irony. Indeed, irony is as pervasive in his novels as it is in the novels of Jane Austen. His novels deal largely with life on the distant seas and with the unusual experiences of human beings. Much of Conrad's irony has a sombre or grim quality.

The greatest irony in Heart of Darkness is the **transformation** which takes place **in Mr. Kurtz** during his stay at the interior station of the Company. Mr. Kurtz had been a kind of intellectual during the years of his prime. He had once written a pamphlet stating his views about the role of the white man in the backward countries explored by him. In that pamphlet he had written that the whites necessarily appeared to the savages as supernatural beings and as deities. The whites could therefore exercise a great power over the savages and bring about a great betterment in their way of life. The whites, according to Mr. Kurtz, could confer great benefits upon the backward people of the countries which they visited, which they conquered, and which they governed. The whites could suppress the savage customs of those backward people, and could civilize those people. Thus **Mr. Kurtz held highly progressive views about the role of the white men in the dark and unexplored countries of Africa**. And yet Mr. Kurtz had written at the end of that pamphlet the following words: **"Exterminate all the brutes."** This bit of writing at the end seemed to contradict what he had written about the constructive role of the white people.

Mr. Kurtz was expected to strive to bring about all possible improvements in the way of life and in the way of thinking of the savages of the Congo where Mr. Kurtz had settled down to carry out his duties as an agent of a Belgian trading company. However, just the reverse happens. Mr. Kurtz, **instead of civilizing the savages**, himself **becomes a sava**ge. This is one of the most **surprising developments in this novel**. Thus the opposite of what was expected from Mr. Kurtz has happened. This is the chief irony in the story of this novel.

Another great irony in this novel is the **attitude which Marlow ultimately adopts towards Mr. Kurtz**. Marlow's impressions about Mr. Kurtz are of a very adverse kind in the beginning. From the various reports that he has heard about Mr. Kurtz, he forms a most unfavourable opinion about Mr. Kurtz's character. And yet, afterwards, Marlow becomes an admirer of Mr. Kurtz, and begins to harbour strong feelings of friendship and respect towards that man. We had expected that a rational and intelligent man like Marlow would continue to react to Mr. Kurtz in the same adverse manner. But what happens is just the opposite of what we had expected. Knowing fully the evil which has begun to dwell, in Mr. Kurtz, Marlow yet begins to cherish feelings of regard and esteem for that man. Evidently, Marlow's own primitive instincts, have also been aroused, and been brought to the surface. That is why Marlow has begun to perceive a kind of kinship between himself and Mr. Kurtz. Thus, another civilized man, one who is an embodiment of reason and sanity, has also fallen a near-prey to the influences of savagery and primitivism.

There is **irony** also **in the attitude of Mr. Kurtz's fiancée towards Mr. Kurtz**. She has been entertaining feelings of the highest admiration and esteem for him. She has beenfeeling proud of the man who had proposed marriage to her, and whom she had agreed to marry in opposition to the wishes of her own family. After hearing about the death of her lover, this woman is plunged into grief and, when Marlow goes to meet her a year after Mr. Kurtz's death, he finds her still in mourning. She talks about her deceased lover in glowing terms and pays to him the highest tribute which a woman can pay to her lover. **The irony in this case lies in the fact that the man, whom this**

woman still worships and adores, had become a devil as a result of his stay among the savages. The irony becomes all the greater when Marlow tells her that the last word uttered by her lover before his death was her own name. She feels overjoyed to hear that Mr. Kurtz had spoken her name while dying though the actual fact is that the last words spoken by him had been: "The horror!" The irony in this case arises from the contrast between what Mr. Kurtz had actually become and what his fiancée still continues to think about him.

There is a similar **irony** in the **Russian's attitude of worship towards Mr. Kurtz**. Mr. Kurtz has become a devil, as Marlow tells us. But, to the Russian, Mr. Kurtz has been a kind of hero worthy of adoration. The Russian tells Marlow, that Mr. Kurtz had enlarged his mind and that Mr. Kurtz had taught him to perceive the very essence of things. In other words, Mr. Kurtz had appeared to be a great sage and moralist to the Russian. The Russian had found in Mr. Kurtz a hidden wisdom which was a source of great enlightenment and illumination to the Russian. It is very strange that a man, who has become a savage and a beast, should be able to inspire such a deep respect in the Russian who is by no means a fool or a simpleton.

There is **irony** also in **Marlow's descriptions of things at certain points in his narration**. For instance, his description of the blasting of a rock with gunpowder, when the rock does not stand in the way of the building of the railway line, is surely ironical. Ironical also is his description of the warship firing its guns without any purpose. The supposed purpose of the firing of these guns is to destroy the enemy, but no enemy is visible anywhere in the forest; and the warship is merely wasting its ammunition. There is irony also in the fact that, although the white man has brought a lot of machinery into the dark country of the Congo, the machinery is lying unused. Equally ironical is the fact that, although there are heaps and heaps of rivets lying at one of the Company's stations, no rivet are made available to Marlow for the repairing of the wrecked steamer which he has been able to pull out of the river-bed.

Irony in Some of Marlow's Portrayals of the White Persons

There is **irony** also in the way in which Marlow **describes** some of the **whitepersons**. His description of the two **knitting-women**, in the Company's office in Brussels is **ironical**. There is a tinge of irony in his description of the **Company'sdoctor** and the manner in which he examines the prospective employees of the Company. There is a lot of irony in **Marlow'sdescription** of the **whiteagents** who are seen loitering about at the Central Station in the Congo, and in Marlow's describing these men as faithless pilgrims. The irony here becomes most pungent. For instance, referring to the sticks which these men carried, Marlow says: "**I verily believe they took these sticks to bed with them".** Besides, the irony here is not sombre or tragic but most comic and most amusing. Then there is irony in his portrayal of the manager's uncle, and the brick-maker who tries to extricate some information from Marlow because in his view, Marlow is a highly connected man wielding a lot of influence among the higher officials of the Company.

To conclude, irony deepens a particular effect. In this novel, the use of irony deepens the effect of melancholy and sadness which constitute the prevailing atmosphere of the story. Irony sharpens the sorrow which we, experience when we read about the unexpected transformation which comes, over Mr. Kurtz. The ignorance of Mr. Kurtz's fiancée about this transformation in him saddens us because, being innocent and idealistic, she still visualizes him as her noble knight and her adorable hero. Similarly we feel a deep regret at the moral deterioration which unexpectedly takes place in Marlow and which him admire Mr. Kurtz.

Heart of Darkness : Marlow's Symbolic Character

Marlow is one of the two narrators in "Heart of Darkness" and he is the more important of the two. Conrad has created a complex narrator in Marlow, a man who is not all good or all bad. Marlow narrates the story constituting the real substance of the novel. A mere narrator would objectively tell a story, keeping himself out of it. But in "Heart of Darkness", Marlow himself is one of the central characters. As a narrator, Marlow is unreliable that he is not an objective teller of the story, but is instead emotionally conflicted about the events and people within his tale. He is also a figure who is alienated from the mainstream. He is also an observer, a thinker, and a commentator. Half of the interest and appeal of this novel would be lost if we were to ignore the role of Marlow in "Heart of Darkness". Marlow also has a symbolic role. He stands for something bigger and larger than himself.

Marlow symbolizes the spirit of adventure and the love of exploration. The spirit of adventure is ineradicable and inborn but only some people possess it. The man seeks adventure to acquire knowledge. Marlow showed his spirit of adventure in his very boyhood when world-maps aroused his curiosity. He felt attracted by the African country, Congo, and fascinated by a river Congo. On growing up, he became a sailor, sailed upon many seas, and got an opportunity to explore the Congo and sail upon the river Congo. He does not go to there for trading purposes. It is to satisfy his spirit of adventure, and his boyhood longing, that he goes into the heart of darkness.

Marlow serves also as a symbol of the thoughtful observer of human life and the thoughtful student of human nature. Marlow symbolizes the class of curious people. He tries to probe the mind of everybody whom he encounters in the course of his travels. Firstly, Marlow observes the white men who have come to the Congo for trading purposes. He observes the chief accountant of the trading Company and feels much impressed by him who has kept up appearances even in a sordid environment and whose account-books are in apple-pie order. Marlow then observes the manager who is obeyed by his subordinates, but who can inspire neither respect, nor love, nor fear. To Marlow, he seems to be hollow. Next, Marlow observes the brick-maker and concludes that he is a papier-mâché Mephistopheles. The group of white traders, idling about, creates upon Marlow the impression that they are "faithless pilgrims". Marlow clearly brings out the failings and the meanness of the white men. There is nothing admirable about what Marlow sees of their life in Congo.

Marlow observes the natives with same keenness and minuteness. He depicts the misery and the suffering of the poor, wretched and over-worked natives. He finds many of these starving to death slowly.

'They were dying slowly … They were not enemies, they were not criminals, they were nothing earthly now, - nothing but black shadows of disease and starvation, lying confusedly in the greenish gloom.

He also sees a group of muscular natives paddling their boat in a carefree manner, enjoying their work. Then Marlow observes the self-restraint of his cannibal crew who are feeling very hungry but do not kill the white men to eat their flesh. Marlow also admits the hard-working helmsman on his steamship, but greatly laments the lack of caution on the part of that helmsman, leading to his death.

Marlow also gives us vivid pictures of the wild scenery on both banks of the river Congo, and he conveys to us fully the darkness of the jungle and its impenetrable thickness of trees, in addition to the dangers which lurk there.

Marlow as a keen observer, thinker and a commentator, appears even more in his study of the character of Mr. Kurtz. Marlow here appears as a philosopher-cum-psychologist by giving us a detailed portrayal of Mr. Kurtz. He conveys to us the evil which had taken control of Mr. Kurtz's mind and his actions. He tells us about the influence of barbarism of the natives that had begun to exercise upon Mr. Kurtz. He had begun to participate fully in the "unspeakable rites" and ceremonies of the savages and their mode of life. He had begun to gratify all his lusts, monstrous passions and had begun to experience all kinds of abominable satisfaction. Marlow also conveys Mr. Kurtz's inextinguishable gift of eloquence in speech and his irresistible influence upon those who encounter him. Here we must note that Marlow himself also falls to some extent, a prey to the evil in Mr. Kurtz. He also begins to experience the surge of primitive instincts in his own mind. Of course, much remains mysterious about Mr. Kurtz despite Marlow's insight and Marlow's vast knowledge of human nature; but the salient features of Mr. Kurtz have effectively and vividly been brought to our notice by Marlow who therefore becomes a symbol of the writer having a penetrating mind and a masterly way of writing.

Marlow also symbolizes self-exploration. Marlow's journey into the Congo symbolizes a journey by Marlow into his own sun-conscious mind, and even into the sub-conscious mind of mankind in general. "Heart of Darkness" is not only a physical journey into an unexplored dark continent, but also a psychological and mystical journey. The Inner Station, where Mr. Kurtz lives, symbolizes the sub-conscious mind of man, and particularly of Marlow himself. On several occasions, Marlow reveals the working of his own mind to us in clear terms. Marlow shows a lot of bluntness when talking about himself and about the thoughts which cross his mind. He tells us freely about his hatred of lies, his assent in the brick-maker's mistaken idea about him, his motive in telling a lie to Mr. Kurtz's fiancée at the end of the story. At least the lies have a pure motive, for they save the distraught fiancé. Just as he tells us frankly about the nightmare being the evil embodied by Mr. Kurtz, similarly he tells us of the inner strength which enabled him

to withstand the dangers of his travel in the Congo, and he speaks of the dream-like quality of some of his experiences.

Unlike most Europeans who bought into the justifications for imperialism and saw it as a righteous cause, Marlow saw that it was nothing but greed. However, Marlow's ability to distance himself from the dominant thinking of the time does not fully free him from that kind of thinking. In the end, he accepts the injustice of imperialism by supporting the lies, which justify it.

Significance of lie in Heart of Darkness

The closing scene of The Heart of Darkness , Marlow's interview with the dead man's white Intended (a pale figure of delusion juxtaposed against the black Athena who had usurped her place for Kurtz at the Inner Station), leaves the reader with ambivalent feelings about Conrad's chief narrator. The paradoxical ending of Heart of Darkness has caused considerable critical consternation, if not outrage. That the novel should end with a lie should be told to a beloved amazing, that the lie should be told in a novel ostensibly directed towards a bewaring of the nefarious nature of the human heart almost astounding; that such a lie should be practiced by modern Buddha absolutely preposterous. The ending has therefore been criticized as being 'a botched scene', 'a fatal blunder' and even as 'the final flaw in a flawed novel'. Yet a contextual reading of the novel would almost lead a discerning reader to a radically different conclusion. The conclusion would be that even though the ending does not satisfy the human desire for the whole truth or for a satisfying rounded final, the ending is not only appropriate, but also something devoutly to be wished for.

Every aspect of the ending is stepped in grandeur, pervaded with touch of the ethereal. The setting suggests magnificence and splendid idealism: the drawing room is 'lofty', the windows are long and luminous, the tall marble fireplace has monumental whiteness , the piano is grand and stands massively looking like a sombre and polished sarcophagus and the door is high. The lady is described in an almost equally idealized and hollowed manner:

"She has a mature capacity for fidelity, for belief, for suffering… this hair, this pale visage this pure brow, seemed surrounded by an ashy halo from which the dark eyes looked out at me. Their glance was guileless, profound, confident and trustful."

She was dressed in black although it was almost a year since Kurtz's death, and this unceasing mourning is revelatory of the fact that she was 'girlish', that 'she was one of those creature who were not the play thing of time'. Her attitude towards Kurtz, her reverence for him is flawless. Illumined by the inextinguishable light of love and belief, she declares, 'it was impossible to know him and not to admire him.'

The grandeur of the scene is shattered when Marlow lies to her. Marlow's lie gives a lie to the carefully crafted and meticulously woven façade of glory. The answers to Marlow's motivation are to be discovered in the nature of the lie itself and in the nature of the liar.

Lies, of course, have proven indispensable to fabulists ever since Cain lied to God in Genesis and Odysseus slipped out of one disguise into another in The Odyssey. But Marlow's lie is neither as wicked as Cain's (especially since it acknowledges his need to be the keeper of his spiritual brother's memory) nor as self-serving but justifiable as Odysseus's. When the beloved declares that she would have treasured every sigh, every word, every sign, every glance of the dying Kurtz, and laments that there may not have been anyone to hear his last words, Marlow unwittingly states that he had heart ' his very last words'. When pressed to reveal the final words of Kurtz , the self reviling and desperate Marlow can only utter a lie:' the last word he pronounced was your name" the final victorious truth expressed in articulo mortis by Kurtz---' The horror! The horror!'- is thereby suppressed.

The questions remain as to why Marlow tells an untruth. Such a lie may be explicable in the case of an inveterate liar, but not in the case of Marlow since it made it abundantly clear that lies are abhorrent to him. When he speaks about lying early in the novel, he says ,'lying appals me,' it is exactly what I hate and detest in the world,' it makes me miserable' and sick like biting into something rotten wound'. As Garrett Stewart points out in lying as dying in Heart of Darkness ', 'his strict ethical theorem, the equation of death with lying ,is even in the early context no stray remark, for it threads untruth to death in the casual nexus of the European experience in Africa.' All through the novel his one endeavour has been to know the truth about himself, and it is inconceivable that a man so meticulous about knowing the truth should lie to others.

The answer might be one of the various proffered—that he was being merciful to the Intended whom he admired , that he was generally mild and protective towards women as they were cocooned from reality, and that he wanted the truth only for himself. That Marlow may be tempted to hide the hideous truth fro the lady whom he found to be a veritable paragon of virtue, one who was about to dedicate her entire life to Kurtz, is quite likely. That he does so because he desires to shield all women from the unbearable truth of the darkness of the human heart too is plausible in view of his earlier remark about woman, 'it is queer how out of touch with truth women are. They live in a world of their own…' Marlow would be the last to shatter the fragile edifice of their make- believe world. If Marlow's assertion seems to deny women the right or need for the quest for the truth, one might go further and suggest that Marlow's was a journey of self-discovery and that therefore he was never interested in telling her truth.

Even though the reasons preferred may contain some truths, perhaps the greatest truth behind the lie is something different. It is not merely designed to provide relief to a particular woman or even to all women and certainly his purpose could never have been the selfish one of attaining the truth only for himself. Much more likely is his realization that not only cans mankind 'not bear too much reality', but also the mankind must be saved from the reality. Society can exist only if there is some idealistic basis, even if it is an allusion. It is only save mankind from devastating truth about itself, that Marlow makes the supreme sacrifice of telling a lie, something foreign to his nature, alien to his spirit.

Conrad's Use of Journey Motif in Heart of Darkness

The novella Heart of Darkness was written in 1899 by Joseph Conrad explores the idea of self-discovery and can be described as a story of initiation. Marlow, the protagonist of the novella, undertakes a boat ride up the Congo River in search of Kurtz, the chief of the Inner Station, however this journey, which can be seen as a journey into the self, one's 'inner spirit'. Conrad uses the journey both in its literal and figurative meanings. Most obvious is Marlow's journey to discover Africa, and the effects of imperialism. On a deeper level, it seems as if Conrad uses the journey to cloak Marlow's true journey into himself. Through the use of the physical journey in Heart of Darkness, the reader can see the inner journey that the characters in the novella undertake and the effects that their unconscious has on their thoughts and actions. Marlow's journey from Europe, to the Outer Station and then to the Central Station also tests his ability to distinguish between good and evil since he witnesses such proceedings that draw out a moral judgment from him.

The journey in Heart of Darkness passes not only through the capricious waters that spanning the physical world, but also the paradoxical ocean which exists in the heart of man and all of mankind. Through Marlow's somewhat fanatical eyes we view the enigma that is humanity, and the blurred line between light and dark. It is a voyage into the deepest recesses of the human heart and mind (a voyage of self-discovery or, like Albert Guerard it can also be viewed as a 'night journey'), leading to epiphany, enlightenment, and finally spiralling downwards into the crevices of a hell existing within each and every one of us, which is represented by the character of Kurtz. Although through Marlow Conrad depicts a journey into the Congo, his use of symbolism and wordplay divulge that it is something much more profound.

Almost every action, object, and character in Conrad's Heart of Darkness has a deeper, more relevant meaning behind it, serving to bring us ever closer to the conclusion that the voyage is indeed an inward one. The first major indication of this is the posture of Marlow as he recounts his journey into the Congo. According to the narrator, "he had the pose of a Buddha preaching in European clothes and without a lotus-flower." This lotus position is one typically used for meditation, which is in fact defined as a spiritual journey promoted by a lucidity of thought. Successful meditation leads to a more discerning understanding of human nature and allows one to contemplate the innermost workings of the mind. Therefore Marlow's stance capitalizes on his true destination, insinuating from the very first pages that his journey is actually within himself.

From the start of Marlow's tale there are countless of symbols relating to the unchartered places of the subconscious, and the journey intended to discover them. For instance, Marlow is lead to a room by two silent women spinning black wool (The women represent the Fates of Greek mythology, who spin a skein of wool which symbolizes a person's life. The fact that these women's thread is black creates an ominous sense of foreboding.). There his attention is drawn to a map and he finds himself enthralled by a large river coursing through the heart of Africa.He notices that the river resembled a snake, and that it was "fascinating." For some odd reason, this long, sinuous river

tempted him, despite its reptilian connotations, which already alerts the reader to danger ahead. The river is akin to the serpent in the biblical story of Adam and Eve, offering the unwitting pair a forbidden fruit - wisdom, and a dark knowledge of oneself. Also, throughout the journey, there are repeated references to both life and death.

Uncannily, these two are always intertwined. For example, there is a theme of bones which is constantly recurring in Marlow's story. The Swede mentions a man who died, and whose skeleton was left sprawled on the ground until the grasses began to grow up through his ribcage. The grass represents life, and of course, the skeleton represents death. These two are woven together. Also, there is Kurtz's obsession with ivory (dental bone), and according to Marlow he has the appearance of the object of his fixation. From Marlow's description, Kurtz bears a skeletal resemblance even when he is alive. Conrad's frequent symbolic combination of life and death is probably one of his numerous parallels to light and dark, echoing the fact that the two must exist simultaneously - there cannot be without the other. Conrad's book is based on the presence of light and dark within everyone, and in Marlow's journey the question is often posed of which is predominant. There are times when darkness usurps the light, others when it is the opposite. However, the darkness (evil) usually tends to prevail.

Conrad is implying that a sense of evil resides in the core of every human, and therefore reigns at the centre of humanity, however veiled by morals, civilization and refinement. This is one of the main facts Marlow ascertains on his journey, for he sees darkness everywhere, even when there is light. Just as the line between light and dark is indistinct, the barrier segregating civilization from savagery is equally obscure. In Africa, Marlow repeatedly encounters natives, and his crew is comprised of twenty cannibals. As they progress deeper into the heart of the forest, we can take note that black people are dehumanized. They are perpetually referred to in animalistic terms, and are treated as such. However, it is these "savages" who survive and thrive in the heart of darkness, and whose ways eventually engulf Kurtz. There is also the indication here that technology, civilization, and refinement have been rendered useless.

Every character thought to be at the pinnacle of cultivation and etiquette either dies or becomes corrupted by his surroundings (Kurtz, Fresleven). It is apparent that civilization is utterly futile in such surroundings. Kurtz serves as a prime example of a civilized gentleman who capitulates to his barbaric side due to his environment. Regardless of the respect and admiration showered upon him by his peers, not to mention the jealousy, he was at heart a hollow man, consumed by his greed for ivory. This is probably why he gave in so readily to his primitive instincts, partaking in the horrendous rituals of the natives, and letting his dark essence become the hub of his actions.

Kurtz is also symbolic of the evil within our society, for people saw him as the "emissary of science and progress." He represents the person found deep within the recesses of our subconscious, the core of darkness ever-present beneath the gauzy layers of refinement and civility. "One evening coming in with a candle I was startled to hear him say a little tremulously, 'I am lying here in the dark waiting for death.' In this quote we can see that, symbolically, Kurtz is so overcome by darkness that he is blind to light. This is also embodied in an oil painting done by Kurtz, depicting a blind folded woman surrounded by

darkness but carrying a torch which casts a sinister light over her face. The blindfolded woman can be taken as a common Western symbol of justice and liberty, things that man has created to differentiate himself from the beasts and savages. The fact that the woman is enshrouded in darkness with only insufficient torchlight to guide her says a lot about the nature of our society.

The culmination of Marlow's journey leads into the heart of darkness, or in a more worldly sense, Hell. Heart of Darkness fosters the allusion that hell is within us that it is the evil existing deep inside our souls. Marlow visits this place when he finally encounters Kurtz, and his innocent morals are challenged. He views first-hand the inhumanity man is capable of, and the journey begins to take on all the properties of a nightmare. When Kurtz himself is lying on his deathbed, he sees into his own heart, looks his personal hell in full view, and utters things which give Marlow a grim revelation as to what lies within that black abyss. Kurtz's final words, as he ends his voyage into his bitter core, are "The horror, the horror!" referring to what he sees inside himself.

The journey Marlow undertakes is seemingly in our own world, something which we reside in yet know so little about. We delude ourselves into believing that we can tame and subdue it, and that it will readily succumb and be molded to our good intentions. However, just as trying to harness the dark and primal nature within ourselves is impossible, this is an equally unattainable fantasy. Conrad's world is an embodiment of humanity, its ocean is its heart, and its impenetrable forest is its mind. Through Marlow's epiphany it is revealed that at the mouth of every river, at the core of every grove, subsists a perpetual darkness encased in light.

Thus what makes Heart of Darkness more than an interesting travelogue and shocking account of horrors is the way that it details — in subtle ways — Marlow's gradual understanding of what is happening in this far-off region of the world. Like many Europeans — including his creator — Marlow longed for adventure and devoured accounts such as those offered by Stanley. But once he arrives in the Congo and sees the terrible "work" (as he ironically calls it) taking place, he can no longer hide under the cover of his comfortable civilization. Instead, all the horrors perpetrated by European traders and agents — typified by Kurtz — force him to look into his own soul and find what darkness lies there. In the first half of the novel, Marlow states, "The essentials of this affair lay deep under the surface, beyond my reach" — but by the end of his journey, he will have peeked beneath "the surface" and discovered the inhumanity of which even men such as the once-upstanding Kurtz are capable.

Marlow's descent into his mind in "Heart of Darkness"

Heart of Darkness is a novel which clearly shows the influence of psychology and psychiatry (psychoanalysis) which were emerging as full-fledged sciences at the time when this novel was written. Heart of Darkness is a record of the inner life of Marlow during the period of his travels in that country.

Heart of Darkness certainly gives us a vivid description of the thoughts and ideas which crossed his mind during his stay in that country. Marlow appears in this novel as a thinker who broods and meditates upon everything that he sees. Marlow appears as a keen observer, and he also appears as a thinker who reflects upon everything that he observes. Marlow is an introspective man who keeps constantly examining his own thoughts as they arise in his mind. Thus the book is to be treated as a kind of an exploration by Marlow of his own mind, of both his conscious mind and his sub-conscious mind. The phrase **"heart of darkness"** also means the inmost depths of the human mind which requires a great subtlety to plumb and probe.

From the very beginning, this novel gives us the **internals as well as the externals**. The externals are the outward scenes, happenings, incidents, and the persons with whom Marlow comes into contact, while the internals are the workings of Marlow's own mind or the thoughts which take their rise in his sub-conscious. Thus the novel is a record of a two-fold journey–a journey into the Congo which had at that time not yet been fully explored, and a journey into the dark realm of Marlow's mind and, in a sense, into the dark realm of the human mind in general. He narrates his experiences to a small group of his friends, he not only gives them his experiences of outward happenings but also his inward reactions to his experiences. For instance, he tells his friends that the city of Brussels made him think of a **"whited sepulchre"** (that is, a place which outwardly seems to be pleasant and righteous but is actually corrupt and disgusting). When he speaks about his encounter with the two knitting-women, he also describes his mental reaction to them: "**Hail, old knitter of black wool. Those who are about to die salute you!"** After seeing the knitting-women and after meeting his aunt, Marlow feels as if, instead of going to the centre of a continent, he were about to start for the centre of the earth. Similarly, he describes his reactions to the doctor who examines him and who measures the dimensions of his skull because it is in the interests of science for him to do so. The doctor at this time tells Marlow that it would be interesting for science to watch the mental changes of individuals during their stay in the dark continent.

When Marlow is **sailing towards the Congo** on a French steamer, he again **records his thoughts**. He tells us that during this journey the voice of the surf was now and then a positive pleasure to him like the speech of a brother. This voice, he says, was something natural which had its reason and which had a meaning. Marlow sees half a dozen black men linked together with a chain, and each wearing an iron collar around his neck. These men were criminals who had violated the law. This sight produces a deep effect on Marlow, giving rise to a chain of awful thoughts in his mind. He here says that he had previously seen the devil of violence, the devil of greed, and the devil of hot desire, but that these half a dozen black men were strong, muscular, red-eyed devils.

Marlow's **encounterwith the manager** of the Central Station and the brick-maker there also **gives rise to manythoughts in his mind**. The manager seems to be a man with nothing inside him, while the brick-maker appears to be a cunning and inquisitive man who tries to find out, by questioning Marlow, whether Marlow has any influence among the higher officials of the trading company which has sent him here. In this context, Marlow tells us that he has always hated and detested lies, not because he is straighter than the other people, but because a lie simply appals him. Marlow finds a

taint of death and a flavour of mortality in lies. However, on this occasion, Marlow allows the brick-maker falsely to assume that he did have a lot of influence among the high officials of the company. In the same context, Marlow says that the figure of Mr. Kurtz at this time was like a dream to him. He further says that no man can convey to others a dream-sensation, and that it is impossible for a man to convey to others the life-sensation of any given period of his existence. Marlow then adds: **"We live, as we dream alone."** Thus here we find Marlow probing his own mind and delving into depths of his mind.

Later, **Marlow speaks about hiswork-ethic**. He has to work hard on the ship which he has to command. In pulling the wrecked steamer out of the river and repairing it, Marlow has to work very hard. His hard work made him fall in love with the steamer. Marlow says that work gives a man the chance to find himself and his own reality.

When Marlow has actually become the skipper of the Company's steamer and begins his voyage on the river Congo, he **continues tomeditate upon whatever he sees and overhears**. For instance, at the very outset he says that, in performing the daily duties of a routine kind, a man comes to know only the surface reality of life because the inner truth is hidden from him. In command of a steamer on a strange and unknown river, Marlow feels like a blind-folded man driving a motor-van over a bad road. Then Marlow describes his reactions to the scenery which he witnesses. "**We penetrated deeper and deeper into the heart of darkness,"** he says; and the earth at that time seemed unearthly to him. A little later, he says that the **mind of man is capable of anything because everything is in its all the past as well as all the future.** Furthermore, a real man is he who can meet the naked truth with his own true stuff.

Marlow discovers a book on the **subject of seamanship in the deserted hut**. Such a book being found in that hut was something wonderful, says Marlow; but still more surprising were the notes written in pencil in the margin. The notes seemed to be in cipher and looked like an extravagant mystery. Later, however, the mystery is solved because Marlow learns that the notes were written not in cipher but in the Russian language. Here Marlow also observes that **no man in this world is safe from trouble at any stage in his life**.

Marlow's **reflections upon his cannibal crew** are also noteworthy. Here again he records his mental reactions to an outward situation. The crew consists of cannibals who would like to eat human flesh to satisfy their hunger. They could easily kill the white men on board the steamer and eat their flesh; but they did not do so. Marlow feels amazed to find that, in spite of their gnawing hunger, they did not kill the white men on board. It is really easier to face the death of a close relative than to face prolonged hunger. It is easier to endure dishonour and even the damnation of one's soul than to bear the pangs of hunger. Marlow is therefore filled with **admiration for the self-restraint of those cannibals** in not killing the white men and eating their flesh to appease their hunger.

Then there are **Marlow's reflections upon the helmsman**, who gets killed by one of the natives through his own folly. The look in the dead helmsman's eyes haunts Marlow.

In this context Marlow says that the helmsman had been lacking in self-restraint. There are also **Marlow's reflections upon Mr. Kurtz** about whom he has been hearing a lot. Mr. Kurtz was a gifted creature, with eloquence as his greatest gift. When Marlow is told by someone that Mr. Kurtz might be dead by this time, Marlow feels deeply disappointed. He does not, of course, shed tears, but he is certainly grieved at the idea of having lost the privilege of meeting Mr. Kurtz and listening to his eloquent talk.

From this point onwards the **narration centres round the deeds and the personality** of Mr. Kurtz; and, in telling us the facts about Mr. Kurtz, Marlow also gives us his own reactions to those facts. The facts about Mr. Kurtz are certainly very intriguing, but so are **Marlow's reactions to those facts**. Mr. Kurtz has now become an embodiment of evil, so that it seems to Marlow that Mr. Kurtz has taken a high seat among the devils of the land. And here Marlow once again talks about the need of inner strength in a man if a man has to face such grim facts as the devilry of Mr. Kurtz. Furthermore, Marlow now speaks about the spell which Mr. Kurtz's reputation has begun to cast upon his own mind. Marlow here says that subsequently he became a devoted friend of Mr. Kurtz, and that Mr. Kurtz was able to conquer his soul. After meeting that man, Marlow begins really to admire him despite the man's demonic character.

In fact, Marlow now becomes deeply devoted to Mr. Kurtz and goes to the extent of saying that he would never betray him and that it had already been ordained that he would always remain loyal to him. Marlow admits that Mr. Kurtz was a nightmare but he still maintains that he would never betray him because; Mr. Kurtz was "the nightmare of his choice". Thus Marlow has developed a keen personal interest in that man, whose evil he also recognizes fully. Even after returning to Europe, Marlow remains loyal to Mr. Kurtz's memory because, when Mr. Kurtz's fiancée asks him what Mr. Kurtzs' last word before death had been, Marlow tells her a lie and says that Mr. Kurtz's last word had been her own name. Now this loyalty to Mr. Kurtz again means only one thing. Marlow has been able to convey to us indirectly and subtly the influence of Mr. Kurtz's primitivism upon himself, without being able to define that influence in specific and explicit terms. It is in the last one-third of the novel that Marlow tries to lay bare his sub-conscious mind. The writing in this part of the novel anticipates the technique which came afterwards to be known as "stream of consciousness" technique. This technique was subsequently practised by writers like James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. Conrad was a forerunner of that technique whereby the inner consciousness of a character is revealed. The inspiration and the incentive to explore the sub-conscious mind had come, of course, from the findings of Sigmund Freud.

Colonization and Greed in Heart of Darkness

The book Heart of Darkness written by Joseph Conrad is a masterpiece in literature. Conrad obtained many of his perspectives for his work from `hands on experience' and also from his harsh background and childhood. When Conrad was still a child his father was exiled to Siberia because of suspicions on plotting against the Russian government. After his mother died, Conrad's father sent him to his mother's brother in Krakow for education purposes. This was the last time Conrad ever saw his father.

In 1890 Conrad took command of a steamship in the Belgian Congo. Conrad's experiences in the Congo paved the way and the outline for his brilliant novel Heart of Darkness. During his time in the Congo, Conrad's health took a devastating blow so he returned to England to recover. Returning to sea twice before finishing Almayer's Folly in 1894 Conrad wrote several other books including one about Marlow which was called Youth (a narrative before beginning Heart of Darkness in 1898). Conrad wrote most of his other major works Lord Jim (which features Marlow), Nostramo and The Secret Agent as well as several collaborations with Ford Madox during the following two decades. Conrad died in 1924 but will always have and hold a place in the hearts of many readers. In his book Heart of Darkness Conrad gives the us an understanding of how the Africans were mistreated during colonization. The book also pinpoints many cases that show the greed and selfishness of imperialism.

The evilness of how the Africans were treated is critiqued well in a quote **"the men who work for the company describe what they do as `trade' and their treatment of native Africans is part of a benevolent project of civilization".** This is a very true statement which shows that the way the colonizers treated the African was more like slaves rather than people. The book Heart of Darkness describes this inhuman behaviour in the quote **"Each chief was authorized to collect taxes; he did so by demanding that individuals should work for a specific period of time for a minimum payment. This, of course, was another name for slavery. The so-called taxpayers were treated like prisoners; their work was carried out under the supervision of armed sentries, and, as can be easily imagined, the system lent itself to all kinds of tyranny, brutality and subsequent reprisals by the natives. In one concession alone one hundred and forty-two Africans were killed. The spirit of bitterness and hatred generated in the people was quite terrifying, but little could be done about it as thee was not enough control in the area to prevent the various agents from misusing their power".**

This quote sums up the immorality and the misuse of power against the Africans. It also gives insight into the horror of the colonization that was taking place at the time. One critic (Wilson Harris) helps describe Conrad's view and vision of the way that the Africans were treated. Harris writes "He sees the distortions of imagery and, therefore, of character in the novel as witnessing to the horrendous prejudice on Conrad's part in his vision of Africa and the Africans". This quote helps explain why Conrad describes the Africans the way he did (which some people may consider racist), but in actual fact it was just the reality of the situation.

The evilness of imperialism is shown very well in this quote **" As Marlow travels from the outer station to the central station and finally up the river to the inner station, he encounters scenes of torture, cruelty and near slavery".** This shows that the colonizers would do whatever it took including taking over the people and using them as `near slaves' for their own personal benefits. The results of this madness and greed can be best shown through Conrad's use of life and imagery. The land of Africa is described throughout the book as a living thing, and the Congo is brought to life as a snake. Also the hills are described as being `scarred' from the recourses being taken out of them. During the course of the book, the trees and land in Africa are constantly

moving and swallowing up the travellers. It is sort of forcing them towards Kurtz and barring their retreat. This in my mind is the land and the spirit of what `used to be' rebelling against the colonizers that include the travellers searching for Kurtz. The evilness and greed of what was taking place is unimaginable and so this spirit being still very much alive is defiantly very realistic.

Colonization, greed and the mistreatment of human people happens all the time in our current day life. It is very sad, but true that we are living in one of the (if not the) biggest powers of imperialism ever. In Iraq for instance, America left Sadam in Iraq during the first gulf war for a reason. America had the power and the resources to do exactly what we are doing now back then. It was all about the oil, and sadly but truly oil was not even a necessity anymore. Technology has grown so much that we now obtain the power to generate enough electricity and power through wind alone. America has the ability to run cars off of water rather than gas, but if we look at where American president and his family had their money we clearly can see the problem. It was all invested in the oil business. Why was it so great that the vice president of American Mr Cheany was heading up a campaign to salvage the oil fields? Was it such a big surprise that he also had money invested in the whole oil business as well? This is one example of a current day situation that is reflected to the greatest extent in the wonderful novel Heart of Darkness. This book was an excellent portrayal of the evilness and suffering caused by imperialistic powers exercising their power in the wrong ways. It also helps us understand the suffering that took place in Africa.

The Significance of Idealism in Heart of Darkness

One of the prevalent themes in Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness is **idealism**, a seemingly inescapable component of human nature. Conrad addresses the desirability of such a quality, and his stance on this can be discerned through his use of symbolism, underlying myths, and language. He uses the background presence of the Company and the characters of Kurtz and Marlow to criticise the surface prettiness of idealism, which serves to disguise uglier intentions and leads ultimately to darkness.

One who falls to such darkness, the tragic hero Kurtz, harbours high ideals that veil a possible hypocrisy and may precipitate his mental and spiritual degradation. By most accounts a "remarkable" man, he is the epitome of the culture and civilisation of Europe – a **"universal genius"** and an **"emissary of pity and science and progress".** Yet he is a man of contrasts. For example, his idea of justice is given form in his painting of **"a woman, draped and blindfolded, carrying a lighted torch".** The light, however, cannot hope to penetrate the sombre darkness, just as Kurtz cannot see the lighted candle hovering before his eyes as he pronounces, **"I am lying here in the dark waiting for death"** .

Additionally, in the report he has written for the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs, the contrast comes sharply into play through words. He writes of **"a power for good practically unbounded"** among other altruistic notions. Impossible to overlook, however, is the prophetic postscriptum: "**Exterminate all the**

brutes!". Kurtz, whose **"immense plans"** are lost, or perhaps twisted, by abandonment and solitude, is a metaphor for a humanity which is capable of anything, even the most immense of darkness. Restraint, like the rotten fence in the story, falls away all too easily (though restraint is ironically exhibited by the cannibals on the boat), and Kurtz (like the manager and the brick maker) is hollow inside, and try as he might to **"swallow all the air, all the earth, all the men before him"**, nothing could fill that void but an echoing wilderness.

On the other hand, the Company, a collaboration of imperialistic notions, hides its core of darkness behind noble ideas of civilisation and commerce. At the beginning of the story, Marlow defines the Company as being **"run for profit",** an ironic retort to his aunt's **"emissary of light"**. The trading Company, as a model for colonialism, has as its visible aim a **"heavenly mission to civilise"** the **"darker"** regions of the world. However, elements of foreshadowing indicate a more sinister aspect to the Company. It is located in a **"white sepulchre"** of a city, and the description of its physical structure is reminiscent of Fresleven's remains – the **"grass sprouting between the stones".**

The two knitting women whom Marlow encounters guard the **"door of Darkness"** – a door that leads to the schemes and bureaucracy of an empire that holds the fate of millions in its hand. The women are symbolic of two of the three Fates who control the destiny of humankind, knit black wool, representing the dark-skinned natives of Africa. The true face behind the mask of the Company's idealism, as Marlow finds out, is in the grove of death he stumbles upon. In stark contrast, immediately after the horrific discovery, Marlow meets an impeccably-dressed accountant who is possessed of a mentality that enables him to say, with indifference, **"When one has got to make correct entries, one comes to hate those savages – hate them to the death"**. These encounters are perhaps some of the very first chisels to chip away at Marlow's ideals.

It is through this divesting of long-held and **cherishedidealism** – reminiscent to him of childhood – that Marlow truly begins to gain insight into the human condition. In his journey into the heart of the Congo (a journey that has a symbolic counterpart and bears similarities to mythic rites of initiation), he is confronted with savagery and an unforgiving humanity that bring him closer to despair. Yet, it is through despair and a leaving behind of acceptable society that Marlow can be made privileged to a vast knowledge. He grows cynical with the Company's ideals, and sees the imperialists as trying to conquer something much more immense than could be conceived.

Furthermore, he starts to discard his own convictions, such as his revulsion of lies, by letting the **"papier-maché Mephistopheles"** believe in his non-existent influence in Europe. However, this near-lie may actually represent spiritual progress, as rivets (the motive behind the lie) have become to him **"a symbol of the redeeming ideas of civilisation, the ideas of humanity and solidarity which enable man to constrain hostile nature"**. Marlow confesses with true clarity, **"... what I wanted was a certain quantity of rivets – and rivets were what really Mr. Kurtz wanted, if he had only known it"** (46). Marlow's most significant lie is perhaps to the Intended, when he chooses not to reveal Kurtz's expiating last words **– "The horror! The horror!"** (118).

It is a sign of his new-found knowledge that he does not unthinkingly respond to the Intended as he did his aunt. He lies to the Intended because the "truth" was **"too dark altogether"** and he perceives that **"a part of Kurtz, the noblest part, the part he "Intended" has in fact survived the powers of darkness"** (Boyle 115).

The story, in fact, ends on a hopeful note of idealism – within the **"heart of an immense darkness"**lies an imperfect and fleeting light, and though transient like a flash of lightning, it is our attempt to **"live in the flicker"** that ultimately redeems us.

Is Joseph Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness' Racist?

Joseph Conrad's novel Heart of Darkness follows one white man's nightmarish journey into the interior of Africa. Aboard a British ship called the Nellie, three men listen to a man named Marlow recount his journey into Africa up the Congo River in a steam boat as an agent for a Belgian ivory trading Company.

Marlow says that he witnesses brutality and hate between the white ivory hunters and the native African people. Marlow becomes entangled in a power struggle within the Company, and finally learns the truth about the mysterious Kurtz, a mad agent who has become both a god and a prisoner of the "native Africans." After "rescuing" Kurtz from the native African people, Marlow watches in horror as Kurtz succumbs to madness, disease, and finally death.

The description of African people in Heart of Darkness is disgusting. They are seen as and referred to as **savages**. This is what the narrator says about the Africans and Africa: "It (Africa) was unearthly and the men (Africans) were — no, they were not inhuman. Well, you know that was the worst of it — this suspicion of their not being inhuman. It would come slowly to one. They (Africans) howled and leaped and spun and made horrid faces but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity — like yours — the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar."

That is not enough because there is some more of this kind of description: ". . . as we struggled round a bend, there would be a glimpse of rich walls, of peaked grass roofs, a burst of yells, a whirl of black limbs, a mass of hands clapping, of feet stamping, of bodies swaying, of eyes rolling . . . The prehistoric man (the African) was cursing us (white men), praying to us, welcoming us — who could tell"

The structure and style of Heart of Darkness is the first challenge. We have a narrator reporting Marlow's narration of Marlow's experiences in Africa. This is a story inside another story, inside a story! We may say that technically, Heart of Darkness ceases to be Conrad's story and therefore if the story is racist, then Conrad is not necessarily racist!

The story is partially Marlow's because only what is remembered or deemed important by him gets to be narrated. It is also partially the narrator's story because his record of what he heard Marlow say is his sole experience. We are, therefore, faced by a situation

where we should not fully ascribe to either Conrad or Marlow. Again: technically the story operates from several "subsequent" points of view. We keep on saying: who is racist here?

Chinua Achebe, Africa's most prominent novelist, who happens to find the novel racist, thinks that Marlow speaks for Conrad because Conrad does **"not hint, clearly and adequately at an alternative frame of reference by which we may judge the actions and opinions of his characters."**

Achebe's assertion that Marlow speaks for Conrad is further strengthened by the fact that Conrad himself makes a journey similar to Marlow's down the Congo River in 1890. It is the nature of literature to be wholly or very partially autobiographical.

Those who agree with Achebe insist on the point that: in the nineteenth century where adventure novels are heavily loaded with the author's experiences the authors tended to agree to be associated with their major characters. Conrad, who tended, throughout his life, to see the multiple conflicting dimensions of one thing, would definitely not want to disassociate himself from Marlow, who undertakes the same journey as his creator

For Achebe, Heart of Darkness is racist because it projects the image of Africa as "the other world, the antithesis of Europe . . . the question is whether a novel which celebrates this dehumanization, which depersonalizes a portion of the human race, can be called a great work of art. My answer is: No, it cannot. I do not doubt Conrad's great talents. Even Heart of Darkness has its memorably good passages and moments

The "Achebe school" is also angered by the portrayal of the Thames River as representation of modernity against the savage muddiness and hazardous Congo River of Africa. There is also the "wild and gorgeous apparition of an (African) woman" pitied against the serene civilised mood of the intended (white woman). The "worst insult" is the pitying of the thoughtful life-like white men against the grunting men of Africa.

Those who disagree with Achebe and company put across a series of arguments that revert back to the ideological environment under which the novel was conceived and written. Their argument is that the writing of Heart of Darkness was done at a time when considering Africans as savages as and lesser beings than non-Africans was the norm.

They point out that Conrad set his story in the Belgian (King Leopold II's) Congo of the 1890s when the Africans in the Congo region were being forced to extract ivory and rubber for the Empire at gunpoint. Those who resisted got killed or dismembered and to imagine a kind of discourse that saw blacks as having equal humanity with other races was unthinkable. They even think that Conrad attacks imperialism because he identifies it with clear plunder and not the pretensions of civilizing the savage and spreading Christianity.

However, even then, Conrad's attack of imperialism has its contradictions. Conrad questions the morality of colonialism and exploitation but he does not question the colonial mission itself. Although Conrad's Africans are pitiable, they are nonetheless

niggers and are victimised quite as much by their own stupidity and ignorance as by European brutality.

One of Kurtz's last utterances: "Exterminate the brutes!" demonstrates that the term "going native" does not mean becoming one with the savages. Despite the delirium, Kurtz knows the clear cut racial divisions and his white man's duties in Africa.

In addition, "Darkness" in Heart of Darkness tends to be metaphorical. Darkness holds a multiplicity of meanings.

The only clear meaning of darkness in the novel seem to be one's descending to inhuman levels of thought and behaviour — like Kurtz and the whole Belgian colonial establishment. In Heart of Darkness evil is portrayed as African and if it is also African that is because some white men in the Heart of Darkness behave like Africans!

Reading Heart of Darkness, we are certain that for the western readers of the 1890s, it must have shown the extremities of conquest, of course, but, it definitely must have confirmed the western concept of Africa as the land of savages. If the novel caused sympathy towards the African, it was that sympathy one has for an animal in agony, not fellow human beings.

Character of Kurtz in Heart of Darkness

Heart of Darkness is an important novella in terms of pre 1914 literature and is considered by many one of the most important books in literature. In the 1890's Conrad sailed up the river Congo, so the novel was written from a good knowledge of the surroundings and personal experience of colonialism and the oppression that was a major part of Africa in the late 1800's. Although slavery was abolished in most places, slavery was still a major part of African life in those days due to many European countries fighting over the prospect of ivory and land and when they did get the land they slaved the Africans either keeping them in Africa to help with the ivory trade or shipping them off to Europe to be slaves there. In the novel Conrad presents Kurtz as a mystical being a god almost to the native people but he also shows him to be an evil and sinister man with a 'heart of darkness' he does this by not actually presenting Kurtz as a human but a figure a 'vapour of the earth.' Conrad also leads the reader along by not actually meeting Kurtz until the very end the rest of the book relies on peoples tales of Kurtz and what he has done which lead us to believe that he is a supernatural being.

The role of the narrator in the novel is a key part of what makes the novel so appealing because it is the story teller Marlow who has been through all of it, although there is one other narrator at the start of the novella who sets the scene. The primary narrator also talks about Marlow in a strange way he claims that he was sat in a way that 'resembled an idol.' This infers that Marlow is a very wise and very powerful figure. He also talks a lot about the light and the dark 'the sky, without a speck, was a benign immensity of unstained light.' Only the gloom to the west. Brooding over the upper reaches became more sombre every minute, as if angered by the approach of the sun.' This extract

paints a very vivid picture in the reader's minds it talks about getting closer to Africa every minute and the evil is just waiting there as if angered by their presence. This could be a warning sign as to how the story could end up as the narrator is referring to Africa as the gloom, when the first narrator ends it is quite difficult to see where he ends and Marlow begins but it becomes clearer when you read on. But before the first narrator stops he tells us that Marlow has 'the propensity to spin yarns.' This means he has the habit of over exaggerating this gives the reader doubts if this whole story is true and the way Marlow talks about Kurtz later on in the story as a supernatural being may well be and over exaggeration of Kurtz's power. This makes the reader feel doubtful and question Marlow's integrity as he may be exaggerating some parts of the story particularly Kurtz, and this may make the reader unable to trust Marlow's farfetched stories

Although this has been said there was absolutely no mention of Kurtz until page 38 were Marlow is talking to the accountant Marlow is keen to find out what Kurtz has done and why he is so praised and feared all over Africa he asks the accountant who Mr Kurtz was and the accountant simply said 'he was a first-class agent.' He then added 'he was a very remarkable person' this is the first time Marlow gets any information about Kurtz and he realises how powerful and inspirational this man really was. This mention of Kurtz only makes the reader want to read and as Kurtz is talked about as a supernatural being and as the story progresses the reader is more aware of the impact that Kurtz has had and is more anxious to meet him.

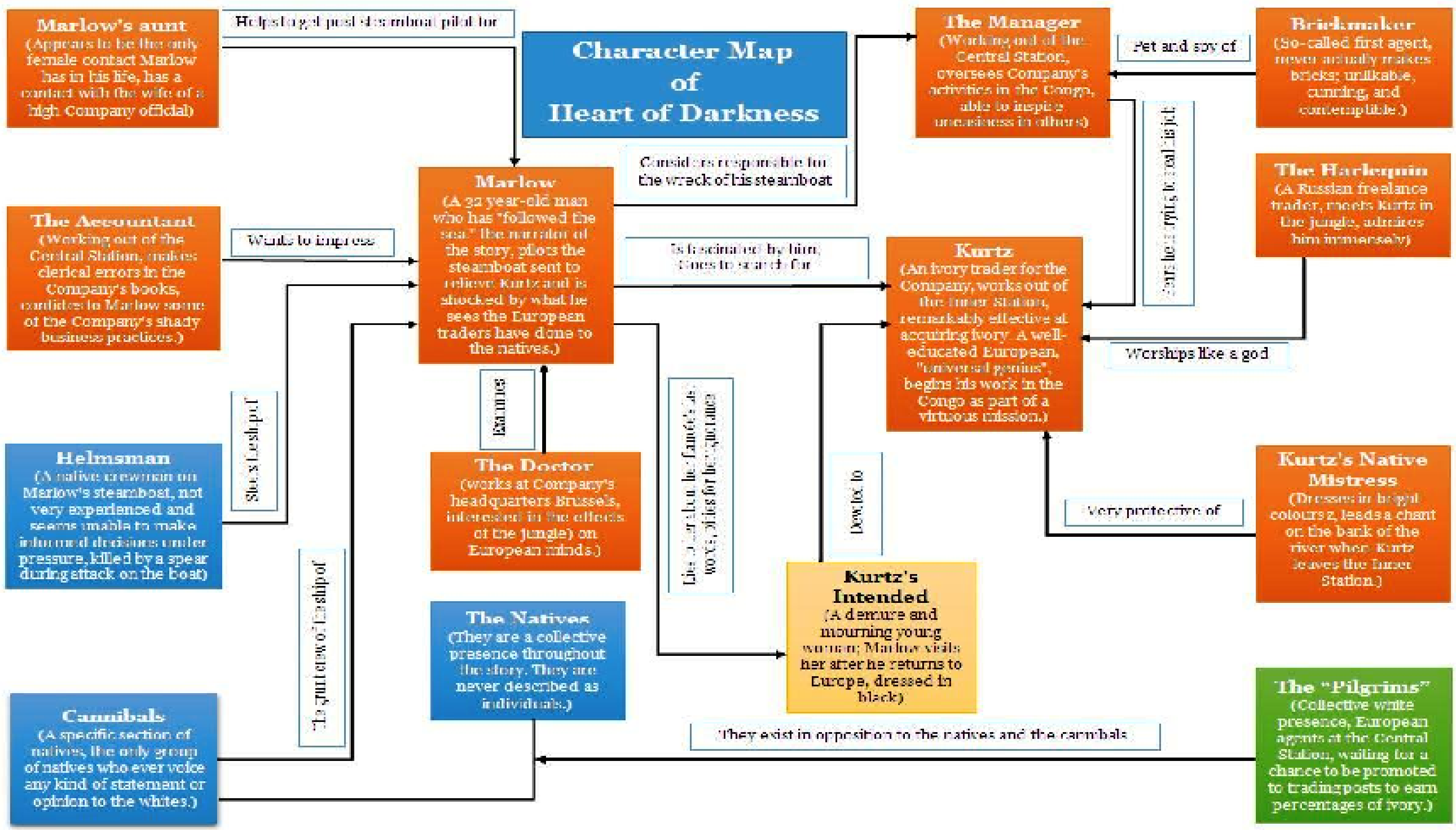
The setting is a big part of how the story unfolds, and the closer the boat gets to Kurtz up the river the more sinister and edgy the descriptions of the settings are. Conrad shows vivid pictures of sinister rainforests and murky rivers. 'silent wilderness surrounding this cleared speck on the earth struck me as something great and invincible, like evil or truth, waiting patiently for the passing away of this fantastic invasion.' This could show the silent power of the jungle just lying in wait for colonialism to end and for those people to go. Conrad writes about the jungle in unexplainable darkness and is linking this with Kurtz's path of destruction up the river 'for me it crawled towards Kurtz exclusively.' This shows the way that Marlow had somehow become obsessed with the finding of Kurtz and now it had consumed him so much that all he thought about was him. The forest had done that to him as there was so much evil in the leading to Kurtz it was hard not to see it 'a treacherous appeal to the lurking death, to the hidden evil, to the profound darkness of its heart.' The jungle also seemed to become an enemy to Marlow as there was an heir of uneasiness all around this is because of the way Conrad writes about the setting the way he talks about the darkness the impenetrability of it, it seemed like a fortress was surrounding Kurtz and slowly Marlow was getting to it.

Kurtz is in many ways the most important character of the novella and although he is not present for most of the book the reader feels that there was something of him there in the way that the forest was described and the way that the river seemed to be against Marlow, there always seemed to be a part of Kurtz there the evil of his mind. Conrad makes this possible by making Kurtz a god like being a 'vapour of the earth' and his mind and spirit was everywhere in the jungle that he owned. He was described and praised by many people 'whatever he was he was not common' but even though we hear

so much about him there is no evidence of he has done they are all just rumours and maybe exaggerations. Kurtz was described and talked about by most people Marlow came across but he was said to have been an evil person only when Marlow was sailing up the river there are hints of his immense evil. ‘the inner truth is hidden – luckily, luckily' this could show that maybe Marlow might be going insane slowly, the constant thinking of Kurtz and his power may have slowly been making Marlow insane. And when the realisation dawns upon him that he might not even be able to see Kurtz he realises that ‘"now I will never hear him." The man presented himself as a voice.' This shows the amount that Marlow respects and honours Kurtz he can't even imagine him being a real person. Kurtz was definitely a mystery to Marlow because he doesn't know anything about Kurtz and what he has done all that has been said about him was that he was an extraordinary man.

Kurtz's effect on others was very strong. He made people believe that he was something special something amazing and people worshiped him for it a good example of a person that worshiped Kurtz was the harlequin character. The harlequin was in awe of Kurtz's abilities and talked about him as if he was a god or a supernatural person as if he could not be real. Marlow was in awe of how much he had got in such little time. ‘Everything belonged to him – but that was a trifle. The thing was to know what he belonged to, how many powers of darkness claimed him for their own.' This is a very important quote as it shows what Marlow really knows about Kurtz and his powers have made him so great but Marlow asked himself what made him so powerful how did he become this great and how many powers of darkness did Kurtz himself belong to. ‘He had taken a high seat amongst the devils of the land - I mean literally.' But ultimately the prospect of Kurtz was too much for Marlow as when Marlow does finally see Kurtz he had fallen ill and was facing death ‘it was as though an animated image of death carved out of old ivory had been shaking its hand with menaces at a motionless crowd of men made of dark and glittering bronze.'

Kurtz's character in many ways is a real character and could be a realistic and real person and therefore is convincing. Although he shows unremorseful evil all through the book and is seen to be the heart of darkness when Marlow finally does meet him he seems to be quite sane. ‘Believe me or not his intelligence was perfectly clear' he also shows remorse with his dying words ‘the horror, the horror.' This is open to many interpretations and is a very famous quote but in my opinion Kurtz has realised that mankind given the chance can do horrific things like what he did in Africa and only when he dies he realises this. Although the character is convincing to be a man of pure evil, there may have been some exaggeration in the novel as at the start of the novel the anonymous narrator does tell us Marlow has the ‘propensity to spin a yarn.' And therefore Kurtz's whole story and background could be an exaggeration. But in my opinion Kurtz was a very real character and was a convincing and intriguing character all the way through the novel.


Character Map of Heart of Darkness
Marlow's aunt (Appears to be the only female contact Marlow has in his life, has a contact with the wife of a high Company official)
The Accountant (Working out of the Central Station, makes clerical errors in the Company's books, confides to Marlow some of the Company's shady business practices.)
Wants to impress
Helmsman (A native crewman on Marlow's steamboat, not very experienced and seems unable to make informed decisions under pressure, killed by a spear during attack on the boat)
Cannibals (A specific section of natives, the only group of natives who ever voice any kind of statement or opinion to the whites.)
Marlow (A 32 year-old man who has "followed the sea," the narrator of the story, pilots the steamboat sent to relieve Kurtz and is shocked by what he sees the European traders have done to the natives.)
Examines
The Doctor (works at Company's headquarters Brussels, interested in the effects of the jungle) on European minds.)
The Natives (They are a collective presence throughout the story. They are never described as individuals.)
Considers responsible for the wreck of his steamboat
Is fascinated by him; Goes to search for
The Manager (Working out of the Central Station, oversees Company's activities in the Congo, able to inspire uneasiness in others)
Pet and spy of
Brickmaker (So-called first agent, never actually makes bricks; unlikable, cunning, and contemptible.)
The Harlequin (A Russian freelance trader, meets Kurtz in the jungle, admires him immensely)
Worships like a god
Kurtz (An ivory trader for the Company, works out of the Inner Station, remarkably effective at acquiring ivory. A well-educated European, "universal genius", begins his work in the Congo as part of a virtuous mission.)
Very protective of
Kurtz's Native Mistress (Dresses in bright colours, leads a chant on the bank of the river when Kurtz leaves the Inner Station.)
Kurtz's Intended (A demure and mourning young woman; Marlow visits her after he returns to Europe, dressed in black)
They exist in opposition to the natives and the cannibals
The "Pilgrims" (Collective white presence, European agents at the Central Station, waiting for a chance to be promoted to trading posts to earn percentages of ivory.)

They proclaimed to educate the people civility,

But how bewildered are beasts they at their brutality,

But fondness got they to make cities devastated,

Graveyards everywhere have they populated,

The world has never seen such a tyrant hypocrite,

To fellowmen they are snare, to beasts affectionate.

Twilight in Delhi

Ahmed Ali

Ahmed Ali (1910 in New Delhi – 14 January 1994 in Karachi) was an Indian (later Pakistani) novelist, poet, critic, translator, diplomat and scholar. His writings include Twilight in Delhi (1940), his first novel.

Born in Delhi, India, Ahmed Ali was educated at Aligarh and Lucknow universities, graduating with first-class and first in the order of merit in both B.A. (Honours), 1930 and M.A. English, 1931. He taught at leading Indian universities including Lucknow and Allahabad from 1932–46 and joined the Bengal Senior Educational Service as professor and head of the English Department at Presidency College, Calcutta (1944–47). Ali was the BBC's Representative and Director in India during 1942–45. During the Partition of India, he was the British Council Visiting Professor to the University of China in Nanking as appointed by the British government of India. When he tried to return to India in 1948, K.P.S. Menon (then India's Ambassador to China) did not let him and he was forced to move to Pakistan.

In 1948, he moved to Karachi. Later, he was appointed Director of Foreign Publicity, Government of Pakistan. At the behest of Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan, he joined the Pakistan Foreign Service in 1950. The first file he received was marked 'China' and when he opened it; it was blank. He went to China as Pakistan's first envoy and established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic in 1951.

Literary career: - Ali started his literary career at a young age and became cofounder of the All-India Progressive Writers' Movement and Association with the publication of Angare in 1932, a collection of short stories by four young friends, which was later banned by the British Government of India in March 1933. Shortly afterward Ali and Mahmud-uz-Zaffar announced the formation of a "League of Progressive Authors", which was later to expand and become the All-India Progressive Writers' Association. Ali presented his paper "Art kaTaraqqi-PasandNazariya" (A Progressive View of Art) in its inaugural Conference in 1936. A pioneer of the modem Urdu short story, Ali's works include collections of short stories: "Angare" (Flames), 1934; HamariGali (Our Lane), 1940; QaidKhana (The Prison-house), 1942; and Maut Se Pehle (Before Death), 1945.

Ali achieved international fame with his first novel written in English Twilight in Delhi, which was published by The Hogarth Press in London in 1940. During the 1950s, Ahmed Ali worked for the Pakistan Foreign Service, establishing embassies in Morocco and China.

Twilight in Delhi : A Critical Review

Ahmad Ali's *Twilight in Delhi* is a marvellous novel. It brings before our eyes a true "*motion-picture"* of how the Muslims of the sub-continent used to live their religious, social, cultural, single and collective life during the tumultuous years of 1857-1919. Another important thing to note is that, Ahmad Ali shows us all the positive as well as negative aspects of the Muslim Cultural life of sub-continent. So there is no taboo binding the hands of the writer to omit this or that part of the life: he presents life as a whole in all its aspects and colours. The details of **Mehro's** marriage with **Meraj**, **the son of Bhopal millionaire**, added with the details of **Mushtari Bai** and **Babban Jan**, provide ample proof for our statements in this respect. We also find details of two pastimes that were very popular at those times among the gentlemen and others: pigeon-flying and kite-flying. There would be only a few such cities in the world which have become living landmark in the history or civilization of the world at large and of the related country in particular. Constantinople (now known as Istanbul) is one. Rome is another. Delhi is still another. Delhi can boast rightfully of a culture and civilization that has its long, deep roots going back into the 2nd century B.C. Built in *1453 B.C.* by the name of Hastnapur by Raja Yudhishtra after the great battle of Mahabharat, Delhi had seen many ups and down in its long history. It has seen the age of Kauravs and the Pandaus. It has seen the rise and fall of the Khiljis. It has seen the regime of the Sayyeds. And lastly it has seen the supreme, superb and colourful reign of the great Moghals; Babur, Huamyun, Jahangir, Shah Jahan, the grand and great line culminating in Bahadur Shah (*Zafar*), the last of the Moghal dynasty who was overthrown by the Britiehers, or ***Farangis***, as the people of the sub-continent including the Delhiites used to call them. **According to the novelist himself**:

"Destruction is in its foundations and blood is in its soil. It has seen the fall of many a glorious kingdom and listened to the groans of birth. It is the symbol of life and Death ..."

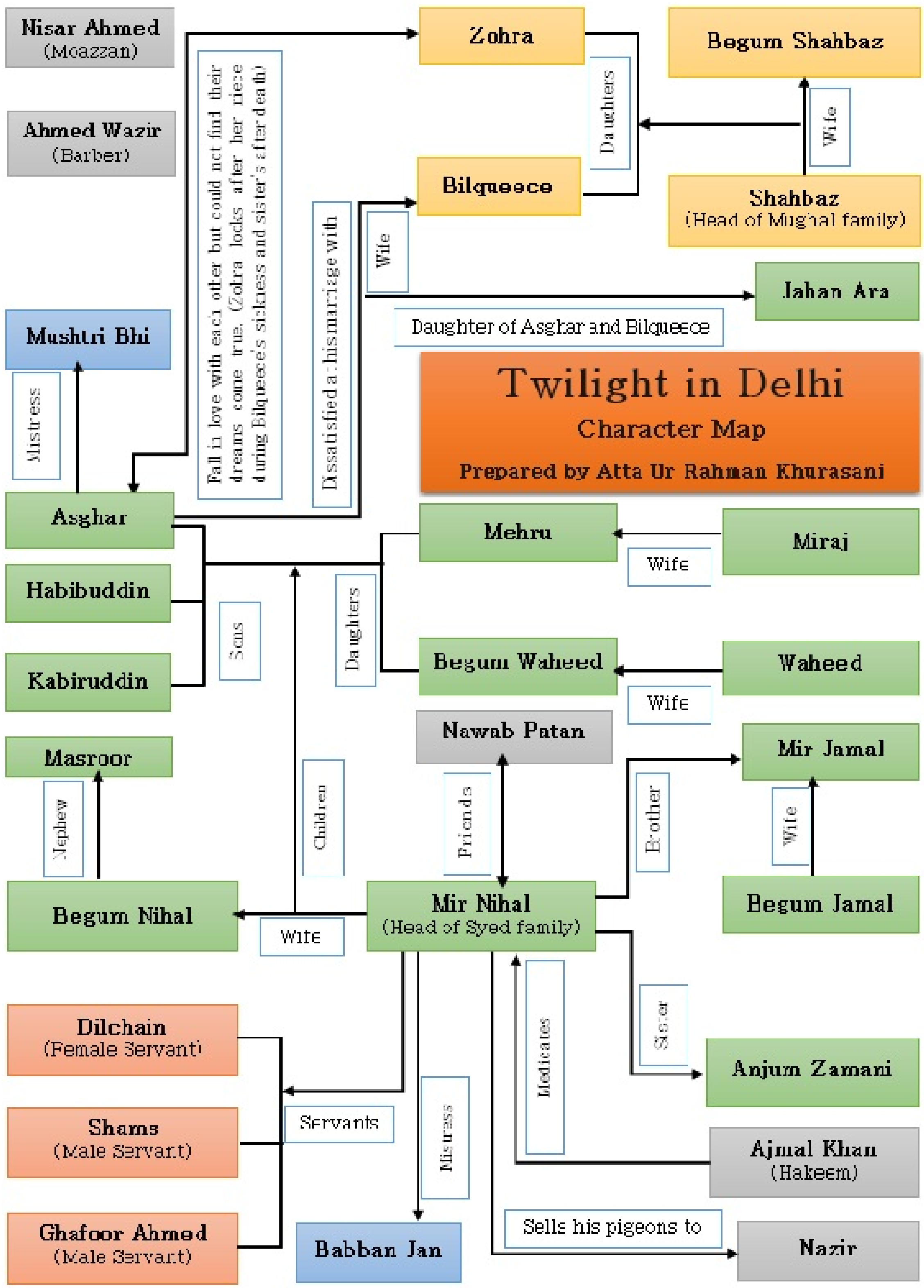
Ahmad Ali has seen the lanes, by-lanes and streets of Delhi with great affection. So Ahmad Ali has drawn a detailed picture of the life going on in these lanes and by-lanes during the last years of the 19th and the earlier years of the 20th century. The life is the true representation of the decaying Indian Muslim civilization during the period referred to above.

When this novel was published in 1940 by Hogarth Press, London, a lot of reviews appreciations about the same appeared not only in India but also in England. The novel gained spontaneous attention of the literary critics in India and abroad. One of the main aims of Ahmad Ali in writing this novel in English language was to acquaint the English-speaking world about the Indian civilization and its presentation through the life of novel's characters. In his essay entitled "Some Reflections on the Novel" Ahmad Ali himself writes:

"The Novel is not an imitation but representation of life and its changing shadows, reflecting their movement and directing the changing scene of human activity in all ages and societies.... For the canvas of life is too vast and can be presented only in the moments of shattered desire or contemplation calm and rising hopes and ambitions. In all forms it shows man and society their true

semblance, and life, its picture which, in the movement, life itself does not often understand.”

So, Ahmad Ali lived a rich life and created, out of that, a rich, living and throbbing novel as such which is Twilight in Delhi. If we care about the unity of impression and vitality of life, we are to find it only in Twilight in Delhi. Loo-stricken life being lived/passed in the lanes and by-lanes of Delhi right from the darkness of dejection to the radiating hopefulness has been immortalized in its own subtle and sublime manner by Ahmad Ali.



Plot Construction of Twilight in Delhi

Ahmed Ali's Twilight in Delhi is a well-knit and brilliantly constructed novel. It consists of four parts and every part has the chapters which gave additional meaning to the course of events. The plot is constructed in a particular style—in the act of narration. Every character is in descriptive or in evaluating style which gives additional significance and beauty to the plot. Mostly the plot revolves around the family of Mir Nihal representing on symbolical level the Muslim class's present and past life. The Novelist Ahmed All relates a person's tale in this novel that, in the end, looks alienated and apart from the surroundings and all this happens only through his out dated attitude in the present condition.

Ahmed Ali has utilized his events of the story to construct an organic whole in the shape of plot of the novel "Twilight in Delhi". This thing tells us about his expertise in the field of novel-writing or fiction-writing as such. The novel under reference has basically been designed by the writer to give us a rich glimpse of the Indian Muslim society along with its customs, traditions and ways. This purpose has been achieved by the writer by taking a large number of characters from the span of 1911-1919 from the city of Delhi from among the Muslim population. As it is not inside his goal to tell the readers anything about the Hindu society, so he does not include any Hindu character in the novel, so much so that even the bania (basically the money lender of the sub-continent society) of the novel is Saddiq, a Muslim, although mostly Hindus were the banias of the sub-continent.

The plot of Twilight is Delhi "seems purposeful in every way. There are many characters and events only included in the novel to make the novel realistic and to give a true colouring to the Muslim Indian society as such. NawabPuttan is one of such characters. His character has nothing important to do with the advancement of the story. Still he is very important for the reasons that he is the representation of Nawabi culture and life. For giving complete a social picture of the Indian Muslim Society, Ahmed Ali has told us in detail about Ramazan and the traditions of Ramazan. He tells us a detail about how Eid is celebrated, and including that famous, classical verse used at this occasion by numberless people:

"It is the day of Eid, my dear,
Ah come, let me embrace thee.
It is the custom and besides
There's time and opportunity "

Mir Nihal, in his sixties has a family, a mistress named Babban Jan from whom he gets mental and sexual levels pleasure. He has a son, Asghar, a boy in twenties, who desperately wants to marry a girl, Bilqeece. His marriage takes place after a huge amount of resistance from Mir Nihal's side. In the background of these events, Ahmed All has portrayed a graphic picture of historical moments of violence and tyranny in this novel and also the pathetic condition of Delhi on a big canvass. The marriage of Asghar is caught in a fiasco and the relations weaken day by day and after Bilqeece's death the whole scenario changes. Asghar thinks himself responsible for her death but Bilqeece'syounger sister Zohra again turns Asgher to the beauty of life. Zohra, a young girl, full of charming and alluring beauty, fascinates him to marry her but finally nothing happens according to his desires. In the end we see Mir Nihal as a paralyze

has faced many hard blows from fate like, death of Babban Jan, death of his pigeons and the end of his rule—all pathetic. His wife Begum Nihal, who has spent her life honestly and devotedly, is unable to retain happiness in Mir Nihal's life.

In the background, the plot of the novel advances through the story of the freedom struggle of the people of India and of the Indian Muslims. We read about the fall of Delhi and about the fateful time for Jama Masjid, Delhi, as well as for the Muslims of Delhi. We read about the fires burning petrol depots and the royal canopy at Delhi-Darbar before it was held. We read about rallies, procession, agitation, marches and strikes. We read about the non-cooperative movement. So we see the advancement of the struggle for freedom going in the background of the story of the novel. But the thing is so well knit into the texture of the plot that we are ready to take it as an integral part of the main story.

The story, which started from the first section, shows every character's attitude and ordinary view about life. All the subsequent events end in the fourth part where we get not the conclusion but the actual condition that if they spend the same life they shall not be able to retain themselves in the changing conditions.

The plot, on the whole, is compact; there is very little irrelevant or unnecessary. Even the smallest details promote the action, produce the necessary atmosphere and fulfil the purpose of the novel. The concentration on the main theme is well maintained to achieve the desired purpose. All the strings are gathered at the end to give the final touch. Thus the plot construction in Twilight in Delhi, is nothing but remarkable. There can be arguments that the plot has some drawbacks or loose ends but it was never easy to pack a rapidly changing culture in limited pages and Ahmed Ali's realistic technique in describing the actual conditions is not only brilliant but also shows his precision in every way.

Art of Characterization in "Twilight in Delhi"

In "Twilight in Delhi" Ahmed All has used descriptive method to show the characters in the development of novel's plot. Every character is close to the actual condition of Delhi. Ali's realistic mode of expression in describing the relation of plot and character is remarkable. The opening section of the novel and its first chapter seems as a prologue to city's actual condition and its inhabitants. When we go through the novel, we find that the writer has used the art of characterization as a nice tool to realize his end. He has a plot and for the completion of the plot the characters come at the stage at a particular time and then leave the stage. Still there is one central character that is most of the time there in one or the other manner. This is the main male character of Mir Nihal who plays the pivotal role in the novel. All the events have a direct or indirect bearing at his character: all the characters are related to his character in one or the other way. So the spot light remains most of the time on Mir Nihal.

Mir Nihal's character has been portrayed with utmost precision and accuracy. He is a man who has witnessed the last event/episode of the surrender of Delhi on 14th September, 1857, the fateful day, with his own eyes. He is a patriot in the core of his

heart. He feels pain and torture at Hindustan's slavery but he believes in direct use of sword (i.e., weapons) to liberate his country whereas people are resorting to some other "useless" ways and means, like rallies, marches, strike and non-cooperative movement.

Mir Nihal's character is a representative of the older generation who has seen the country going into the clutches of slavery with his own eyes. So he hates the rulers. On the other end is Asghar, his younger son, who likes the English fashion and ways. Although, he also represents Indian Muslim culture in his own way but he belongs to the younger generation and, as such, differs with Mir Nihal. Both of them are having their own singing and dancing girls: Mir Nihal has Babban Jan and Mir Asghar has Mushtari Bai but the former "keeps" Babban Jan till her death whereas the latter leaves Mushtari Bai in the lurch and starts loving Bilqueece so intensively that he leaves no stone unturned for her achievement as a wife. It is another story that he, even then, does not keep himself limited and goes out on his romantic adventures or errands to find out new women for him.

Ahmad Ali is depicting the story of the dying Indian Muslim society in his novel, so he picks and chooses from the society only such characters that can be helpful to him in the context. These characters may be as overwhelming as Mir Nihal and Asghar and these may be as summarized as Kabiruddin, the elder brother of Asghar, and Habibuddin. We hardly see Kabiruddin in any scene of the novel. Similar is the case with Ashfaq, the nephew of Begum Jamal, who has married with the eldest daughter of Begum and Mirza Shahbaz Beg. These are the characters that perform their duty behind the scenes. Even Ahmad Wazir, the family barber of Mir Nihal, has to perform his duty at two places in the novel. Dilchain and Ghafoor do the duties of servants in zanana and mardana of Mir Nihal's house. Once we see that Dilchain wears men's clothes (at the age of near about 60) and dances in a lewd manner on the occasion of the marriage of Asghar. But all this is done to represent the dying Indian Muslim culture.

As the society depicted in the novel is basically a male-oriented society, so we see that generally males are taking lead in all the matters of importance and generally females are lagging behind or following them. Strangely enough, if we look deeply into the matter, there are two trees growing in the middle of the courtyard of Mir Nihal's house. One is the date-palm tree. It is tall and manly. The other is the henna tree. It is small and womanly. And, as such, the "male" date palm tree has been talked about at more times and in more manners (although we never see any dates being plucked from the tree!) than the "female" henna tree has been talked about (although henna leaves are practically plucked from the tree and applied for practical utilization!).

Ahmed Ali also shows a complete picture of female class. Female characters like Begum Nihal, Dilchain, Babban Jan, Begum Shahbaz, Bilqueece, and Zohra—all of them are the part and parcel of this man-made community. They have their own ways of living which the outside world is unable to comprehend and they themselves are not able to understand their frustrated life. It seems that Ali has tried his level best to maintain a connection between the characters and the historical events. The events of the 14 September 1857 which are described in the Twilight of Delhi, have close relation with them. There are also many historical events which are portrayed in this novel like Mir Nihal and Begum Nihal's remembering about the pathetic conditions of British

So if we look at Ali's art of characterization on large canvas we can say, he has used direct as well as indirect way of describing the characters. Every character, from its appearance to his way of life, is remarkably close to reality. We see that different characters of the novel Twilight in Delhi (by Ahmed Ali) advance the plot of the novel in their own peculiar manner So it can be said that Ahmed Ali has superbly portrayed the condition of Delhi and her inhabitants and his art of characterization shows his sagacity and brilliance of thought.

Major Themes in "Twilight in Delhi" by Ahmed Ali

Ahmed Ali's classic novel Twilight in Delhi is a nostalgic tale set in nineteenth-century Delhi between two revolutionary moments: subsequent to the collapse of the last Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar, and prior to the rise of the independence movement which culminated in the violent partition of the Indo-Pak subcontinent. In the novel, Ali depicted a scene after early morning prayers on the day of Eid at the Jama Masjid in Old Delhi. He wrote: **When the prayer ended they all began to embrace, falling on each other's necks, pressing the chests together warmly. All those who knew one another went through this show and expression of affection. And the lovers found the opportunity of their lives. A middle-aged man quoted these lines to a young man with arms open for an embrace:**

'It is the day of Eed, my dear,
Ah come, let me embrace thee.
It is the custom and besides
There's time and opportunity …' (Ali 1940: 95)

Ali, in his novel, depicted most movingly and melancholically **the loss of a culture and way of life** in the city of Delhi as it was altered by the rebellion of 1857. He presented this moment as a vestige of a pre-modern cultural Indo-Islamic milieu that was in the process of a traumatic disruption at the hands of colonialism. The above incident, although of a literary nature, demonstrates that a context and environment for the expression of same-sex attraction and love existed in Muslim societies.

The Struggle over Memory: - In "Twilight in Delhi" memory is seen both as source of personal identity and as a burden preventing to attain happiness. Each character is involved in a struggle to remember but more importantly in a struggle to forget certain aspects of their past. Mir Nihal the protagonist of the Novel wants to seek refuge in the past. He wants to live in past not is present. The other characters, like Begum Nihal, Begum Jamal and the elder sons of Mir Nihal, all of them are found in struggling condition. The grandeur and wonderful Muslim's past, in which they were rulers, not wipe out from Mir Nihal and his family's mind, like Asghar seemed rebellious but in the end of the Novel he was caught in the trap of cruel and remorseless fate. The city "Delhi" had faced the rise and fall of many Kings and princes like a poet said.

Delhi which was once the Jewel of the world,
Where dwelt only the loved ones of Fate,
Which has now been ruined by the hand of time,

I, m a resident of that storm-tossed place . . . .

But now the present scenario has impolitely changed people who were rulers now they are under the domination of colonial forces. So Mir Nihal like madam Ranevsky in "The cherry orchard" is not able to forget the grandeur of past his management, attitude and behaviour in his family totally reflect the king like way as Mughals did in past. He never able to comprehend the change in his own family when Asghar showed his consent to marry Bilqueece, the problem solved and everything happened according to his will. Ahmad Ali showed all the characters and especially Mir Nihal in a struggling position, the whole family and the surrounding area's people never able to come out from the memory of their glorious past.

Modernity vs. the Old India: - With the arrival of the British colonial forces in the sub-continent everything had changed. People who were habitual in living under the kings of were not able to face a change which as far as British was concern a change which civilizes the Brutes, the major character or the protagonist of the Novel, Mir Nihal never able to compensate with the new traditions. Britishers gave change to their style of living and the government structure but he wants to live according to the past like Ahmed Ali relate in part 4 chapters 4.

"New ways and ideas had come into being a hybrid culture which had nothing in it of the past was forcing itself upon Hindustan a wedge-people of Indian and Western ways which he failed to understand. The whole culture of India was a mixture of two cultures the new generation want to adopt the English culture like in the beginning of the Novel Asghar's first appearance was in wearing English shirts and Mir Nihal scolded on it His sudden anger on him showed his hatred and non-accommodateable attitude towards and modernity."

He was a backward person like in the mid-end of the Novel. The episode when he tried to give punishment to the children he said to Dilchain that you go and take my sword and he took his sword and children seemed terrified not in real sense, this shows that he did not left the past, but he did not want to think about it.

Theme of Sex: - Sex is the most important theme of the novel. All the women characters in the novel were sexually suppressed figures. Mir Nihal, a tall handsome and energetic man, desperately wanted a woman who knew well the art of sex and the art of capturing man. So Babban Jan, a young girl, gave him all these pleasures. When she died his whole world disturbed. He felt a kind of flux in his life, which cannot be full-filled. He had also sexual relations with Dilchain (His Maid) and when she got pregnant Begum Nihal surprised to hear this that she is not a married one and her quarrel with Mir Nihal shows that Mir Nihal's sexual appetite was not satiated from Begum Nihal.

If we look at Delhi's society we came to know that most of the male society went to prostitutes. When they became habitual of them then they were not able to accommodate with their wives because they (wives) were not well-versed in the art of capturing man through sex. We can see that most of the men had no time for their wives.

Asghar was also one of them who went to prostitutes like Mushtari Bai who was a young girl; beautiful, fascinating and charming girl. Asghar often went to her Kotha and became habitual of her. But when he saw Bilqueece he was bewitched by her extreme beauty. He desperately wanted to marry her and after huge amount of reluctance from Mir Nihal he succeeded to marry with her. But later on he felt that she lacked sexual understanding. So Bilqueece was unable to feel the gulf. It wasn't her fault because in Indian culture mostly the women spent her youth in the four walls of Zanana where no male allowed enter in it. So she can't able to understand why her husband left her in the house for weeks. But Begum Shahbaz felt the actual problem or the cause which created the gulf. She quarrelled with him but Asghar was unable to manage the whole issue.

The whole Mir Nihal, s family represent the Muslim class of India and throughout India they have the same life style. Men often satisfy their sexual appetites to go to the prostitutes and women remained ignorant because they had no knowledge about what is going on there.

Passing away of Muslim civilization in India: - One of the Major themes is the passing away of Muslims civilization in India. "Twilight in Delhi" basically showed the decay of Mughal Kingship or the Muslim civilization.

Muslims ruled on India from many centuries but with the arrival of Britishers, the whole civilization had faced a huge set back. Mir Nihal, who lived in the illusions of splendid past, was not able to accommodate with the present condition. His appearance and attitude represent the Muslims community of that time. He was unable to live according to the changed conditions because they felt that this is the most humiliating condition for the Muslims. Like Niven says

"Despite the rhapsodic(passionate) treatment of Asghar's love Bilqueece (Ali's own wife is called Bilqueece), the autumnal mood at the Novel's close the grief-stricken regrets for the Mughal past and the frequent coherence in his prose style, Ali writes less from a romantic than a classic stand point. He recognizes the immutability of the basic elements in human life individual remains the same in every age."

Yet classicism in so far as it refers to recognition of the permanence of the change brought about by the passing of time is perhaps the intention of the Novel's plot.

Symbolism in "Twilight in Delhi" by Ahmed Ali

Ahmed Ali's Twilight in Delhi of been regarded as masterpiece. His writing is immensely visual. He wants to recreate a world which is real, vivid and close to the actual traditional ways of old Delhi. Throughout the whole novel symbolical elements are used vehemently. His direct and indirect ways of using symbolism, is very unique in Pakistani literature. He wanted to go beyond sub-continental sounds and words, to convey the essence of traditional Indo-Muslims culture in which poetry plays a pivotal role. The poetry, use of Urdu words art of narration all seemed remarkable.

"Twilight in Delhi" is a book whose opening description has symbolic significance. It shows the down to earth life of Indians, the delay of Muslim civilization, the darkness in minds or in life which on a literal level is the product their own inefficiencies and mismanagement in handling Govt. or State.

"Night envelopes the city covering it like a blanket. In the dim starlight roofs and houses and by-lanes lie asleep wrapped in a restless slumber, breathing heavily as the heat become oppressive or shoots through the body like pain, in the courtyards, on the roofs, in the by-lanes, on the roads, men sleep on brave beds, half naked, tired after the sore day's labour. A few still well on the other-wise deserted roads, hand in hand, talking; and some have jasmine garlands in their hands. The smell from the flowers escapes, scents a few yards of air around them and dies smothered by the narrow by lanes, from under the plants gutting out of shops, and luck the earthen cups out of which men had drunk milk and thrown away"

All deserted conditions of men and their surrounding shows nation miserable plight under the colonial forces rule.

The title is symbolical as well as metaphorical, symbolical in a way that it symbolizes the downfall or deterioration not only of Delhi but ways of Delhi as well ,people's moral ,religious and social values all were on the verge of death and metaphorical in a way that the title not only refers to the twilight of Delhi but also the Twilight of Mir Nihal

Asghar's character seemed disillusioned as he was a typical Indian Muslim bachelor who was not sexual satiated and spend life without any prior aim of life. His approach seemed un-realistic of the conclusions like in part 1 chapter 2 when he thought about Bilqueece Ahmed Ali's creates.

"His heart begins to beat and he follows her until he overtakes her, and arm in arm they go. But soon the road comes to an end, and in front there is a void, deep and dark and dim, As he looks its depth his head begin to reel, and beads of perspiration came upon his brow. He turns to say is not there upon the brink of that void he finds himself alone, and are unknown fear grips his heart.

The character of Asghar symbolically represents the whole trading Muslim are generation who desperately wanted something near because they in a hodgepodge (jumble) of Indian and British culture. He has got the disillusionment and was not able to foresee the coming circumstances, and it also shown uncertainty and nihilistic attitude from his part because he hadn't the courage to make a charge.

Mir Nihal's family represent the whole Muslim community in India. Mir Nihal's family is an embodiment and passionate picture of the Indian Muslim, who had spent the same type of lining from many centuries. Their sceptic approach, religious atmosphere, beliefs, customs, traditions, thinking and superstitions all can be packed by Ahmed Ali in one family Death of Mir Nihal's pigeons. The chapter in which we came to know about death of Mir Nihal's Pigeons; is highly symbolical. At was turning point in Mir Nihal's life. A healthy tall and handsome person turned into the weakest person in the

whole episode symbolically foretell the defeat of a certain traditional way of life; life which showed the static side of Muslim world life. The habit of keeping pigeons was old nobody thought about at this time so Mir Nihal had to adopt the change but he didn't comprehend the reality or the modern standards.

Cat episode isalso the most symbolic event of the novel. When Mir Nihal went upstairs to release his pogroms he saw feather and the stairs and many more on the roof. When he looked inside the loft he found that there had been massacre. He had forgotten to close the door last night and the cats had found their opportunity to kill many of Mir Nihal's pigeons. Cat is a potent symbol Ali has used repeatedly in his short stories to represent cunning, stealth, and destruction. He also identifies the cat with the British who have succeeded in altering of not destroying these cherished ways of life by introducing new ideologies and mores; which Mir Nihal's generation stands for.

Mir Nihal's Paralysis has highly symbolical meanings. It represents a parting away of old order or the end of the old orthodox beliefs. His desperation increases when came to know about Babban's death. In the last chapter Ahmed Ali relates about his paralyzed condition:

"His days were done and beauty had vanished from the earth. But life remained over which men had no command and must go on.

He was weary and tired, limp like a shaken hand. His world had fallen to pieces all around him, smothered by indifference and death. Yet he was still alive to mope like on owl, and count his days at the merry of time and fate. He lay on the bed in a state of coma, too feeling less to sit up or think. The sun went down and hid his face. The rooks cawed and flew away".

The whole gloomy picture of Mir Nihal's paralyzed condition also shows his authority, or a rule's end. His soul or inward condition is totally shattered, his dominating figure and his grandeur scattered or destroyed. He was more than nothing now.

Begum Nihal's Blindness also shows her lack of comprehension in maintaining or in making proper decisions. Her Blindness also shows the Blindness of that age's women who can't able to manage the matters.

Significance of the Title "Twilight in Delhi"

The name or title of Ahmed Ali's novel as "Twilight in Delhi" is very significant in itself. This is the most proper and appropriate name of the story he has told in the novel. "Twilight" is a word that signifies the short span of time that spreads itself between a dying day and emerging night just as "dawn" is the opposite term that signifies the death of the night and the arrival of the day.

"Twilight in Delhi" deals with the dying culture and civilization of Muslim India as such. If we take Mir Nihal as a symbol of that culture etc. which he really is, we can see the civilization crumbling with our own eyes. When we go through the novel, we find out that

its main male character has passed his middle age and is almost knocking at the door of old age. We are talking of Mir Nihal who is nearing sixty in the beginning of the novel as he had witnessed the fateful day of the fall of Delhi, 14th September, 1857, as a ten-year old boy. Still he is so healthy and strong that he can pick up a running snake from the gutter of the house with a swift movement of his hand and he can break its spinal cord by hitting it on the floor of the house with a powerful jerk of his hand.

But, later on, we find his health going to dogs. He gets a paralysis attack and is unable even to talk. Then, three days later, his power of speech is restored to a great extant but not so the physical or bodily power. Hakim Ajmal Khan comes to Mir Nihal twice or thrice a week and brings costly medicines from his home for him. Still his condition is not improved. Mir Nihal's nice friend, Kambal Shah, advises "Pelican oil" for massaging on the body of Mir Nihal. A pelican is arranged from somewhere. It is slaughtered and the oil is prepared under the supervision of Kambal Shah himself. Later on, the famous wrestler of Delhi, Shammoo, is called daily for massaging but with no improvement at all. At last, Mir Nihal becomes totally bed-ridden. He lies drown and goes on remembering his past. Then his son Habibuddin falls sick and dies. This tragedy casts a terrible effect on Mir Nihal and he becomes almost unable now even to remember his past. He is in a living death, so to speak. The same is the case of the Indian Muslim civilization and culture that faces a living death.

When Mir Nihal is healthy and jovial in the beginning, he looks after his hobby: pigeon flying. He also earns more money because he also has to arrange for his beloved keep, Babban Jan. He also looks after the family name and honour because they are Sayyeds and Bilqeece is a Mughal. But when the conditions deteriorate, Mir Nihal loses his beloved keep, a very great extant. Mir Nihal leaves his hobby and asks Nazir to sell out all his pigeons. Mir Nihal leaves to work for extra income. He leaves to care for family honour and self-respect etc. and gives his consent to the marriage of Asghar with Bilqeece. The world has stopped caring for him: let him stop caring for the world! So we find out that Mir Nihal has been used as a top-priority symbol to portray the deterioration of the customs, traditions, ways and means of which he has been the proud representative.

We can find this deterioration in other characters as well, symbolically enough. Begum Nihal becomes blind slowly and steadily. Begum Jamal leaves her classical residence at Mir Nihal's. Shams loses his wife. Hafizji does not get "pulao" on the very first uttering. Asghar stops loving Bilqueece and starts to find other women for his love.

This does not happen to the world of human beings alone. Even the buildings etc. are affected by time. The gutters of the city which were deep down are dug up and laid on a shallow level. The city walls are demolished. So the stink and sand attack on the city dwellers. The Jamia Masjid whose floor has been coloured redder by Muslim sacrifices on 14th September, 1857, wears a cheap garland to welcome the procession of King George V on the Coronation Day. Even the date-palm tree standing in the middle of the courtyard of Mir Nihal's home throws away its leaves and becomes yellow and seared (dry as a bone).

All these things have been aptly and appropriately used by the writer to show us, symbolically, the dwindling and dying Indian Muslim Civilization and Culture. The novel dealt with the twilight of cultural exhaustion, the twilight of social preferentialism and the twilight of economic backwardness. The city which has for so long enjoyed the 'dawn' – the embellished position of prosperity – cultural richness, economic strength, religious freedom, and above all political supremacy has now been expropriated with all its possessions.

So we can justly claim that although there could be many other names or titles of the novel under discussion, but the most appropriate and the best title for the same could only be "Twilight in Delhi". We can wind up the discussion with a verse from Bahadur Shah Zafar:

Delhi was once a Paradise
And great were the joys that used to be here,
But they have ravished this bride of peace,
And now remain only ruins and care.

Muslim Community as depicted in "Twilight in Delhi"

Ahmed Ali belongs to the post-world war II Indian writer in English. His novel "Twilight in Delhi" is a study of the middle class Muslim society of India in the pre-independence days. Twilight in Delhi is a novel where social history has been believably acknowledged. It is set in a society whose religious, cultural and social ambiance was changing and disintegrating under the impact of the British rule. This society had a history of hundreds of civilized years behind it.

Social values of the culture and society: - Ahmed Ali shows the movement of social forces, memories of the disaster caused by the colonial regime and its strong impact on the thinking and behaviour of the middle class society. The most glaring aspect of Ahmed Ali's style is the pessimistic tone built-up right from the outset of the novel and maintained throughout.

Ahmed Ali's protagonist – the sixty year old, sturdily-built, and typically feudal, manager of a shop of the lace-dealers- Mir Nihal, and his household personify the crumbling feudal society that the novel uncovers. Mir Nihal is the head of his middle-class Muslim household living in the area near Lal Kuan. His is a fairly large family with two daughters, four sons and a typical middle-class Muslim wife in her fifties called Begum Nihal. Mir Nihal is a hen-pecked head of the family. He owns some property also, which keeps the household running quite soundly. And the other monthly income which Mir Nihal makes from his services as a manager of the lace-dealer's shop, he spends on his hobbies. He is a free-lancing old man spending much of time and earnings in kite and pigeon-flying Mir Nihal is an aristocrat in his habits – typical feudal gentleman. Besides pigeon-flying he was very fond of collecting old China-ware and also devoted some of his time to alchemy and medicine. Every morning and evening he would be seen flying pigeons-feeding them, or beating the roof with his shoes to drive the pigeons away from home.

Social relations: - Once Mir Nihal was busy at the pigeons' loft, giving water to and tying feathers of the newly bought pigeons, Gafoor, his servant, comes running to inform that Babbajan is critically ill. Mir Nihal immediately leaves for Babajan, forgetting altogether even to close the loft door.

With the demise of Babbanjan, a very different phase in the life of Mir Nihal began. The death of this mistress being a mournful occasion many unfortunate incidents occur as a result of the utter disillusionment and melancholy that descended upon Mir Nihal following the tragedy. He forgets to close the door of the loft and becomes almost mad to find that wild cats had had a nice feast there - almost to the extent of society. As it was impossible to overcome this second shock, he decides in anger to do away with the hobby itself. He plans to sell the remaining pigeons on the same day.

He found himself weak and broken. The piling up of grief made hm pessimistic. He then decided to give up his jot itself for where was the income to be spent now, as it is his sons were asking him not to do the job – and – what was there now to protect his demeanour or position – he could as well lead a life of dependence on his children. Remarks the novelist: **"Now she was dead, and he did not care what mattered if he was dependent on his sons or anybody else he decided to give up his work."** These incidents evoke in him a consciousness of his own impending end. He begins to think about death.

It was after these incidents that Mir Nihal decides to give his consent for the son Asghar's alliance with Mirza Shahbaz Baig'sdaughter.And he said to himself: "Why withhold consent? It mattered little whether Asghar married a low-born or a girl with blue blood in her veins. He would not be in it anyway. If Asghar refused to see his point of view he could go his own way and ruin himself. He did not care, Life had not treated him well, and if a son was also lost it must be borne.'

Then in idleness his old hobbies of medicine and alchemy revived. He took out his notes and began to study about herbs and plants. A new circle of friends began to form. Hakims and Fakirs come to him to sit for hours comparing notes and relating anecdotes. Besides, he thought, the atmosphere of alchemy and medicine was " a world which was still his own where no one could disturb him or order him about.' Such was the old man's hatred for being ordered about and being imposed upon.

Social Values: - Begum Nihal, a woman in her early fifties, was a dutiful wife of the easy-going husband. She reprimanded him for his careless ways. She often had to remind him that their children Mehro and Asghar – were coming age and that he should look for a proper alliance for them. Begum Nihal is the only person in the entire household who performs the religious rites with a mechanical regularity. The others only did it occasionally. In the morning, after the dawn prayers, she would sit and recite the holy Quran aloud in a rhythmic tone –rhythmically moving back and forth. She is the symbol of the self-less and calm middle-class Muslim Woman of the early twentieth century.

The culture of Delhi: - All of Mir Nihal's children were married and settled. Whether they were happy or not was not his worry now. He himself was on the way

This he had begun to understand. And he thought it to be certain. Similarly the beloved of the heart of the Indians, the city of Delhi, has also got dismembered, giving birth to a New Delhi. Though the inhabitants of Delhi had become disillusioned the fortune of the foreign government had begun to assert itself poignantly. In the city of Delhi many changes were being proposed. New people meant new customs and traditions. The old culture would, therefore be in a danger of annihilation. The language on which Delhi had once prided itself would become adulterated and impure. The people of Delhi were most unwilling to let this happen.

Ahmed Ali's hero, Mir Nihal's personification of the society at the moment when the social fabric was being altered, becomes clearly discernible. A proud and stable civilization was destroyed by the encroachment of an outside culture, just as a happy family was dismembered by the modernistic trends. The traditional society, hitherto protected by the common force of social and religious values, breaks and collapses with the arrival of the white man and his ideology. Similarly the erosion of traditional values in the family of Mir Nihal is seen as a result of the effects of the new civilization. Mir Nihal tells Asghar: **"You are again wearing those dirty English boots; I don't like them. I will have no aping of the Farangis in my house. Throw them away."**

The foreign occupation of India seems to have made some of the citizens withdraw into a world of their own. Though there are no direct references in Ahmed Ali's novel to the ravages wrought by the rule of the white man, the novel deals with it very subtly. Mir Nihal the protagonist adopts a leave-me-alone attitude. When the Home-Rule movement sweeps across India he is almost untouched. Ahmed Ali says: **"His world had fallen. Let others build their own."**

Ahmed Ali describes the popular sport of Pigeon flying. And this is contrasted with the family scenes within the old house. The family tale which reaches its climax with the marriage of Asghar and Bilqueece is set against the aerial background of kite flying and pigeon flying. As the flying of pigeons and kites fade into the background the family becomes the central metaphor. Then the novelist subjects the husband and wife to the inevitable blows of fate. Asghar's happy life is covered with gloom with the death of his wife. The novelist strikes a fatalistic note here. "who can meddle in the affairs of God?"

Ahmed Ali begins his novel with a description of the night enveloping the city like a blanket, and ends it by showing Mir Nihal the head of the family, in a state of coma when the sun is about to set. On another level a segment of Indian history comes to an end.

Political Conditions depicted in 'Twilight in Delhi'

Ahmed Ali is known as the pioneer of English fiction and poetry among the Muslims of India. His literary career began during British rule over India and his significance as a writer is both historical and social. He moved from Urdu, his mother tongue and the literary language of Indian Muslims, to English. He is the first to get hold of modernity, social-realism and then symbolism from Western origin among Indian Muslim writers. His revocation is chiefly for his historical significance. 'Twilight in Delhi' is one of his finest

literary achievements in which he depicts the prevailing political conditions of pre-independence Delhi.

Description of Delhi in 'Twilight in Delhi': - The city of Delhi was once the vice-like grip of art, culture, architecture and learning. Its throne was adorned by the kings and monarchs who patronized learning and encouraged fine arts. Many victorious wars were fought on its battlefields. It has seen their glory as well as their disaster. They were those who beautified the city by erecting great monuments and creating magnificent buildings. And whose only work was to invade the city, raid its fortresses, destroy the monuments and loot the wealth. And the city of Delhi stands a witness to all these happenings like a mute spectator. It has no reaction to show against the damage done to its culture and civilization.

The novelist speaks pessimistically: **"Gone are the poets now and gone is its culture".** Only the coils of the rope, when the rope itself has been burnt, remain to remind us of the past splendour. Delhi stands for both life and death. It has seen how glory descended upon it with the rise to power of the Guptas, the Mauryas, the Kushans, the Pandabas, the Khiljis, the Sayyids and the Lodhis, and the great Moghuls. And it had also seen the dethroning of the poet-king Bahadur Shah – the last of that great line of rulers, at the hands of the foreigners who came into the country as mere traders but gradually dug their feet deep into the soil of statecraft. With their invasion a kind of silence and apathy, as of death, descended upon the city. Its glory began to wither away. The city of Delhi is the definitive symbol of loss and Muslim sense of nostalgia.

The city, at least six or seven times in history, has been plundered and destroyed. Ali captures the image of Delhi as:

"But the city of Delhi, built hundreds of years ago, fought for, died for, coveted and desired, built, destroyed and rebuilt, for five and six and seven times, mourned and sung, raped and conquered, yet whole and alive, lies indifferent in the arms of sleep. It was the city of kings and monarchs, of poets and story tellers, courtiers and nobles. But no king lives there today, and the poets are feeling the lack of patronage; and the old inhabitants, though still alive, have lost their pride and grandeur under a foreign yoke." (Ali 1983: 1-2)

Depiction of political orientation among middle-class Muslim families in Delhi:- The novel depicted the life of the first two decades of the twentieth century middle – class Muslim family in Delhi. The novel describes that the city of Delhi that was under the control of British ruling over it and moreover described the conditions prevailing during the period. In the second edition of the novel, Ahmed Ali articulated his intention:

My purpose was to depict a phase of our national life and the decay of a whole culture, a particular mode of thought and living, now dead and gone already right before our eyes. Seldom is one allowed See a pageant of History whirl past and partake in it too. (Twilight in Delhi Vii)

In 1918, nature was rebellious and angry with people of India. Thousands were killed in the war, with the German guns. There was inhumanity and could find Delh

city of the dead. People of Delhi were very particular of the traditions of the past. They made songs and sang them, and the leaflets containing them were sold for a piece each.

How deadly this fever is,
Everyone is dying of it.
Men become lame with it
And go out in dolis
The hospitals are gay and bright,
But sorry is men's plight.

The reader could measure the mind of the protagonists, Mir Nihal's memories of the ferocious British 1857 revolt. When the family's wedding ceremony coincide with coronation of George V took place. Mir Nihal's view point, the celebration of a British monarch in Delhi turned the city "which was once the greatest in Hindustan." Into "an exhibition ground."

Here it was in this very Delhi, Mir Nihal thought, that Kings once rode past. Indian Kings his kings, kings who have left a great and glorious name behind. But the Farangis came from across the seven seas, and gradually established their rule. By egging on Indian chiefs to fight each other and by giving them cecret and open aid they won concessions for themselves; and established their' empire'

Mir Nihal believes the city of Delhi once ruled by Muslim kings with glorious name became dead and decay with the intervention of Farangis. The crowd reached at the Fort in Delhi to see the King, it only happened during the Mughal Kings. People of Delhi could not able to distinguish the king and the officials because the English looked alike with their white faces and similar military uniforms.

The novel presented at a time the political activity and the religious activity. It also presented in detail the celebration of the British and their servants who passed by the main mosque, Jama Masjid centre and it is symbol of the anti-colonialist resistance:

The procession passed by the Jama Masjid whose façade (frontage) had been vulgarly decorated with a garland of golden writing containing slavish greetings from the Indian Mussalmans to the English king, displaying the treachery of the Priestly class to their people and Islam. (pg.150)

There is a celebration of George V in Twilight in Delhi but in his third novel, "Of Rats and Diplomats," there is a criticism, of British ruler as he felt useless to present their celebrations: "**that the British celebrating the death of an Edwardian king by holding a grand durbar on the ashes of Mughal pride in ravished Delhi."** It has described the intention of British who likes to destroy Jama Masjid, there is anti-British sentiments with Islam.

The conflict between British and Muslim as shown in 'Twilight in Delhi':- The conflict between British and Muslim continue till Gandhi's non-cooperation movement

started. While attending the movement's meeting, they heard the death of Muslim youth who had been killed and then Habibuddin, Mir Nihal's favourite son, declares,

"the English frankly say that they fear no one but Muslims in India and that if they crush the Mussalmans they shall rule with a care- free heart."(262)

William Howard Russell wrote in the Times in early 1858:

The Mohammadan element in India is that which causes us most trouble and provokes the largest share of our hostility. Our antagonism to the followers of Mohammed is far stronger than that we bear to the worshippers of Shiva and Vishu. They are unquestionably more dangerous to our rule. If we could eradicate the traditions and destroy the temples of Mohammad by one vigorous effort, it could indeed be well for the Christian faith and for the British rule.

There was no peace for the soul of man. Azaans were called and prayers were done to stop the evil. But it was of no use. Death passed through towns and cities. People of Delhi became conscious and wished to change the conditions of India. As the country was under the British Raaj so Home Rule Movement began. Although, Mir Nihal was not affected as he had his own aspirations which he neither understood nor sympathized with. However, his grandson Nasim (Habibuddin's son) recited the poem or political song written after the Balkan war had sentiments of Mussalmans

The wish for glory and martyrdom
Has begun to sway our hearts again
We shall try his skill and see
What strength is in the enemy's hand
Let the time come we will show
What courage there is in us still
Why should we tell you nows what we
Have in our hearts? The power of will
But, traveler on the road of love,
Tire and weary not in the way.
The pleasure of tramping the desert is
Greater the father is the goal away. (pg263)

Mir Nihal's painful thoughts were in his mind. When he tried to close his eyes he could see the Red Fort that was built by Shahjahan. Humayun's tomb or a Qutub Minar proved to be mighty Hindustan in those days. He remembered with blood in his eyes when he was ten years of age, the English insisted to demolish Mosque into a church during 1857. On 14th September 1857 when thousands of Mussalmans gathered to do prayers, Thomas Metcalf with his army destroyed the Jama Masjid. The Muslims when came to know of this wanted to attack on Metcalf, but hey had no guns with them they had only swords. They were informed that if they want to save their lives they should go to the southern gate and if they want to prove their mettle should reach to the northern gate of the mosque. There was not one soul who went to southern gate of the mosque. Hundreds fell down dead on the steps of the mosque.

Finally, the Muslims dominated during the revolt of 1857, and so the British called it **"a Mohammadan rebellion"** and **"a handiwork of the Muslims"**. Musilms challenged them and made as mortal enemy from the entire population of India. Many thousands of people died and were massacred and some thousands made guilty for their deeds and sent to death. After 1857 the heavy hand of the British fell more on the Muslims than on the Hindus. They considered the Muslims more aggressive and militant than the Hindus, possessing memories of recent rule in India and therefore more dangerous.

A Study of the City in "Twilight in Delhi"

Ahmed Ali a prolific Pakistani writer sets his masterpiece, Twilight in Delhi, in late 19^{th} century. He wants to portray a picture of Delhi in its true perspective. He said:

"my purpose was to depict a phase of our national life and the decay of a whole culture, a particular mode of thought and living, now dead and gone already right before our eyes."

Ahmed Ali's representation of the middle class Muslim family of Mir Nihal and the depiction of Delhi is really a wonderful task. He adequately shows the decay of the whole culture on the whole this novel shows the element of universality because it infuses many layers of meaning in it, like Delhi as an embodiment of the whole culture, and Mir Nihal as true Delhi citizen or the representative of the Indian Muslim class novelist doesn't want to show a complete picture of Muslim society in Delhi but also show the pragmatic understanding of life, religious identities, and the harsh realities of life.

Seven Delhis have fallen: and the eighth is going way of its predecessors, yet to be built and demolished again life, like the phoenix must collect spices from its nest and set fire to it, and arise resurrected out of the flames, by using the highly suggestive image of phoenix as death in life, and also as, life in death, the novelist makes us recognise the cyclic phenomenon, birth-growth decay-resurrection, that governs the lives of men and cities. At the same time, he suggest to us behind the man-infected havoc against another man , there is a greater and omnipotent force.… great are the ravages of time , and no one can do anything against its indomitable might. Kings die and dynasties fall. Centuries and aeons pass. But never a smile lights up inscrutable face of time,(text). Most of the time plot revolves around the protagonist and reveal the past condition of Delhi from 1857 to 1911. When Mir Nihal saw the coronation ceremony he remembered:

"as ten-year old boy the mutiny of 1857 when their relations were killed by the British soldiers ruthlessly and their houses were demolished and destroyed, property looted, residents turned out and their emperor Bahadur Shah cruelly dethroned. All this he could never forget and consequently, he had been smouldering with rage in his soul."

The deep study of the novel delineates that the historical study and individual study went side by side. Further we can say it shows the life by time and life by values. Throughout the whole novel we heard the uneven life of Mir Nihal and Delhi.

which was built by Shah Jahan. The novel is not a mere sad commentary on the plummeting of Mir Nihal and the city, as it also records the inevitable disillusionment of human beings. The major crack in the life of Mir Nihal is the proposal of his son with Bilqueece. It is totally difficult for a man who brought up in the four walls of class and blood, to change his entire values. In the beginning, Begum Nihal also reluctant to give her consent to marry a low- born but son's threat of committing suicide bowed down her but Mir Nihal vehemently protests to her: **"You don't want to bring a low born into the family"**

But neither Mir Nihal nor begum Nihal can change the sweeping winds of change. Mir Nihal's life can be considered as the account of a disillusioned man. His attempts to build a small personal world within the world, which in a way is also everyone, desperate attempt to live, life is as per one's dreams in the face of the apathy of ate. The splendid past and the aristocratic habits die hard in Mir Nihal, it seems that he wants to live in his own private world; his belief on his supremacy sustains himself, to keep going.

Mir Nihal's pigeon flying hobby testifies to his determined will to hold on living his life despite the vagaries of time. His zealous attempts to safeguard his hobby further substantiates this. His attempts to excel in the game of pigeon calling props up his sagging ego.

Babban Jan is another character who was not his wife but a person who gives him solace: **"His wife was there no doubt, and so were the children. But the world they lived in was a domestic world. Here at Babban Jan's he had built a quiet corner for himself where he could always retire and forget his sorrows in its secluded peace"**

The hobby of pigeons flying and Babban Jan both have great meaning in the life of Mir Nihal his unsatisfied sexual appetite often create disturbance in his marital life. Sometimes we have found Mir Nihal with the maid servant Dilchain. His unfullfillment and emptiness is the recurring motif of this novel. The beating of the cat shows his helplessness and anger towards fate. **"the cat gave a piercing how and instinctively rushed to the door of a staircase …he beat her until he was tired and the cat looked dead …but something within him died; and he did not go to the shop that day."**

After these incidents he gave up his normal life and hope for death. Yet death was alive and would come to him too and free him from misery and care. His agony is also around when he saw the coronation of the king George v. his deep rooted association with Delhi makes him grieve over the fate of Delhi.

"there it was that the Hindu kings had built the early Delhi's, Hasthinapur or Delhi, and still in Mahroli stands the iron pillar as a memory of Asoka and other of the day of India's golden age; and dynasties greater than history has ever known today it was this very Delhi which was being deposited by a western race who had no sympathy with India or her sons…

Asghar seemed revolutionary because he led life in his own modern English style. In the relay race of life, Asghar is too busy to take note of the fate of a way side player. The ever enchanting charms of life cast their spell on Asghar too.

Asgher seemed on seventh heaven when he realized that his dream of marrying Bilqeece came true, without prior apprehension about her sexual coldness. By the time he aligns himself from her and the feelings of the others. **"yet he was not so much in love with her as with his own self, his own dreams and illusions which he had created in his mind".**

Asghar also failed to sympathise with the dancing girl Mushtari Bai with whom he dallied for some time. Mushtari Bai bemoans her fate and said: "**I am like a caravan-serai where people come, rest their tried bodies for a while and depart… my life is a desert in which no oases exist."** The whole episode shows the disillusionment and decay of the novel and its character.

After marriage there is a gulf of disillusionment increased between Asghar and Bilqueece. Asghar become father of Jahan Ara and she is like a change in his knife Asghar had become indifferent his dreams had come to an end and he did not find his wife as charming as he had done over a year ago. Both husband and wife are in agony but Bilqueece's agony ended when she died as a tube regular. She feels that world is falling to pieces all around her and in the midst of the debris she stood without a friend or sympathises all alone.

Bilqueece's death made him sad he feel that he is responsible for her death; so Jahan Ara not able fill the blank but Asghar has fallen for the charms of Zohra who knew well what sex is and how to attract men. So Asghar wanted to marry her but his desire remained unfulfilled. It seemed that he is like his father who spends his life in a living death condition.

The seventh Delhi is swiftly declining and Mir Nihal a well built and tall man with noble and majestic face, dwindled into the status of a complete wreck. He is totally defected and never able to bring the peace of mind. He can't able maintain the glories of Delhi.

He is a spectator who sees with his own eyes the decline of Delhi. He lays on his bed more dead than alive, too broken to think even of the past. His world had fallen to pieces all around him smothered by indifference and death. So the whole novel Twilight in Delhi shows the two characters first the city Delhi and second Mir Nihal both seemed in decay throughout the whole Novel.

Gender Issues in Ahmed Ali's Twilight in Delhi

Women consist half of the species. They are the makers of family, society, and nation. Since the ages, women have been relegated to the periphery for being inferior to men. The fetters of the society and culture have led women to imprison themselves in the houses and dream only about their husband, children and family.

Gender issues are very obvious in Ahmed Ali's Twilight in Delhi. It is a beautifully written novel in English. Primarily the novel deals with the downfall of Delhi culture due to the arrival of British in the beginning of the twentieth century and simultaneously it gives us a glimpse of Indo-Muslim family life. The novel becomes the storehouse of various images drawn from Delhi and its culture. Not only the pigeon flying and kite flying have been projected as the major part of Indian culture but the subordinated women's life also becomes its chief issue.

This novel covers the period of nine years i.e. from 1910 to 1919. It is set in pre independent Delhi and remarkably deals with the plight of women during that era. The society projected in the novel is male dominated and it brings out the fact that how the feudal lord of the family restrains a large section of the society from actively participating in the works outside the household affairs. Ali makes his novel a mirror of society and tells through the extended family of Mir Nihal that how the Indo Muslim family were divided into two parts: the one called mardana the men's part of the house and another called zenana the women's part of the house. Women observed purdah from the outsiders as well as the male members of the house. This purdah system was actually started to protect women from the eyes of the strangers.

Women were not allowed to take any important decision in the family as in the case of Begam Nihal who after confronting the secret love of her son Asghar could not think to give her consent without her husband's approval. Nevertheless, finding her son at the door of death and due to the fear of his committing suicide she stealthily settles Asghar and Bilqueece's marriage. She realizes her rights in the case of marriage and says, **"For though women hold a subordinate position in Indian life yet in certain matters they can take the law in their hands, and marriage is one of them"**. This fact reveals that women had the rights but they never realized this out of their modesty.

Mir Nihal, one of the leading characters in the novel, enjoys an extra marital love affair with a courtesan named Babban Jan and keeps telling a lie to his wife. These visits to the courtesans were considered royal in the Mughal period. Begam Nihal who used to wait for her husband's arrival in the night was entirely unaware of this dark side of her husband's character. Not only this but after her mistress' death he gradually washes his hands away from all the duties. Mir Nihal did not have only Babban Jan in his life but in the very early years of his married life, he had a son from his maid Dilchain who died later on, and due to which his wife went mad.

On the other hand, Mir Nihal's son Asghar also visits Mushtari Bai, another famous courtesan and starts having visions of her in the night. The female beauty of Mushtari Bai charms Asghar. But as men, due to their tendency are fickle minded in case of women and keep vacillating from one to another, Asghar also soon loses his interest in Mushtari Bai and turns to Bilqueece, and marries her against his father's wishes.

Indian scenario is such that girls, since their childhood, are taught to be humble and docile as they have to be sent to their husband's house sooner or later. As soon as the proposal comes for Mehro's marriage, she starts thinking about her ultimate destiny. The romantic and fantastic images that revolve in her mind take her into another world and she is preoccupied with an idealistic picture of her husband. She thinks:

Mehro lies on her bed and looks up at the stars,…She thinks of a man far away whose proposal has come for her hand. What can he be like? She wonders. She has never seen him…Meraj –that is his name --… And she associates him with the prince in the story with whom the princess was in love.

Not only Mehro dreamt of her future life partner but she was thrilled at his thought also. She was too young to understand the complexity of married life. Ahmed Ali gives us a peep inside her heart:

She, of course, liked it in her heart of hearts;…that not only disturbed her emotional balance, but also exposed her inhibitions which grow in the repressed lives of the Indian women like cobwebs and mushrooms. To conceal her consciousness of sex, she flew into a temper, without, of course, realizing its unconscious and hidden cause.

Even though it was the time of freedom struggle and women were also breaking the barriers and coming out of their houses, but still the common people kept their daughters and women in purdah and they were always brought and sent in dolis.

Ahmed Ali has presented the conventional women caught in their household affairs. Patriarchy (male dominated system) always considers women as irrational, emotional, and sentimental fools and men have this pre-conceived notion that women are good for nothing. They are simply the gossipmongers and only know to kill their time by chatting endlessly. Ali does not remain away from this belief and throughout the novel; he has depicted these details at length:

Everyday Begam Jamal and AnjumZamani, her sister in law, came down and peeling potatoes or some other vegetable for dinner, or just sitting idle, cutting areca nut into small bits which they collected in circular purses, they let their tongues loose, and talked and talked, of marriage and death, of this and that, but mostly of people and family.

Ali is deft at portraying men as paragon and hides their inadequacies. Through the character of SaeedHasan he tells what to be expected from women and what a man wants in his wife:

A wife should be of moderate stature, neither short nor very tall nor too fat. She could not be short because then she would give birth to many children. She should not be very tall as she would bend down soon after the birth of one child. She would not be too fat for then she will never have a child at all. That is why a man must give preference to one who combines all qualities harmoniously and proportionately.

Not only the women belonging to the refined, honourable families are our issue in the novel but the courtesans like Babban Jan and Mushtari Bai have their own miserable life. They neither gain sympathy from the readers in the novel nor pitied by the people in society. They are only looked at with hatred and contempt. For them it is only their physical beauty, which they use to get money to survive. They

that in their old age they will be left alone to suffer as Mushtari Bai says, "**But when old age knocks at the door, beauty of the body dies: only virtue is beauty which I do not possess".** The cursed fate of Mushtari Bai becomes more heart rending when she very philosophically says,"**I am that candle which burns its own self, shedding tears of blood, and blackens the walls of the niche with its smoke"**. This is very ironical that these neglected women of the society who sang and danced only for the Nawabs and the upper classes to entertain them, they themselves remained ruined and neglected throughout their life.

The central attraction of the novel is the passionate love of Asghar for his wife Bilqueece. Bilqueece's beauty forces Asghar to marry her against his father's desire. However, the problem arises when after marriage Asghar finds Bilqueece not as sensuous and passionate as he himself was and thus his dream shattered. Bilqueece worshiped him like her God but Asghar could not pacify himself with the cold attitude of Bilqueece and did not pay any regard to her. On the very first night of their wedding, Asghar finds himself in chaos when he expects the romantic talks and gestures of Bilqueece and gets nothing, not even the response to his own advances. This lack of warmth in his beloved resulted in Asghar's indifference towards her. He started keeping himself away from all the duties of a husband, often shouted at Bilqueece, and busied himself in official works.

Surprisingly enough Asghar, who has once left Mushtari Bai for Bilqueece, again moves towards his mistress. The reason for the detachment of Asghar from Bilqueece was not only her coldness but also the birth of a girl child whereas Asghar expected a son. This negligence of Asghar led Bilqueece suffer in her heart and ultimately forced her to die. Asghar now left with his only daughter was grief stricken, as he could do nothing to keep his daughter happy. Nothing could bring him solace and comfort. However, destiny has its own role to play and the life has to go on, believing in the same dictum soon after the death of his wife Asghar started planning for his second marriage with no one else but his dead wife's younger sister Zohra. Man does not dare to accept his infidelity; therefore, Asghar gives the excuse of his young daughter Jahan Ara that only for her sake he was getting married. Nevertheless, Zohra's mother, after seeing her first daughter's condition, did not approve the match and rejected the proposal.

The novel Twilight in Delhi forces the readers to look deep into the realities. However, the novel was written in mid twentieth century but still Muslim women's condition is not praiseworthy. They still go through the same agonies and sufferings. A conventional Muslim family still does not allow a girl child so easily to educate and purdah system is so deep rooted in their custom that to break this system is a sin for them.

Twilight in Delhi : "Indianness' of the novel,

Ahmed Ali tries to infuse his work with indigenous concerns by deploying a particular theme, style, imagery and setting. His style is realism. Ahmed Ali says:

"Our literature so far has been of an individualist type, sentimental, unrealistic, irrational, mystical. Conditions demand an uncompromising realism, looking the

problems in the face, a literature brutal even in its ruggedness without embellishments and unnecessary insistence on form and technique".

In accordance with these views, everything is treated to realistic detail. Describing the by lanes of Delhi, the author comments "**Dogs go about sniffing the gutters in search of offal; and cats slink out of narrow by lanes, from under the planks jutting out of shops, and lick the earthen cups out of which men had drunk milk and thrown away".** Though the novel gives a sweeping view of members of different social strata and accordingly has a huge number of characters with markedly different personalities, it gives us a glimpse of the everyday doings and concerns of the Nihals. Then there is the realistic depiction of the elaborate rituals involved in marriage ceremonies, funerals and religious festivals of Id, kite flying, pigeon flying and the pervasive belief in superstition.

We are given a close view of the Indian joint family where women are shut up in their zenanas while men are free to keep mistresses. Referring to the realm of the zenana, the author says eloquently, **"The world lived and died, things happened, events took place, but all this did not disturb the equanimity of the zenana, which had its world too where the pale and fragile beauties of the hothouse lived secluded from all outside harm, the storms that blow in the world of men"**. Ahmed Ali gives an apt picture of the Indian woman who is subjected to so many restrictions that **"the idea of love does not take root in the heart".** Bilqueece is such an Indian woman who is '**unromantic'** but a '**perfect housewife'** and the novelist gives a poignant picture of her later passive suffering. He also gives a psychological insight into Mehro's temper whenever her fiancé's name is mentioned. This novel does not portray any female resistance to the patriarchal biases prevalent in the home and the family.

The specifically hot Indian summer with which each part of the novel begins, the beauty and sadness of the Indian spring and rainy season, the date palm and the henna tree which stand in the courtyard as witnesses to the family's joys and sorrows, the song of the domnis and the riot of colours in the marriage ceremonies, the smell of kababs near Jama Masjid – all these make the novel quintessentially Indian.

But the question arises as to whether the novel tries to impute homogeneity to Indian tradition and culture. Mourning the passing away of a great art and culture, the author makes Mir Nihal consider only posts like Mir, Ghalib and Insha as the "great poets of Hindustan". The Mughal Empire and monuments built by Mughals are regarded as the mark of glory and splendour of the city of Delhi, though there is a minor reference to the Kauravas and the Pandavas. By doing this, the author imparts singularity to India's rich and plural cultural heritage. Vinayak Krishna Gokak in his book The Concept of Indian Literature remarks that an integral cultural awareness is an indispensable feature of Indianness. I would not say that the novel here falls short of Indianness but it does infuse homogeneity by glorifying only a portion of the entire Indian heritage and calling it the whole.

Commenting on the themes handled by the older generation of Indo-English novelists, Meenakshi Mukherjee in her essay "The Anxiety of Indianness" says that they were predictably pan-Indian, defining Indian concerns as against

Mukherjee does not refer to Ahmed Ali, but his novel, though marked by spatial specify and attempt an exploration of Muslim society, also deals with similar time-worn clichés of east-west confrontation, the clash between tradition and modernity, the disintegration of the Indian joint family, etc. As Mukherjee says, this can be seen as an attempt to construct a national identity, through **"erasure of differences within the border and accentuating the difference with what lies outside"**.

K. Satchidanandan in Indian Literature: Positions and Propositions has pointed out that Indian writers are first and foremost Indian, no matter what language they write in, because of their works' rootedness in their social, historical and cultural contexts. But this basic unity has in no way eroded the fascinating diversity of our literatures. Twilight in Delhi is very different from the other literary texts already done in this course both in theme and form – a pointer to the heterogeneity of Indian literature. But an Indian setting and theme marks it, reflecting Vinayak Krishna Gokak's comment that Indian literature is a thread of continuity against a background of continuous change. In conclusion, it can be pointed out that Indian novels in English and works in Indian languages are, as Mukherjee says, "disparate literary products of a complex plural culture" (168) and they should not be congealed into rigid and opposed positions.

From our situatedness in a time when upper and middle class Indian society has internalized so many Western habits and ways of life, Twilight in Delhi can be seen as looking into a time when the situation was very different, and as trying to articulate a people's helplessness in the face of what colonialism was doing to their culture and to their beloved and once glorious city.

Literary and non-literary purposes in the novel

The novel has two main purposes or good intentions. One is literary or creative or artistic and the other one is essentially non- literary. It does not mean that there can be contradiction in the book. Suppose the writer has a good talent in his writings, then non-creative purpose does no harm to work.

According to Mohammed HasanAskari the actual purpose of Ahmed Ali is to write a guide to Delhi for Englishmen. He called it 'a guide' because the book has been written for Englishmen who are unfamiliar with life in Delhi and that the author wishes to acquaint them in this way. When asked about this point, Ahmed Ali stated that the thought had never entered his mind. Actually, his purpose was to depict life a culture, a mode of living and thought, all of which were passing away. He did this in his own realistic manners, which are considered the detail are essential and part of its method. He noticed that the details are historical and Mir Nihal's generation lost the culture and forgotten them and reached to history.

The non-literary purpose has restriction on the writer- that life of Delhi has to be depicted in English. The problem the author might have faced could be to create a style in English to represent atmosphere and harmony of life in Delhi into a foreign language or English. Ahmed Ali has been most successful in this effort and made English as

subservient to his artistic will. Edwin Muir said that 'one could smell the Jasmine flowers in the book, which in turn means that Ahmed Ali has achieved the impossible.

The masterly artistic techniques could be seen in the novel. Ahmed Ali has done two things with great artistry. On the one hand, he presented the atmosphere of an average Muslim household, and on the other hand, commenced his story. The picture of the family which Ahmed Ali has drawn was ordinary and colourless to look at from this point of view Ahmed Ali's task was the more difficult, for he has created colour from colourlessness.

Ahmed Ali mentioned in his book different individuals, a city, a particular culture, a period of history. His theme is not confined to a few characters and their biographies but to an entire city. It is actually a collective novel whose hero is the city of Delhi. One can raise a point that Muslims were not alone lived in Delhi and the author has given importance to one particular section, as he want to see the reality through his own eyes. The fact is that Ahmed Ali knew Delhi as millions of Muslims whether a class society or a classless one, there is always a section of society, large or small, that occupies a central place and is the source of cultural values. Delhi created a particular set of values. There is a sense of defeat for the period with great courage and honesty. Ahmed Ali could not conceal the fact that he love these dying values and felt sorry for its decay. He has shown sympathy for the culture, and in doing this sympathy shows itself as a personal catharsis, his emphasis in the book is on something larger –life itself brings unmindful of social changes, continues and never dies. Thus Ahmed Ali's attitude did not change from its original progressivism. This definition of progress was not understood or appreciated by many readers, especially member of the All-India Progressive Writer's Association, who were according to Ahmed Ali,' carried away by the panorama of passing things.'

Method of depicting collective life:- In the collective life of a whole society can be presented through the ideas and actions of a group against the background of a revolutionary movement or war. It is most difficult to produce events or extraordinary thing with the art and technique. But Ahmed Ali has done it. That's the author has taken one family and shown its members daily life. All these are considered to be simple and insignificant things such as eating, drinking, sleeping festivals and fairs, marriage birth, and death, naïve love affairs, quarrels and arguments. Hence the works of women novelist and the incidents of the novel are more or less alike. The difference one can find in the arrangement and selection of incidents in the novel are different and considered or believed to have a universal significance. These details also presented the spirit of collective life and the values of collective unity. With the insignificant details we come to know collective life and the soul of society that is its subject. These details are as essential for the artistic purpose of the book as they are for the non-artistic ones.

The other method of depicting collective life, apart from incidents is through characters. Their action lasts only as long as need demand. The action for the character takes place when it is needed and authors of such novel do not allow their characters to continue with their action. In contrast to this, Ali allowed his characters to live a complete life with right. Actually, each character believed and felt significant or important of themselves and we tried to identify them and sometimes feel unaware of the some characters.

E.M. Forster said of Twilight in Delhi: "it is beautifully written and very moving. The detail was almost all of it new to me, and fascinating. It is a sort of poetical chronicle. At the end one has a poignant feeling that poetry and daily life have got parted and will never come together again."

Ahmed Ali presented the character of Asghar who falls in love three times. First, he flirts courtesan out of a desire. The courtesan falls in love with him, but he turns her down. Then he loves Bilqueece, after a struggle to marry her, he makes his love successful. As there is a saying "familiarity breeds contempt," he becomes indifferent to her when she becomes ill. After Bilqueeces' death, Asghar falls in love with her younger sister, but unfortunately he cannot marry her. Thus, this love remains unsuccessful. Ahmed Ali thus depicted the emotional ups and downs of an ordinary man's life.

Through the character of Mir Nihal Delhi's culture has been produced life that has neither depth nor expanse, there is no balance and uniformity, who is culturally a mixture and in fact whose finest emotions are lacking beauty and dignity the qualities that arouse from the traditions of the harmonious culture. But if once a balance achieves stability, it becomes static and turns to death. Therefore, the character of Mir Nihal ends in the novel. Baseless and lack of balance signifies a compromise with life. But Asghar's defeat does not end there – he has not met his final defeat. He still likes to love again. There is a symbolic significance of the date palm tree, there is a sadness that deepens as the plot develops with the gradual decay of the spring of life into autumn one can find man's helplessness in their life. The author has beautifully described the pain of the transience of life and doubts about the purpose of life itself.

The remarkable character of the book is Mir Nihal. Something unique one can find in the character of Mir Nihal. The nature is passive in him. He has two interests in life, his pigeons and his mistress, Babanjan. When his courtesan or Babanjan dies, he gives up flying pigeons and also his job and take interest in alchemy and mysticism. His intention is to escape the changes that are taking place in life and to withdraw from the world formerly. Mir Nihal wished to cry over the ups and downs of life, but in the end he does not even have the desire to do that. Asghar comes to him wearing English clothes, but Mir Nihal does not even object. His body becomes paralyzed. He has no hoe to survive. Already his young daughter-in-law and son have died. Mir Nihal dies on his bed and watches with open eyes and cannot heave a sigh. Asghar, may forget his sorrows, but Mir Nihal cannot forget. All his physical and mental strengths have decreased, but his memory is alive. The grief of the minor characters have become the grief of Mir Nihal.

One can find at the end of the book, the intensity becomes so strong that, life of Nihal grieve for unfulfilment, haplessness, transience and seems to cast basic doubts on its own reality. Ahmed Ali's great achievement is the creation of the character Mir Nihal. One cannot separate this character from the body of the book, because the whole book contains life in him. The description of Mir Nihal's illness is a masterpiece in itself. We cannot compare either with Urdu novels or with western fiction.

Ahmed Ali is most sympathetic to his characters. Sometimes the comic elements in Ahmed Ali produce an effect of pity example. After Pelican being procured with much difficulty, it is killed and everybody comes to watch it not only the children l

old maidservant Dilchain. One can judge the writers when they produce in their work death and illness during such situations, the writers would either become emotional or ineffective. But Ahmed Ali managed to be good. He gave the description of death in detail that of Bilqueece and then of Habibuddin with subtlety. After World war-I, Ahmed Ali gave details of plague which was marvellous. Ahmed Ali created the horrific atmosphere of universal death and all-round dishonesty.

After reading his work one can say that he has used masterly artistic techniques. Ahmed Ali has done two things with great artistry. One the one hand, he presented the atmosphere of an average Muslim household, and on the other hand, commenced his story. The picture of the family which Ahmed Ali has drawn was ordinary and colourless to look at from this point of view Ahmed Ali's task was the more difficult, for he has created colour from colourlessness.

Ahmed Ali has given individual life to each- that is nature, the days, and nights of Delhi, the sunsets and dawns, the summer, the rainy season and the changing shades the sky, the breezes , the hot wind, the dust storms and sunshine have a separate existence in themselves in the novel. He described the lanes of the city, the gutters, dogs and cats, the flying pigeons, hawks and paper kites – all appear often in the novel. With these changing seasons, with the moods off nature and all the rest, Ali has given the city an eternal and living identify and name. He described the summer season of Delhi with great artistry. The seasons have a symbolic value, and the atmosphere of the whole novel is imbued with them, the whole story take s place in this atmosphere. In the Urdu novel there can be sensitive appreciation of nature. Hence, we can compare the writing of Ali with that of Urdu writer. Mohammed HasanAskari says:

"I cannot recall any novel or short story in Urdu where nature has thus come to life, or in which nature has played such a role in making the novel so meaningful."

Another factor in this novel is a sense of unity and intensity: the awareness of the flight of time. A thought of time is so intense in Ali that his imagination acquires momentum and becomes the source of his artistic vitality. Ali has produced a few emotional sentences, but the feelings are not sentimental and sound. Through which one could form an idea of Ali from the character of Mir Nihal. One cannot or may not find Urdu authors equal to him. There is an attachment and love for whole civilization and so the sense of time does not lead to more sadness or passions in him, but carries within it tragi c elements.

The novel does not remain the story of Delhi alone, but is simultaneously the story of the life of mankind. The centre of our tragic sense is not Delhi alone, but life itself. After reading a book, one can ask fundamental and knotty questions about life and the human condition. Why beauty does come to an end? Why does life rush involuntarily towards death? If death is the final goal of all things, why was life created in the first place. The difficulty in finding answers to these questions is clear from the fact that at the close of the book nature in all its wonder and awe overshadows man and engulfs him within itself.

This is the cumulative impress of the book. Yet there is another aspect which remains Mir Nihal becomes paralysed and asks his grandson to struggle for freedom when he reaches to the age. Mir Nihal s bones must be buried and decay, but his grandson must dream the dream to a new life, a new harmony, a new civilization and the way of life. Mirza the milk seller sacrificed his son in the path of independence. Hundreds of such brave heroes must still be alive. From the twilight in Delhi arose the dawn of Pakistan. Until Ahmed Ali writes the second part of the novel, his book remains incomplete.

Style in "Twilight in Delhi" by Ahmed Ali

Twilight in Delhi provides a real and accurate portrait of the static and decaying tradition of culture of Delhi while the British arranged the coronation Durbar of 1911 and draw up plans for new imperial city, New Delhi. The novel has planned to reveal interconnecting levels and has been praised for its lucid style, its use of symbolism and the manner in which it merges the life of its main protagonist, Mir Nihal, with that of the family. Much attention has also been paid to this feeling that it had universal appeal because it focuses on the life, birth, marriage and deaths which are intrinsic to every culture.

Use of metaphor: - Twilight in Delhi is filled with extensive use of metaphor. It begins with the description of the city:

"Night envelops the city, covering it like a blanket in the dim straight roofs and wrapped in rustle slumber breathing heavily as the heat become apprentice or shoots through the body like pain. In the bay came on the road men sleep on bare bed, half naked tired of for the sore days capture A few still walk on the other wise deserted roads, hand in hand, talking and some have jasmine garlands in their herds, the smell from the flower escapes scents a from yards of air around by them and alias smothered by the heat dogs so about sniffing the gutter in search of offal."

Attitude of Indian Muslims: - Another way in which the ethos of Indian Muslims has been conveyed is by making the characters quote poetry. As Coppola points out: **"It is a custom of long standing among Urdu _ speakers to quote lines of poetry copiously, appropriately, and energetically in order to emphasize, to make a point in conversation, or to add elegance to speech and writing."**

Use of couplet: - Thus it would be naïve to look for existential despair in Asghar's reply to his friend Bari's question as to where he has been. He replies by quoting someone else's couplet which does not represent his real feelings but is merely an elegant way of replying to any query:

Life has become a burden; the time is ripe for death.
The space of existence has shrunk into a narrow cell (P. 28)

The couplet is merely used for ornamentation and factitious dramatization of commonplace disappointment in love. The function of poetry was mostly rhetorical in Urdu speaking culture and that is how been used by the characters. The couplets are,

therefore, clichés which substitute a hackneyed formula for an intellectual response to a given experience. But of course, the couplets prefacing chapters are intellectually relevant and emotionally evocative.

Most of the couplets used by narrator express the ethos of the Urdu-speaking middle class. And this class had a distinct world view, a world view which was essentially romantic in eighteen nineties. Three qualities can be discerned in this special world view: nostalgia, sublimation of sexual feelings into vague aestheticism, and world weariness. A pose of wistfulness, ennui and jadedness complement these three dominant qualities. And all these are found in most of the verses quoted. For instance:

I' m the light of no man's eye,
The rest of no one's heart am I.
That which can be of use to none
—Just a handful of dust am I.

These kinds of couplets the theme of regret for a dying culture directly. The self-pity in the poetry is, of course, a reflection of the self-pity which was a part of the Indian ethos before the partition. Ahmed Ali's novel has been able to catch this aspect of Indian culture faithfully.

False sense of diffidence: - One aspect of the male-dominated Urdu speaking culture which has not been revealed out of a false sense of modesty by most other writers, but which has been revealed by Ali, concerns the sexual emotion. As I have mentioned above, sex was suppressed or sublimated. But, mainly because women were in purdah (behind the veil), it took unusual forms. It took, for instance, the form of celebrating the beauty of boys rather than that of women in poetry. Thus the sown on the face (khat) became a conventional attribute of the beloved. One reason for doing this was that in Iran, where the ghazal had its genesis; boys did actually become the beloveds of certain poet. The other reason was that when Persian mystic poets started writing love poetry symbolizing the souls' quest for merging with the Soul of God, the symbol they chose for the beloved was that of a beautiful youth rather than a woman. On the other hand the Indian mystics, Muslims and Hindus, represented God as the lover and the soul as the woman who desires union. As Urdu poetry followed Persian fashions the beloved was addressed by the male pronoun and had some of the physical attributes of adolescent boys (such as khat) though it was often clear otherwise that a woman was being referred to. This literary fashion, and perhaps the absence of women, led to talk between men becoming full of homosexual innuendoes. Ali, with relentless honesty, tells us about this aspect of Muslim culture.

He tells us, for example, that when Asghar lives in Bhopal as an adolescent youth, he was the beloved of men:

He had just to cast a glance and there were many who would have given their lives to do his bidding. At the least sign from him they would have done anything. Then he was the bestower of favours; there he was the loved one and not the lover. To be loved is sweet, he thought, whereas to love is full of sorrow and grief and pain (TD, 23).

We are also told that a man called 'Huzoor Ali was devoted to him' (p.23) and if Asghar had happened to look at him kindly even 'one there had appeared such joy on his face' (p. 23). When Huzoor Ali invites Asghar or dinner and Asghar 'refused and refused until the old man was broken-hearted' (p.24) the lover recites these lines:

Would to God that You
Might also fall in love and suffer
As I am suffering now.

This special kind of homosexuality in which the youth or boy is sought as a female surrogate by the male is also a feature of Greek, Persian and some Arab literature. To distinguish it from the adult peer-group homosexuality common in modern Western literature I have suggested elsewhere that is should be called paedophilia. It is this which was a part of Indian Muslim culture and is not hypocritically dissembled in Twilight.

At its noblest the love between man and youth is described as a mystic or sacred emotion. Kambal Shah, the mystic, tells Mir Nihal and his friends that the real cause of the downfall of the Mughal Empire 'was that they had separated lover and beloved from each other by burying Mohammad Shah between the graves of HazratMahboobElahi and Hazrat Amir Khusro'. The audience listens to this with religious emotion because the two saints mentioned are revered by all. At its most vulgar, of course, the nature of the emotion is purely sensual. In 'Our Lane', for instance, Munno tells Aziz:

I had a cousin. The boy was rather handsome. It was about ten years ago. I sort of fell out with him over a kiss (PH, 21).

This is said seriously but most allusions to sexual feelings of this kind are fictitious. Sometimes there is open buffoonery:

As he [an old man] crossed Asghar, his stick unwittingly touched the old man's behind. As once he turned round and remarked:

I say, moon-bridegroom, even with an old man? ….

A eunuch who sat on the balcony just above in the hope of some stray customer, clapped loudly in a vulgar way and gave a loud guffaw (p.79).

And sometimes the humour is more refined but, in fact behind the humour there is sexual flirtation as in the following scene:

And the lovers found the opportunity of their lives. A middle aged man quoted these lines of an young man with arms open for an embrace,

It is the day of Eid, my dear,
Ah come, let me embrace thee.
It is the custom and besides
There's time and opportunity

What is even more remarkable is that the narrator offers no comment on these scenes. That makes Ahmed Ali one of the few Indian writers who could reveal such tabooed areas of Indian life without either falsifying reality or preaching as Muslim. However, unfortunately, Ali does offer platitudinous comments of a moralistic kind at some places and this flaw of his work must not go unnoticed.

Realism: - To continue with the discussion of the quality of Ali's realism in Twilight, it has been noted that he presents the corporate life through the minor characters who help to create the illusion that one is in India, the land of the crowded houses in which something is always going on. The novel is full of 'servants, beggars and craftsmen'. In fact no other novel catches the nuances of the Muslims culture in Delhi as convincingly as Twilight in Delhi. One can find out all about the details which make a culture come alive in Ali's descriptions. And the descriptions are not as if they were a part of a documentary, they form an organic whole and are, therefore, artistically successful whereas those of Scented Dust were intrusions. In this respect Twilight in Delhi represents an aspect of Indian culture as successfully as Chinua Achebe's Novel Things Fall Apart represents African culture.

Realistic portrayal of culture and traditions: -The novel evokes the culture of Delhi through describing customs and ceremonies minutely and – says Brander – 'the fine wedding chapter reads like an epithalamium in which verse and prose alternate in wonderfully refreshing bridal music'. Even the beggars are described and their songs and mannerisms make them concrete presences and not allude to the superstitions of the time he does so in a manner which reveals his own beliefs. For instance, Kambal Shah, a Faqir who visits Mir Nihal, is described as follows: **He was said to be high up in the mystical order although no one knew his hidden spiritual powers, for such faqirs never reveal themselves to human beings.**

The above quoted lines seem to suggest that the narrator shares in the belief or Mir Nihal and his friends. Since there is no indication that the author was deliberately distinguishing himself from the narrator in this instance, one may assume that Ali to believes in this. On the other hand Mir Nihal also believes that mercury can be converted into silver but here he narrator shows his own scepticism by correcting Mir Nihal credulity when he says: **'Yet no one really did it. Still Mir Nihal believed in its truth and went on hoping against hope'**.

This suggests that the narrator, and by implication the author, had shed off some of the beliefs and ways of looking at life of the Muslim gentlemen of U.P but not all: a conclusion which will help us to understand the theme of the novel.

Theme and Structure: - The theme, the philosophical import of the novel, is based in Ali's subjective response to his declining culture and is, in the last analysis, sentimental and therefore, unsatisfactory. For the theme is the passing away of Muslims civilization in India. The narrator's attitude towards this culture is romantic.

Despite the enthusiastic treatment of Asghar's love for Bilqueece (Ali's own wife is called Bilqueece), the autumnal mood at the novel's close, the grief-stricken regrets for the Mughal past and the frequent opulence of his prose style, Ali w

than a classical standpoint. He recognizes the immutability of the basic elements in human life. Individual dramas come and go …Yet the denominator remains the same in every age.

Ahmad Ali bangs his fatalistic drum and suggests that fate is to blame when things wrong; Achebe relegates the supernatural to the background and shows tragedy to be consequent on the interaction of social forces and human character.

For if it not for hope men would commit suicide by the scores, and the world would remain a barren desert in which no oasis exist. On this tortuous road of life man goes on hoping that the next turn of road will bring him in sight of the goal (TD, 128).

Conclusion: - Several such passages mar the book. Most of the ellipses too suggest much more than is actually warranted by the situation. For this situation in itself does not evoke the response of inexpressible emotion which the ellipses seem to suggest. The author hints at a profundity through them, which is not really there. The purple passages the pseudo philosophical dictums, and the incomplete sentence, point out that the writer is relying on rhetorical devices in order to evoke pathos for a civilization to which he responds for personal reasons but which does not really deserve this response from the reader.

Character-Sketch of Mir Nihal in "Twilight in Delhi"

Mir Nihal: Appearance: - He is tall and well built, and is wearing a white muslin coat reaching down to the knees, and an embroidered round cap is put at a rakish angle on his bobbed head. His white and well-combed beard is parted in the middle, and gives his noble face a majestic look…….

The whole physical description shows that he had a royal appearance with a sober style of wearing cloth .He is nearly a sixty –two year old person whose outward appearance is a picture of Muslims grandeur which they had in past. Ahmed Ali showed him as a “noble”. So it can be said about him that he is the representative of the royal Muslim class. his physical appearance has showed the same magnificence as Muslims had in past but inwardly he wasn’t able to comprehend the actual scenario .It seems that Ahmed Ali made this character before writing this novel ,there is no further scope for any fundamental change in it .

Passive character: - The nature of this character is totally passive. He has only interest in life: his pigeons and his mistress Babban Jan. The passivity lies in his unreceptive mind in understanding the change in surroundings. He felt that he remained immortal as the Muslims thought in past that their dignity remained forever, but when the colonial forces came in the sub -continent they had changed the entire atmosphere. The matter of Asghar’s marriage is the most crucial moment in his life when he showed his refusal then the whole family turned against his decision,and it was the beginning of change.

I had never approved of Ashfaq's marriage to Mirza Shahbaz's daughter,' Mir Nihal said angrily. 'And I do not approve of Asghar's friendship with Bundoo. Why don't you stop him?'.....

But Mir Nihal not able to stop the change and a time came when the women of the family themselves decides to take step;**"The best thing to do is to settle the thing quietly .brother –in-law will come round in the end .if you wait for his consent nothing will ever come off......""Begum Nihal seemed to agree with her sister-in-law..."**

The whole speech from begum Jamal has showed the courage to do something against Mir Nihal .The women in India has a subordinate position in certain matters like marriage etc. so they rebel against the authority.

Snake episode: - Mir Nihal has managed to catch hold of the snake's tail, and pulling it out with all his force he jerks his hand backwards with a quick movement. The snake is seen flying in the air and the next moment Mir Nihal strikes it on the ground and leaves it. It lies there trying to move, but it is only the front half of the snake which is curling and twisting. The back half wriggles but cannot move forward. Its spine is broken. Taking the stick he crushes the hood, and wriggling and moving painfully for a while, it becomes motionless and dies.

The whole episode shows this ability to deal with the danger from outside. He shows his anger on this little invasion but when his own son Asghar shows rebellious attitude then he not able to prove strong resistance because everything worked against him.

Importance of Babban Jan: - Babban jan is the most important personality in Mir Nihal's life. She is the symbol of courage, love and hope in his life. He loved her from the core of his heart but her death destroyed him because

Like Ahmed Ali shows in these lines;**"Mir Nihal got up with a heavy heart and, giving the old woman some money, cast a last lingering glance at the dead body and walked away. She who was Babban Jan had gone,. She who brought him here had walked the way of death, and nothing could bring her back to life again . . . .."**

He was nearly mentally disabled; he left everything because there was no one who gave him mental and sexual solace.

Pigeon's death: - The death of pigeons is one of the severe blows to Mir Nihal. After he came to home and found the loft's door open he got frightened but when he looked in it his whole world sunk because there were few pigeons left and others wings and scattered parts of the body were found here and there. So his whole world now reduced to dust. Pigeons were his treasure now killed by the outside forces (cat).

Cat imagery: - Cat is mostly a symbol of stealth, cunning and destruction in most of his writings. Ahmed Ali has used the cat in this novel to show the dominance of

outside forces. He also identifies cat with the Britishers who have succeed in altering the old ways and they introduced the new progressive ideologies and mores .

Hatred against British: - His hatred against the British or Farangis is quiet obvious throughout the novel .most of the time he shows his contemptuous remarks about the British .like in the first part of the novel he said :

"You are again wearing those dirty English boots! I don't like them. I will have no aping of the Farangis in my house. Throw them away! . . . And where have you been so late in the night? I have told you I don't like your friendship with Bundoo. Do you hear? I shouldn't find you going there again.'……"

A traditional Indian Muslim: - "Twilight in Delhi" is basically a novel about traditions and customs. The whole novel shows Mir Nihal family's lives who were the staunch believers of traditions and customs. Mir Nihal, the head of the family and the protagonist of the novel ,is a traditional Indian Muslim who spend life with the same idea of grandeur and magnificence which the Mughals had in past ,he believed in caste system, and his negation of Asgher ,s marriage with Bilqeece is the proof of his belief on royal blood . His life is a typical Indian Muslim's life who gave importance to the prostitutes not their wives because what he want his wife cannot able to give him.

Mir Nihal's paralysis: - Mir Nihal's paralysis is highly symbolical; it shows the paralyzed condition of the Muslims in the world of British colonial forces. Throughout the whole novel he showed huge amount of resistance in adopting change and in the end time had restricted him in one place and the whole civilization had changed.

Conclusion: - The world or the affairs of the family, his wishes are no consequence .formerly he wished to cry over the ups and the downs of life but In the end he does not even have the desire to do that. Asghar comes to him wearing English clothes but not even object. His body has already become paralyzed; his heart and the mind are atrophied as well. The spring of life now seemed to an end.

Asghar's Character in "Twilight in Delhi"

Appearance: - Asghar is the second most important character of the novel. He seemed revolutionary in approach and intention (as far as Mir nihal, s authority is concern). He is a young man of twenty-two and the youngest son of Mir nihal. Ahmed Ali introduces him in the first chapter of part I of the novel:

"He (Asghar) is a tall and handsome young man with his hair well-oiled and his red Turkish cap cocked at a smart angle on his head. The upper buttons of his sherwani are open and show the collar of the English shirt that he is wearing under it. He looks an aesthete, and has a somewhat effeminate grace about him. And round his wrist is wrapped a jasmine garland. As he enters his pumps creak"

The whole appearance of Asghar shows the difference. He belonged to one of those youngsters whose life is in transition, they lived in a multicultural society. So Asghar's appearance shows the eastern and western touch in it. Asghar seemed as the representative of the Indian Muslim youth who are directionless.

Asghar a symbol of change: - Mir Nihal stops and turns to Asghar and says in an angry tone:**"You are again wearing those dirty English boots! I don't like them. I will have no aping of the Farangis is my house. Throw them away! …"**

This statement from Mir Nihal shows that right from the beginning Asghar seems entirely changed from his family.

Asghar is the only son of Mir Nihal who showed his opinion to choose bride himself ,on a superficial level it seems nothing but on a symbolical level it is a threat to the dominance of Mir Nihal. His view of marrying Bilqueece; shows the rebelliousness from the old orthodox style of Mir Nihal. The two severe blows in Mir Nihal, s life made him weak that is why Asghar and his family can able to take the step against the authority.

Asghar: A Traditional Lover: - Asghar went hurriedly past and was lost in the crowd which flowed outside the mohallah. His eyes fell on an oldish man in the crowd. He was dressed only in a shirt and paijama, and on his head rested a round cap stiff with starch, and flowers were embroidered on it in brown thread. His long beard fell over his chest in a fine array. There was something sad and unknown in his eyes and they seemed to be looking for someone, a friend who had been separated, or a loved one far away. Asghar was reminded of his life at Bhopal and of those happy days when he had love to receive and nothing to give at all. He had just to cast a glance and there were many who would have given their lives to do his bidding. At the least sign from him they would have done anything. There he was the bestower of favours; there he was the loved one and not the lover. To be loved is sweet, he thought, whereas to love is full of sorrow and grief and pain. He had never known that the path of love was fraught with so much hardship and frustration.

As he saw this man in the crowd he suddenly realized that he must have caused so much pain to so many. He had never known what it meant, so he did not do it knowingly. Even if he had known, would it have changed his attitude? He did not know. He was filled with the pride of youth, and the wine of life was coursing in his veins. He did not ask those people to lavish love and care on him. If they burnt themselves like moths he was surely not to blame.

Still, he could not help thinking of one of them especially, Huzoor Ali, who resembled the man in the crowd. Time and again he had seen the same sad look in his eyes. Huzoor Ali was so devoted to him, but he had always ignored him. If Asghar had happened to look at him kindly even once there had appeared such joy on his face.

But though Asghar had behaved more kindly with others he was always, somehow, indifferent to Huzoor Ali. He wanted him to do things for him, perhaps, but he did not wish to please him even with a kind word.

He realized all this today when he was himself in love and there seemed no way of compelling his sweetheart to take notice of him. Yet an insidious wave of optimism swept over him and he repeated to himself the line of Hafiz:

Love is created first in the heart of the beloved. But it was so short-lived. Huzoor Ali had not succeeded in making Asghar love him. And he thought of an evening when Huzoor Ali had insisted on his coming to dinner at his place. He had refused and refused until the old man was broken-hearted and, heaving a sigh, he had cursed him gently by repeating the lines. All this description about Asghar's attitude shows that he is like a traditional lover of the sub-continent.

Right from the beginning we came to know that he is an in-satiated personality. His longing for sexual pleasure and intimacy can found nearly in every chapter of the novel. He felt that there is no pleasure in his fate. After the refusal from father, s side about his marriage with Bilqueece; he become utterly disappointed from life .always remained depressed he often thought of death. His remembering of the man's curse:

"Would to god that you
Might also fall in love and suffer
As I am suffering now.

The curse had come true, Asghar thought: and there seemed no way out of it ."

Asghar's restlessness and disappointment can be found in these lines**"Asghar felt very self –conscious. There was a peculiar sadness in his heart, and he felt restless."**

" o god, give me death. I am tired of this life…"
"life has become a burden , the time is ripe for death;
The space of existence has shrunk into a narrow cell"

Views about Bilqueece: - 'She is beautiful, Bari, very beautiful,' Asghar said. 'She is graceful as a cypress. Her hair is blacker than the night of separation, and her face is brighter than the hours of love. Her eyes are like narcissi, big and beautiful. There is nectar in their whites and poison in their blacks. Her eyebrows are like two arched bows ready to wound the hearts of men with the arrows of their lashes. Her lips are redder than the blood of lovers, and her teeth look like pearls studded in a row.... I tell you she is beautiful.'…….

Conclusion: - Ahmed Ali has showed a complete picture of sub-continent bachelor who is the representative of the young generation of the early part of the twentieth century. His complexpersonality, his longing for true intimacy and rebellious attitude nearly found throughout the whole course of the novel.

Things Fall Apart

Chinua Achebe : Things Fall Apart

Early Years: - Chinua Achebe (pronounced Chee-noo-ah Ah-chay-bay) is considered by many critics and teachers to be the most influential African writer of his generation. His writings, including the novel Things Fall Apart, have introduced readers throughout the world to creative uses of language and form, as well as to factual inside accounts of modern African life and history. Not only through his literary contributions but also through his championing of bold objectives for Nigeria and Africa, Achebe has helped reshape the perception of African history, culture, and place in world affairs.

The first novel of Achebe's, Things Fall Apart, is recognized as a literary classic and is taught and read everywhere in the English-speaking world. The novel has been translated into at least forty-five languages and has sold several million copies. A year after publication, the book won the Margaret Wong Memorial Prize, a major literary award.

Achebe was born in the Igbo (formerly spelled Ibo) town of Ogidi in eastern Nigeria on November 16, 1930, the fifth child of Isaiah Okafor Achebe and Janet Iloegbunam Achebe. His father was an instructor in Christian catechism for the Church Missionary Society. Nigeria was a British colony during Achebe's early years, and educated English-speaking families like the Achebes occupied a privileged position in the Nigerian power structure. His parents even named him Albert, after Prince Albert, the husband of Queen Victoria of Great Britain. (Achebe himself chose his Igbo name when he was in college.)

Education: - Achebe attended the Church Missionary Society's school where the primary language of instruction for the first two years was Igbo. At about eight, he began learning English. His relatively late introduction to English allowed Achebe to develop a sense of cultural pride and an appreciation of his native tongue — values that may not have been cultivated had he been raised and taught exclusively in English. Achebe's home fostered his understanding of both cultures: He read books in English in his father's library, and he spent hours listening to his mother and sisters tell traditional Igbo stories.

At fourteen, Achebe was selected to attend the Government College in Umuahia, the equivalent of a university preparatory school and considered the best in West Africa. Achebe excelled at his studies, and after graduating at eighteen, he was accepted to study medicine at the new University College at Ibadan, a member college of London University at the time. The demand for educated Nigerians in the government was heightened because Nigeria was preparing for self-rule and independence. Only with a college degree was a Nigerian likely to enter the higher ranks of the civil service.

The growing nationalism in Nigeria was not lost on Achebe. At the university, he dropped his English name "Albert" in favor of the Igbo name "Chinua,'

Just as Igbo names in Things Fall Apart have literal meanings, Chinualumogo is translated as "My spirit come fight for me."

At University College, Achebe switched his studies to liberal arts, including history, religion, and English. His first published stories appeared in the student publication the University Herald. These stories have been reprinted in the collection Girls at War and Other Stories, which was published in 1972. Of his student writings, only a few are significantly relative to his more mature works; short stories such as "Marriage is a Private Affair" and "Dead Man's Path" explore the conflicts that arise when Western culture meets African society.

Career Highlights: - After graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1953, Achebe joined the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation as a producer of radio talks. In 1956, he went to London to attend the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Staff School. While in London, he submitted the manuscript for Things Fall Apart to a publisher, with the encouragement and support of one of his BBC instructors, a writer and literary critic. The novel was published in 1958 by Heinemann, a publishing firm that began a long relationship with Achebe and his work. Fame came almost instantly. Achebe has said that he never experienced the life of a struggling writer.

Upon returning to Nigeria, Achebe rose rapidly within the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation. As founder and director of the Voice of Nigeria in 1961, Achebe and his colleagues aimed at developing more national identity and unity through radio programs that highlighted Nigerian affairs and culture.

Political Problems: - Turmoil in Nigeria from 1966 to 1972 was matched by turmoil for Achebe. In 1966, young Igbo officers in the Nigerian army staged a coup d'ètat. Six months later, another coup by non-Igbo officers overthrew the Igbo-led government. The new government targeted Achebe for persecution, knowing that his views were unsympathetic to the new regime. Achebe fled to Nsukka in eastern Nigeria, which is predominantly Igbo-speaking, and he became a senior research fellow at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. In 1967, the eastern part of Nigeria declared independence as the nation of Biafra. This incident triggered thirty months of civil war that ended only when Biafra was defeated. Achebe then fled to Europe and America, where he wrote and talked about Biafran affairs.

Later Writing: - Like many other African writers, Achebe believes that artistic and literary works must deal primarily with the problems of society. He has said that "art is, and always was, at the service of man" rather than an end in itself, accountable to no one. He believes that "any good story, any good novel, should have a message, should have a purpose."

Continuing his relationship with Heinemann, Achebe published four other novels: No Longer at Ease (the 1960 sequel to Things Fall Apart), Arrow of God (1964), A Man of the People (1966), and Anthills of the Savannah (1987). He also wrote and published several children's books that express his basic views in forms and language understandable to young readers.

In his later books, Achebe confronts the problems faced by Nigeria and other newly independent African nations. He blames the nation's problems on the lack of leadership in Nigeria since its independence. In 1983, he published The Trouble with Nigeria, a critique of corrupt politicians in his country. Achebe has also published two collections of short stories and three collections of essays. He is the founding editor of Heinemann's African Writers series; the founder and publisher of UwaNdi Igbo: A Bilingual Journal of Igbo Life and Arts; and the editor of the magazine Okike, Nigeria's leading journal of new writing.

Teaching and Literary Awards: - In addition to his writing career, Achebe has maintained an active teaching career. In 1972, he was appointed to a three-year visiting professorship at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and, in 1975, to a one-year visiting professorship at the University of Connecticut. In 1976, with matters sufficiently calm in Nigeria, he returned as professor of English at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, with which he had been affiliated since 1966. In 1990, he became the Charles P. Stevenson, Jr., professor of literature at Bard College, Annandale, New York.

Achebe has received many awards from academic and cultural institutions around the world. In 1959, he won the Margaret Wong Memorial Prize for Things Fall Apart. The following year, after the publication of its sequel, No Longer At Ease, he was awarded the Nigerian National Trophy for Literature. His book of poetry, Christmas in Biafra, written during the Nigerian civil war, won the first Commonwealth Poetry Prize in 1972. More than twenty universities in Great Britain, Canada, Nigeria, and the United States have awarded Achebe honorary degrees.

About “Things Fall Apart”

Introduction: - Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is probably the most authentic narrative ever written about life in Nigeria at the turn of the twentieth century. Although the novel was first published in 1958 — two years before Nigeria achieved its independence — thousands of copies are still sold every year in the United States alone. Millions of copies have been sold around the world in its many translations. The novel has been adapted for productions on the stage, on the radio, and on television. Teachers in high schools, colleges, and graduate schools use the novel as a textbook in many types of classes — from history and social studies to comparative literature and anthropology.

The novel takes its title from a verse in the poem "The Second Coming" by W. B. Yeats, an Irish poet, essayist, and dramatist:

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the center cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.

In this poem — ironically, a product of European thought — Yeats describes an apocalyptic vision in which the world collapses into anarchy because of an internal flaw in

humanity. In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe illustrates this vision by showing us what happened in the Igbo society of Nigeria at the time of its colonization by the British. Because of internal weaknesses within the native structure and the divided nature of Igbo society, the community of Umuofia in this novel is unable to withstand the tidal wave of foreign religion, commerce, technology, and government. In "The Second Coming," Yeats evokes the anti-Christ leading an anarchic world to destruction. This ominous tone gradually emerges in *Things Fall Apart*as an intrusive religious presence and an insensitive government together cause the traditional Umuofian world to fall apart.

Literary Purpose: - When *Things Fall Apart* was first published, Achebe announced that one of his purposes was to present a complex, dynamic society to a Western audience who perceived African society as primitive, simple, and backward. Unless Africans could tell their side of their story, Achebe believed that the African experience would forever be "mistold," even by such well-meaning authors as Joyce Cary in *Mister Johnson*. Cary worked in Nigeria as a colonial administrator and was sympathetic to the Nigerian people. Yet Achebe feels that Cary, along with other Western writers such as Joseph Conrad, misunderstood Africa. Many European writers have presented the continent as a dark place inhabited by people with impenetrable, primitive minds; Achebe considers this reductionist portrayal of Africa racist. He points to Conrad, who wrote against imperialism but reduced Africans to mysterious, animalistic, and exotic "others." In an interview published in 1994, Achebe explains that his anger about the inaccurate portrayal of African culture by white colonial writers does not imply that students should not read works by Conrad or Cary. On the contrary, Achebe urges students to read such works in order to better understand the racism of the colonial era.

Achebe also kept in mind his own Nigerian people as an audience. In 1964, he stated his goal:

to help my society regain belief in itself and put away the complexes of the years of denigration and self-abasement. . . . I would be quite satisfied if my novels . . . did no more than teach my [African] readers that their past — with all its imperfections — was not one long night of savagery from which the first Europeans acting on God's behalf delivered them.

In *Things Fall Apart*, the Europeans' understanding of Africa is particularly exemplified in two characters: the Reverend James Smith and the unnamed District Commissioner. Mr. Smith sees no need to compromise on unquestionable religious doctrine or practices, even during their introduction to a society very different from his own. He simply does not recognize any benefit for allowing the Nigerians to retain elements of their heritage. The District Commissioner, on the other hand, prides himself on being a student of primitive customs and sees himself as a benevolent leader who has only the best intentions for pacifying the primitive tribes and bringing them into the modern era. Both men would express surprise if anyone suggested to them that their European values may not be entirely appropriate for these societies. The Commissioner's plan for briefly treating the story of Okonkwo illustrates the inclination toward Western simplification and essentialization of African culture.

To counter this inclination, Achebe brings to life an African culture with a religion, a government, a system of money, and an artistic tradition, as well as a judicial system. While technologically unsophisticated, the Igbo culture is revealed to the reader as remarkably complex. Furthermore, *Things Fall Apart* ironically reverses the style of novels by such writers as Conrad and Cary, who created flat and stereotypical African characters. Instead, Achebe stereotypes the white colonialists as rigid, most with imperialistic intentions, whereas the Igbos are highly individual, many of them open to new ideas.

But readers should note that Achebe is not presenting Igbo culture as faultless and idyllic. Indeed, Achebe would contest such a romantic portrayal of his native people. In fact, many Western writers who wrote about colonialism (including Joseph Conrad, George Orwell, Herman Melville, and Graham Greene) were opposed to imperialism but were romantic in their portrayal of noble savages — primitive and animalistic, yet uncorrupted and innocent. The opposition to imperialism that such authors voiced often rested on the notion that an advanced Western society corrupts and destroys the non-Western world. Achebe regards this notion as an unacceptable argument as well as a myth. The Igbos were not noble savages, and although the Igbo world was eventually destroyed, the indigenous culture was never an idyllic haven, even before the arrival of the white colonialists. In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe depicts negative as well as positive elements of Igbo culture, and he is sometimes as critical of his own people as he is of the colonizers.

Achebe has been a major force in the worldwide literary movement to define and describe this African experience. Other postcolonial writers in this movement include Leopold Senghor, Wole Soyinka, AimeCesaire, Derek Walcott, NgugiwaThiong'o, and BiragoDiop. These writers not only confront a multiethnic perspective of history and truth, but they also challenge readers to reexamine themselves in this complex and evolving world.

As an African novel written in English and departing significantly from more familiar colonial writing, *Things Fall Apart* was a ground breaking work. Achebe's role in making modern African literature a part of world literature cannot be understated.

Note: Throughout this novel, Achebe uses the spelling *Ibo*, the old spelling of the Umuofian community.

A Brief History of Nigeria: - The history of Nigeria is bound up with its geography. About one-third larger than the state of Texas, Nigeria is located above the inner curve of the elbow on the west coast of Africa, just north of the equator and south of the Sahara Desert. More than two hundred ethnic groups — each with its own language, beliefs, and culture — live in present-day Nigeria. The largest ethnic groups are the mostly Protestant Yoruba in the west, the Catholic Igbo in the east, and the predominantly Muslim Hausa-Fulani in the north. This diversity of peoples is the result of thousands of years of history; as traders, nomads, and refugees from invaders and climatic changes came to settle with the indigenous population, and as foreign nations became aware of the area's resources.

The events in *Things Fall Apart* take place at the end of the nineteenth century and in the early part of the twentieth century. Although the British did not occupy most of Nigeria until 1904, they had a strong presence in West Africa since the early nineteenth century. The British were a major buyer of African slaves in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

In 1807, however, the British outlawed slave trade within their empire. At the time, they did not yet control Nigeria, and internal wars continually increased the available supply of captured slaves. In 1861, frustrated with the expanding slave trade, the British decided to occupy Lagos, a major slave-trading post and the capital of present-day Nigeria. Slowly and hesitantly, the British occupied the rest of Nigeria.

Ultimately, the British were prompted to occupy Nigeria for more than the slave trade. The British were in competition with other Europeans for control of the natural wealth of West Africa. At the Berlin Conference of 1884-85 — a meeting arranged to settle rivalries among European powers — the British proclaimed Nigeria to be their territory. They bought palm oil, peanuts, rubber, cotton, and other agricultural products from the Nigerians. Indeed, trade in these products made some Nigerian traders very wealthy. In the early twentieth century, the British defined the collection of diverse ethnic groups as one country, Nigeria, and declared it a colony of the British Empire.

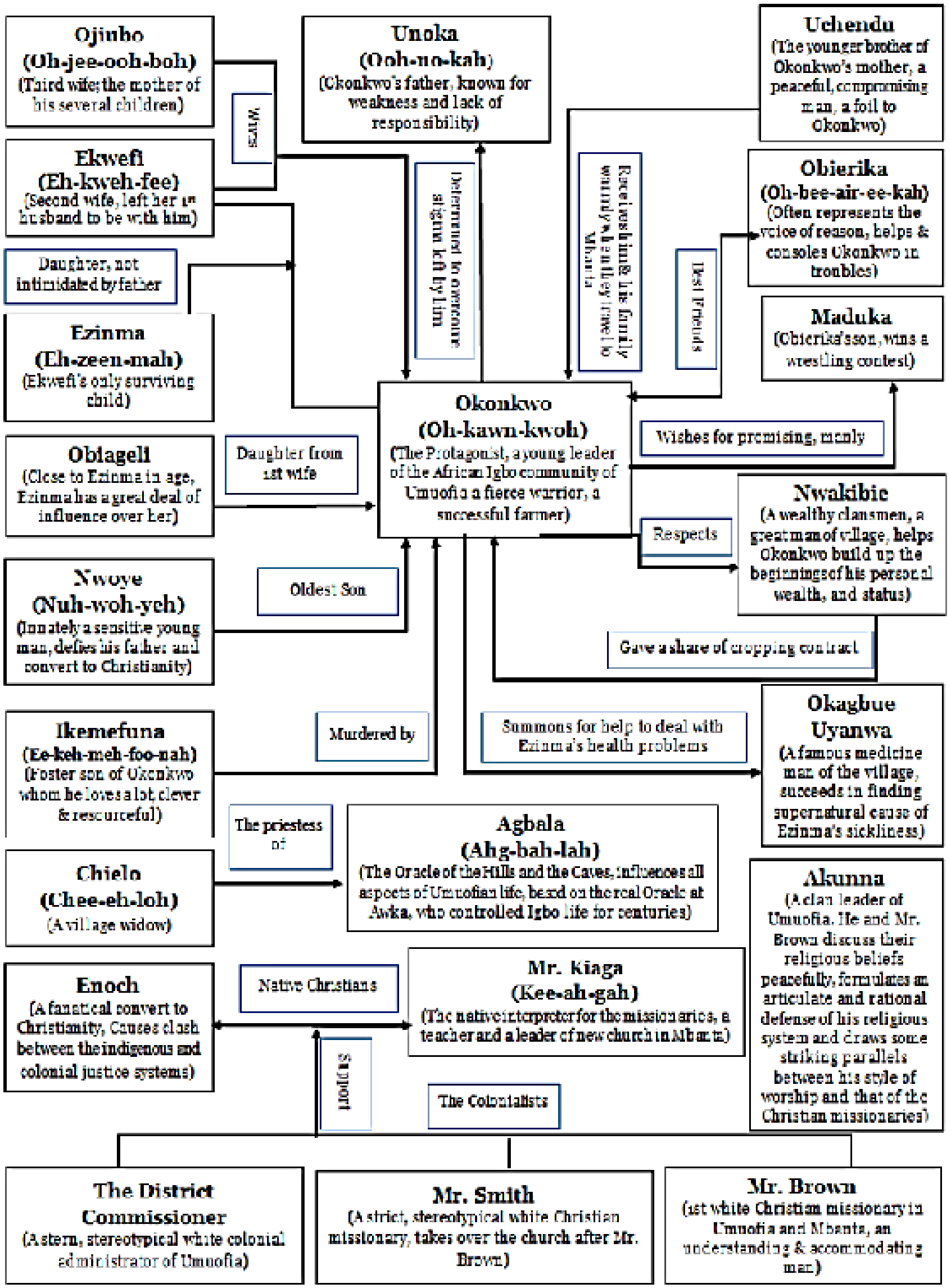
The British moved into Nigeria with a combination of government control, religious mission, and economic incentive. In the north, the British ruled indirectly, with the support of the local Muslim leaders, who collected taxes and administered a government on behalf of the British. In the south, however, where communities (such as Umuofia in *Things Fall Apart*) were often not under one central authority, the British had to intervene directly and forcefully to control the local population.

For example, a real-life tragedy at the community of Ahiara serves as the historical model for the massacre of the village of Abame in Chapter 15 of *Things Fall Apart*. On November 16, 1905, a white man rode his bicycle into Ahiara and was killed by the natives. A month later, an expedition of British forces searched the villages in the area and killed many natives in reprisal.

The Ahiara incident led to the Bende-Onitsha Hinterland Expedition, a force created to eliminate Igbo opposition. The British destroyed the powerful Awka Oracle and killed all opposing Igbo groups. In 1912, the British instituted the Collective Punishment Ordinance, which stipulated punishment against an entire village or community for crimes committed by one or more persons against the white colonialists.

The British operated an efficient administrative system and introduced a form of British culture to Nigeria. They also sent many capable young Nigerians to England for education. The experience of Nigerians who lived overseas in the years preceding, during, and after World War II gave rise to a class of young, educated nationalists who agitated for independence from Great Britain. The British agreed to the Nigerians' demands and, in 1947, instituted a ten-year economic plan toward independence. Nigeria became an independent country on October 1, 1960, and became a republic in 1963.

With the British long gone from Nigeria, corruption and a lack of leadership continued to hamper Nigeria's quest for true democracy. A series of military coups and dictatorships in the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s replaced the fragile democracy that Nigeria enjoyed in the early 1960s. In 1993, Nigeria held a democratic presidential election, which was followed by yet another bloodless coup. And so continues the political pattern for the troubled, violent, most populous country in Africa.



Things Fall Apart : Book Summary

Things Fall Apart is about the tragic fall of the protagonist, Okonkwo, and the Igbo culture. Okonkwo is a respected and influential leader within the Igbo community of

Umuofia in eastern Nigeria. He first earns personal fame and distinction, and brings honour to his village, when he defeats Amalinze the Cat in a wrestling contest. Okonkwo determines to gain titles for himself and become a powerful and wealthy man in spite of his father's weaknesses.

Okonkwo's father, Unoka, was a lazy and wasteful man. He often borrowed money and then squandered it on palm-wine and merrymaking with friends. Consequently, his wife and children often went hungry. Within the community, Unoka was considered a failure and a laughingstock. He was referred to as agbala, one who resembles the weakness of a woman and has no property. Unoka died a shameful death and left numerous debts.

Okonkwo despises and resents his father's gentle and idle ways. He resolves to overcome the shame that he feels as a result of his father's weaknesses by being what he considers to be "manly"; therefore, he dominates his wives and children by being insensitive and controlling.

Because Okonkwo is a leader of his community, he is asked to care for a young boy named Ikemefuna, who is given to the village as a peace offering by neighbouring Mbaino to avoid war with Umuofia. Ikemefuna befriends Okonkwo's son, Nwoye, and Okonkwo becomes inwardly fond of the boy.

Over the years, Okonkwo becomes an extremely volatile man; he is apt to explode at the slightest provocation. He violates the Week of Peace when he beats his youngest wife, Ojiugo, because she went to braid her hair at a friend's house and forgot to prepare the afternoon meal and feed her children. Later, he severely beats and shoots a gun at his second wife, Ekwefi, because she took leaves from his banana plant to wrap food for the Feast of the New Yam.

After the coming of the locusts, Ogbuefi Ezeuder, the oldest man in the village, relays to Okonkwo a message from the Oracle. The Oracle says that Ikemefuna must be killed as part of the retribution for the Umuofian woman killed three years earlier in Mbaino. He tells Okonkwo not to partake in the murder, but Okonkwo doesn't listen. He feels that not participating would be a sign of weakness. Consequently, Okonkwo kills Ikemefuna with his machete. Nwoye realizes that his father has murdered Ikemefuna and begins to distance himself from his father and the clansmen.

Okonkwo becomes depressed after killing Ikemefuna, so he visits his best friend, Obierika, who disapproves of his role in Ikemefuna's killing. Obierika says that Okonkwo's act will upset the Earth and the earth goddess will seek revenge. After discussing Ikemefuna's death with Obierika, Okonkwo is finally able to sleep restfully, but he is awakened by his wife Ekwefi. Their daughter Ezinma, whom Okonkwo is fond of, is dying. Okonkwo gathers grasses, barks, and leaves to prepare medicine for Ezinma.

A public trial is held on the village commons. Nine clan leaders, including Okonkwo, represent the spirits of their ancestors. The nine clan leaders, or egwugwu, also represent the nine villages of Umuofia. Okonkwo does not sit among the other eight leaders, or elders, while they listen to a dispute between ar

wife. The wife, Mgbafo, had been severely beaten by her husband. Her brother took her back to their family's village, but her husband wanted her back home. The egwugwu tell the husband to take wine to his in-laws and beg his wife to come home. One elder wonders why such a trivial dispute would come before the egwugwu.

In her role as priestess, Chielo tells Ekwefi (Okonkwo's second wife) that Agbala (the Oracle of the Hills and Caves) needs to see Ezinma. Although Okonkwo and Ekwefi protest, Chielo takes a terrified Ezinma on her back and forbids anyone to follow. Chielo carries Ezinma to all nine villages and then enters the Oracle's cave. Ekwefi follows secretly, in spite of Chielo's admonitions, and waits at the entrance of the Oracle. Okonkwo surprises Ekwefi by arriving at the cave, and he also waits with her. The next morning, Chielo takes Ezinma to Ekwefi's hut and puts her to bed.

When Ogbuefi Ezeudu dies, Okonkwo worries because the last time that Ezeudu visited him was when he warned Okonkwo against participating in the killing of Ikemefuna. Ezeudu was an important leader in the village and achieved three titles of the clan's four, a rare accomplishment. During the large funeral, Okonkwo's gun goes off, and Ezeudu's sixteen-year-old son is killed accidentally.

Because the accidental killing of a clansman is a crime against the earth goddess, Okonkwo and his family must be exiled from Umuofia for seven years. The family moves to Okonkwo's mother's native village, Mbanta. After they depart Umuofia, a group of village men destroy Okonkwo's compound and kill his animals to cleanse the village of Okonkwo's sin. Obierika stores Okonkwo's yams in his barn and wonders about the old traditions of the Igbo culture.

Okonkwo is welcomed to Mbanta by his maternal uncle, Uchendu, a village elder. He gives Okonkwo a plot of land on which to farm and build a compound for his family. But Okonkwo is depressed, and he blames his chi (or personal spirit) for his failure to achieve lasting greatness.

During Okonkwo's second year in exile, he receives a visit from his best friend, Obierika, who recounts sad news about the village of Abame: After a white man rode into the village on a bicycle, the elders of Abame consulted their Oracle, which told them that the white man would destroy their clan and other clans. Consequently, the villagers killed the white man. But weeks later, a large group of men slaughtered the villagers in retribution. The village of Abame is now deserted.

Okonkwo and Uchendu agree that the villagers were foolish to kill a man whom they knew nothing about. Later, Obierika gives Okonkwo money that he received from selling Okonkwo's yams and seed-yams, and he promises to do so until Okonkwo returns to Umuofia.

Six missionaries, including one white man, arrive in Mbanta. The white man speaks to the people about Christianity. Okonkwo believes that the man speaks nonsense, but his son, Nwoye, is captivated and becomes a convert of Christianity.

The Christian missionaries build a church on land given to them by the village leaders. However, the land is a part of the Evil Forest, and according to tradition, the villagers believe that the missionaries will die because they built their church on cursed land. But when nothing happens to the missionaries, the people of Mbanta conclude that the missionaries possess extraordinary power and magic. The first recruits of the missionaries are efulefu, the weak and worthless men of the village. Other villagers, including a woman, soon convert to Christianity. The missionaries then go to Umuofia and start a school. Nwoye leaves his father's hut and moves to Umuofia so he can attend the school.

Okonkwo's exile is over, so his family arranges to return to Umuofia. Before leaving Mbanta, they prepare a huge feast for Okonkwo's mother's kinsmen in appreciation of their gratitude during Okonkwo's seven years of exile.

When Okonkwo returns to Umuofia, he discovers that the village has changed during his absence. Many men have renounced their titles and have converted to Christianity. The white men have built a prison; they have established a government court of law, where people are tried for breaking the white man's laws; and they also employ natives of Umuofia. Okonkwo wonders why the Umuofians have not incited violence to rid the village of the white man's church and oppressive government.

Some members of the Igbo clan like the changes in Umuofia. Mr. Brown, the white missionary, respects the Igbo traditions. He makes an effort to learn about the Igbo culture and becomes friendly with some of the clan leaders. He also encourages Igbo people of all ages to get an education. Mr. Brown tells Okonkwo that Nwoye, who has taken the name Isaac, is attending a teaching college. Nevertheless, Okonkwo is unhappy about the changes in Umuofia.

After Mr. Brown becomes ill and is forced to return to his homeland, Reverend James Smith becomes the new head of the Christian church. But Reverend Smith is nothing like Mr. Brown; he is intolerant of clan customs and is very strict.

Violence arises after Enoch, an overzealous convert to Christianity, unmasks an egwugwu. In retaliation, the egwugwu burn Enoch's compound and then destroy the Christian church because the missionaries have caused the Igbo people many problems.

When the District Commissioner returns to Umuofia, he learns about the destruction of the church and asks six leaders of the village, including Okonkwo, to meet with him. The men are jailed until they pay a fine of two hundred and fifty bags of cowries. The people of Umuofia collect the money and pay the fine, and the men are set free.

The next day at a meeting for clansmen, five court messengers who intend to stop the gathering approach the group. Suddenly, Okonkwo jumps forward and beheads the man in charge of the messengers with his machete. When none of the other clansmen attempt to stop the messengers who escape, Okonkwo realizes that they will never go to war and that Umuofia will surrender. Everything has fallen apart for Okonkwo; he commits suicide by hanging himself.

Sources of Achebe's Things Fall Apart

"Things Fall Apart" provides an important moral lesson to its leaders. Achebe conceives the primary function of literature to be moral or ethical in nature. According to him the power of the novelist lies on his ability to appeal to the mind and to reach beyond his or her particular circumstance and thus, speak to different periods and generations; the good story-teller is not bound by narrow political or personal concerns or even by the demands of specific historical moments.

Achebe's sympathies, then are not with the heroic character (in this case Okonkwo), but the witness or storyteller (Obierika) who refuses to endorse Okonkwo's commitment to the central doctrines of his culture or the European colonizer's arrogant use of power.

However, the novelist's ability to bring the historical period and his moment of writing together also depended on a notable relationship between his life and his work. As an author, Achebe may be separated from the central event in Things Fall Apart by a period of seventy years, but his own biography is very much a part of the story he tells and its context. Achebe's family occupies a central role in the history which his novel narrates. We know, for example, that his great grandfather was the man who first received Christian missionaries in the village of Ogidi (Umuofia in the novel). More significantly, Achebe's father, Isaiah Okafo (like Nwoye in the novel), was one of the first converts to Christianity in the area and worked for many years as an evangelist and teacher in the Christian Missionary Society, the evangelical branch of the Church of England. This family history is important to our understanding of Things Fall Apart not so much because it invites us to read the author's life in the novel itself. For if the African identity of the novel derives from its acute sense of the oral tradition, and then this is an acknowledgement of the influences of the Ibo stories which Achebe used to hear from his own Christian relatives. It was from the older people in his village that Achebe came to develop an awareness of the history of Ibo people before colonization, a history which is an important aspect of the First Part of Things Fall Apart.

But it would be a mistake to assume that Achebe grew up with a profound understanding and respect for the African past. One of the ironic aspects of being born in a family of African converts to Christianity was that one's status in society depended on a certain self-alienation from the old culture. 'The line between Christian and non-Christian was much more definite in my village forty years ago, than it is today, Achebe observed in 1973.

Although Achebe's first novel is a celebration of the pre-colonial past, it is important to emphasize this sense of superiority among African Christians for one overwhelming reason, it was out of this identification with the culture of colonialism—and his ultimate disillusionment with it—that Achebe became a writer. He was not only brought up in a Christian family, and thus, identified with European culture; his early education was in church schools where the influence of the Bible and biblical stories, Christian moral codes, and indeed modern civility were emphasized. In addition, Achebe's secondary education at the prestigious government school at Umuabia could not but draw him even further into the culture of colonialism. Such schools were modelled after British public

schools which meant that the values they promoted—in scholarship, sports, and conduct—were essentially English. When he arrived at the University of Ibadan in 1948, Achebe was expected to read the major texts of the English tradition, including most notably Shakespeare, Milton and Wordsworth. But by 1948, this acculturation in Englishness was being challenged by African nationalism: advocates of African independence and cultural renewal were beginning to question the central notion in colonial education—the assumption that an African destiny included a future European identify for which the present is but an apprenticeship; in addition, the nationalist movement had brought about a mental revolution.

Since his mental revolution was connected so implicitly to the writing of Things Fall Apart, it is important that readers consider what we may call its cultural politics. Simply put, the writing of this novel marked a radical change in Achebe's way of looking at himself and his culture and in his conception of literature itself. For if we accept the general argument that colonial rule justified itself through the process of writing and rewriting other people's histories and cultural practices, as the last paragraph of Things Fall Apart seems to assert, then we must pay closer attention to the fundamental relationship between the kind of reading communities in which Achebe was brought up and the kind of novel he produced in 1958. Two forms of reading communities are involved: that of the family, and that of the school.

Achebe grew up in a household in which books were revered and played an important role in the visualization of modern life: As the fifth in a family of six children and with parents so passionate for their children's education, "I inherited many discarded books ... I remember also my mother's IjeOnyeKraist which must have been an Ibo adaptation of Pilgrim's progress." Many of these books, most notably the Bible, were later to influence Achebe's literary works as much as the Ibo stories he heard as a child. The Ikemefuna episode in Things Fall Apart, to cite just one example is fashioned after Abraham's aborted sacrifice of Isaac in the Old Testament.

In high schools, as Achebe observed later, he was exposed to English books such as Treasure Island and Oliver Twist. The most significant impact of these books was on Achebe's view of the world: on reading these books, he observed, 'I did not see myself as an African to begin with ... I went through my first level of schooling thinking I was of the party of white man in his hair-raising adventures and narrow escapes' (Chinua Achebe). At University College, Ibadan, Achebe was introduced to famous European writers who had set their novels in Africa, such as Joseph Conrad, Joyce Cary, and Graham Greene. But by now, instead of identifying with the European adventurers against their African counterparts, Achebe felt impelled to represent the historical encounter between Europe and Africa from an African perspective. The connection between Achebe's reading of the colonial novel and his decision to become a writer is found a mental to our understanding of the cultural function of Things Fall Apart. 'I suddenly saw that these books had to be read in a different light.' "Reading 'Heart of Darkness', for instance,... I realized that I was one of those savages jumping up and down on the beach. Once that kind of enlightenment comes to you, you realize that someone has to write a different story."

Things Fall Apart is certainly not the first African novel, but it was probably the first work in which the author set out to represent the African experience in a narrative that sought, self-consciously, to be different from the colonial novel. Since its publication in 1958, Achebe's novel has served as a model for other African writers, and indeed, for a different kind of literature in English Achebe's goal in this novel is to Indicate to his readers that we in Africa did not hear of culture for the first time from Europeans has changed the way African readers perceive their own cultures and their relationship to colonial institutions. Achebe is the man who invented African literature because he was able to show, in the structure and language of his first novel, that the future of African writing did not lie in simple imitation of European forms but in the fusion of such forms with oral traditions. Achebe is the conscience of African literature because he has consistently insisted on the power of story tellers to appeal to the morality and humanity of their readers and to give their life fuller meaning.

Religious life of Ibo society

Human faith in different spiritual powers is regarded as religion which also includes spiritual customs and traditions relating to gods and goddesses. Ibo society also believed that one must have faith in one's ancestors to be blessed with good health, good luck, and many children. Achebe, in 'Things Fall Apart' depicts religious beliefs of the Ibo society in detail. Minute study of the novel reveals that these people did not act contrary to the customs and traditions akin to their duties.

Every man of the clan was well aware of the ill consequences if he violated the rules of the conduct as provided for in their religious scriptures. The religion of the above society was based on two forms of religion—higher and lower. The belief in the supremacy of God was termed a higher form of religion and the faith in the existence of other gods and goddesses was regarded as lower term. Besides a few like Akunna, Ibo people believed in the worship of the smaller gods, who according to them controlled everything. So they worshipped them to be flourished in their lives and also to be saved from facing calamities. Few of the gods and goddesses whom lgbo people worshipped are as under:—

(a)Oracles—Oracles were religious shrines that discharged both judicial and messenger's duties from dead relatives and passed them on to the living beings. They explained to curious relatives why a person had died. They warned individuals and whole community about impending dangers and offered advice on ritual matters. A community might consult Oracles if disturbed by a high death rate, or an unduly high rate of twin-births, or successive bad harvests. Oracles also acted as courts of appeal in judicial matters. Individuals might take their dispute to an Oracle if they failed to reconcile their differences. If a man felt that he had been wrongfully accused of a crime, he might take the matter to an Oracle, who might exonerate him or confirm the guilt. Oracles were feared and respected for miles around, one example was that of the Aro Oracle, known to Europeans as the long Juju. The Aro Oracle was consulted by traders from many areas to settle business disputes. Oracles were housed in secret groves, surrounded by thick bush. The home of an Oracle was a forbidden territory. For the Ibo believed that anyone who saw an Oracle would surely die. Only the chief priestess (or priest) ever looked upon

the face of the Oracle. Supplicants never approached an Oracle directly. The chief priestess of an Oracle served as the mouthpiece of the deity that dwelt in the shrine. Her words were final in all matters, because the forces she represented were higher than all secular powers. To disobey the orders of the priestess was to disobey the deity she represented. The chief priestess might combine her oracular services with other vocations like trading or farming. She and her agents received gifts of money, foodstuffs, and livestock for their services, and they might demand certain sacrifices as well.

The Ibo believed that their Oracles would offer impartial decisions in judicial matters. So great was the confidence they reposed in their oracles that they would willingly pay large sums of money to consult them and accept whatever verdict they might pronounce. Most of the agents of the oracles travelled far and wide as medicine men, divines, traders and smiths, playing their different roles.

In Achebe's novel, Things Fall Apart, we find reference of oracle's importance. The oracle of the hills and the caves could not be disobeyed by the inhabitants of the nine villages. If the clan did not abide by what the oracle wished, it used to be cursed and beaten badly. Chiela was the priestess of Agbala, the oracle of the hills and the caves. In ordinary life, she was a widow with two children but she was a different person who prophesied when the spirit of Agbala was upon her. People came from far and near to consult Agbala when they were haunted by misfortune. No one had seen this deity except his priestess Unoka, once went to Agbala to know why he did not have good harvest. It was said that when such a spirit appeared, the man saw it vaguely in the darkness. Some people had seen this spirit flying in the cave.

(b) Chukwu—In every religion, there is one supreme power governing the whole world. Ibo people called this power 'Chukwu'. There were special shrines for his worship. The name of this great power is referred to in a discussion held between Mr. Brown and Akunna, an Ibo. Chukwu made the world and the other gods to serve him as his messengers. Chukwu can be approached through them. Akunna remarked, "We make sacrifices to little gods but when they fail and there is no one else to turn to, we go to Chukwu. It is right to do so.

We approach a great man through his servants but when his servants fail to help us, then we go to the last source of hope." According to Akunna, everything small or great was made by God. "The tree from which it (piece of wood) came was made by Chukwu, as indeed, all minor gods were." According to Ibo-mythology, Chukwu lived in the sky. He is origin of all things and controlled everything. The names which the Ibo gave their children expressed these beliefs.

Ibo people had much reverence for Chukwu. They did not know how to approach him but they were sure that he is spirit and those who are devoted to him must worship him in spirit. They, therefore communed with him through the spirits and ancestors.

(c) Ani—One of the chief deities of the Ibo people was Ani, the earth deity, the great mother goddess, and the spirit of fertility. Every lineage and, indeed, every homestead had a shrine dedicated to her. Ani had her own special priestesses, who played leading roles in many aspects of community life. They officiated durin

that concerned Ani and presided over all matters involving crime against the earth goddess. Their presence was vital when matters concerning incest, birth, death and burial were being discussed. The ultimate resting place for all men and women who had led a good life was in the bosom of Ani. On the other hand, all men and women who practised witchcraft or died a shameful death, including those who committed suicides had no place in Ani's abode. Usually their corpse were left unburied in the 'bad bush'.

As referred to in Chapter 5 of "Things Fall Apart" the feast of the New Yam was held every year before the harvest began, to honour the earth goddess and the ancestral spirits of the clan. It was an occasion for giving thanks to Ani, the earth goddess and the source of all fertility. Ani played a greater part in the life of the people than any other deity. She was the ultimate judge of morality and conduct. And what was more, she was in close communion with the departed fathers of the clan whose bodies had been committed to earth.

(d) Chi—She was a man's personal god, chi-chi was similar to the Christian concept of a guardian angel. A person's Chi followed him or her throughout life, and could be either benevolent or malignant. A person with a good Chi was always successful in his or her endeavours, while a person with a bad Chi was an unfortunate person, who would labour without reaping.

The Ibo people did not believe that a man's Chi controlled his entire destiny. No matter how 'good' his Chi was, person would achieve success only if he worked hard and led an upright life. They emphasized the importance of hard work in the saying, "If a person says "yes"? that person's Chi says "yes". In addition, the Ibo believed that diviners and other medicine men and women could intervene on behalf of an unfortunate person to change his or her malignant Chi into a benevolent one. Most private prayers, sacrifices, and invocations were directed towards chasing off misfortune and keeping oneself in a state of harmony with one's Chi.

(e) Ekwensu—According to African mythology, he was like a Satan. His prime aim was to lead people astray. Ekwensu had several servants who helped him carry out his evil thoughts. One of them was death itself. The malicious being who would visit a man on the day he enjoyed life the most.

Ekwensu used people to commit crimes against other people and would then turn around and punish the same people as served him. Ekwensu was Chukwu's principal enemy and at the same time his faithful servant. Acting on the powers bestowed on him by Chukwu, he would cause an evil deer to suffer, or die in a strange manner should a man meet with an unexpected misfortune. It was a punishment for some crime he had committed. The crime might have escaped the attention of his neighbours but not the watchful eyes of the higher forces. Until a sinner atoned for a transgression he might not even remember committing he remained in a state of conflict with the higher forces, who would punish him continuously. When a person felt disturbed by certain inexplicable misfortunes, he would approach a diviner, who might recommend that the unseen forces be propitiated. Fear of unconsciously offending the higher beings was responsible for the large number of propitiation rites.

The Ibo also approached the higher forces when they wanted special favours. Should a family want to have many children, it would approach a diviner who might recommend some sacrificial offerings. Sacrifice was an important element in Ibo religious ceremony.

Things Fall Apart : Historical Perspective

Tribal Society: - Things Fall Apart was published in 1958 just prior to Nigerian independence, but it depicts pre-colonial Africa. Achebe felt it was important to portray Nigerians as they really were-not just provide a shallow description of them as other authors had. The story takes place in the typical tribal village of Umuofia, where the inhabitants (whom Achebe calls the Ibo, but who are also known as the Igbo) practice rituals common to their native traditions.

The Ibo worshipped gods who protect, advise, and chastise them and who are represented by priests and priestesses within the clan. For example, the Oracle of the Hills and the Caves grants knowledge and wisdom to those who are brave enough to consult him. No one has ever seen the Oracle except his priestess, who is an Ibo woman but who has special powers of her own. Not only did the gods advise the Ibo on community matters, but also they guided individuals. Each person had a personal god, or chi, that directed his or her actions. A strong chi meant a strong person; people with weak chis were pitied. Each man kept a separate hut, or shrine, where he stored the symbols of his personal god and his ancestral spirits.

A hunting and gathering society, the Ibo existed on vegetables, with yams as the primary crop. Yams were so important to them that the Ibo celebrated each new year with the Feast of the New Yam. This festival thanked Ani, the earth goddess and source of all fertility. The Ibo prepared for days for the festival, and the celebration itself lasted for two days. Yams also played a part in determining a man's status in the tribe-the more yams a man has, the higher his status. Trade with other villages was facilitated by small seashells called cowries which were used as a form of currency.

Within the village, people were grouped according to families, with the eldest man in the family having the most power. On matters affecting the whole village, an assembly of adult men debated courses of action, and men could influence these assemblies by purchasing "titles" from the tribal elders. This system encouraged hard work and the spread of wealth. People who transgressed against the laws and customs of the village had to confront the egwugwu, an assembly of tribesmen masked as spirits, who would settle disputes and hand out punishment. Individual villages also attained various degrees of political status. In the novel, other tribes respect and fear Umuofia. They believe that Umuofia's magic is powerful and that the village's war-medicine, or agadi-nwayi, is particularly potent. Neighboring clans always try to settle disputes peacefully with Umuofia to avoid having to war with them.

Christianity and Colonization: - While Christianity spread across north and south Africa as early as the late fifteenth century, Christianity took its strongest hold when the majority of the missionaries arrived in the late 1800s. After centuries of taking slaves out of Africa, Britain had outlawed the slave trade and now saw the continent as ripe for

colonization. Missionaries sent to convert the local population were often the first settlers. They believed they could atone for the horrors of slavery by saving the souls of Africans.

At first, Africans were mistrustful of European Christians, and took advantage of the education the missionaries provided without converting. Individuals who had no power under the current tribal order, however, soon converted; in the novel, the missionaries who come to Umuofia convert only the weaker tribesmen, or efulefu. Missionaries would convince these tribesmen that their tribe worshipped false gods and that its false gods did not have the ability to punish them if they chose to join the mission. When the mission and its converts accepted even the outcasts of the clan, the missionaries' ranks grew. Eventually, some of the more important tribesmen would convert. As the mission expanded, the clan divided, discontent simmered, and conflicts arose.

English Bureaucrats and Colonization: - After the arrival of the British, when conflicts came up between villages the white government would intervene instead of allowing villagers to settle them themselves. In the novel, a white District Commissioner brings with him court messengers whose duty it is to bring in people who break the white man's law. The messengers, called "Ashy-Buttocks" for the ash-colored shorts they wear, are hated for their high-handed attitudes. These messengers and interpreters were often African Christian converts who looked down on tribesmen who still followed traditional customs. If violence involved any white missionaries or bureaucrats, British soldiers would often slaughter whole villages instead of seeking and punishing guilty individuals. The British passed an ordinance in 1912 that legalized this practice, and during an uprising in 1915, British troops killed more than forty natives in retaliation for one dead and one wounded British soldier.

One of the most important results of Europe's colonization of Africa was the division of Africa into at least fifty nation-states. Rather than being a part of a society determined by common language and livelihood, Africans lived according to political boundaries. The divisions often split ethnic groups, leading to tension and sometimes violence. The cohesiveness of the traditional society was gone.

Nigerian Independence: - British colonial rule in Nigeria lasted only fifty-seven years, from 1903 to 1960. Although Nigerians had long called for self-rule, it was not until the end of World War II that England began heeding these calls. The Richards Constitution of 1946 was the first attempt to grant some native rule by bringing the diverse peoples of Nigeria under one representative government. The three regions (northern, southern and western) were brought under the administration of one legislative council composed of twenty-eight Nigerians and seventeen British officers. Regional councils, however, guaranteed some independence from the national council and forged a link between local authorities, such as tribal chiefs, and the national government. There were three major tribes (the Hausa, the Yoruba and the Igbo) and more than eight smaller ones living in Nigeria. This diversity complicated the creation of a unified Nigeria. Between 1946 and 1960 the country went through several different constitutions, each one attempting to balance power between the regional and the national bodies of government.

On October 1, 1960, Nigeria attained full status as a sovereign state and a member of the British Commonwealth. But under the Constitution of 1960 the Queen of England was still the head of state. She remained the commander- in-chief of Nigeria's armed forces, and the Nigerian navy operated as part of Britain's Royal Navy. Nigerians felt frustrated by the implication that they were the subjects of a monarch living over 4,000 miles away. In 1963, five years after the publication of Achebe's novel, a new constitution would replace the British monarch with a Nigerian president as head of state in Nigeria.

Literary Traditions: - Achebe wrote Things Fall Apart just before Nigeria received its independence. He intended the book for audiences outside Africa; he wanted to paint a true picture of pre-colonial Africa for those people who had no direct knowledge of traditional African societies. As a result of the Nigerians' acquisition of independence, the Nigerian educational system sought to encourage a national pride through the study of Nigerian heritage. The educational system required Achebe's book in high schools throughout the English-speaking countries in Africa. The book was well received. Chinua Achebe has been recognized as "the most original African novelist writing in English," according to Charles Larson in The Emergence of African Fiction. Critics throughout the world have praised Things Fall Apart as the first African English-language classic.

Significance of the Title

Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe is a novel whose title bears the central massage of the work. The very title 'Things Fall Apart' foreshadows the tragedy which takes place at the end of the novel. The novel depicts the tragedy of an individual as well as the tragedy of a society. The protagonist of the novel Okonkwo who was rich and respectable at the beginning of the novel meets a tragic fate at the end of the novel. Achebe portrays how an ambitious, well known, and respected African Okonkwo's life falls apart. But when he suffers, his whole tribe also suffers. At the beginning of the novel, the Ibo society was a peaceful, organic society, but at the end of the novel it falls into pieces. Thus, the novel records not only falling apart of Okonkwo's life but also his whole society.

The Title- A Literary Allusion: - The phrase "things fall apart" is taken from the poem, "The Second Coming" by W.B Yeats, which Achebe quotes more extensively in the epigraph. Achebe's literary allusion to Yeats' poem might deepen or extend—by comparison and/or contrast—the meaning(s) of Achebe's title and his novel. The beginning four lines of the poem are referred as a preface of the novel.

"Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,"

"Things fall apart" can be said when something we believed would last forever, comes to an end. The title Things Fall Apart refers to the fact that without proper balance, things do fall apart. The notion of balance in the novel is an important theme throughout the

book. Beginning with the excerpt from Yeats' poem, the concept of balance is stressed as important; for without balance, order is lost. In the novel, there is a system of balance, which the Igbo culture seems but at the end of the novel the society people cannotlisten the leader, so a chaotic situation is created.

Okonkwo's Life Falls Apart: - At the beginning of the novel we see Okonkwo as a prosperous leader of the Igbo people. But the novel ends with his tragic end. Thus, we can say that the novel Things Fall Apart depicts how Okonkwo's life falls apart. Okonkwo is definitely a man of importance for his society. He is a well-known person throughout the nine villages and beyond. He is a warrior and wrestler who gains respect through his athletics. He is a fierce-free individual. He hasn't lost one fight or any battles. And for this the people of the village love him. He is also respected because of his wealth.

Okonkwo's life first begins to fall apart when he kills Ikemefuna, a prisoner who stayed at Okonkwo's home. Okonkwo considers Ikemefuna as one of his own sons. It has been decided from the oracle that Ikemefuna will be killed. Okonkwo takes part in his murder, despite warning from his friend, "That boy calls you father. Do not bear a hand in his death." But when he hears Ikemefuna's crying, ""My father, they have killed me!" as he ran towards him. Dazed with fear, Okonkwo drew his machete and cut him down." Okonkwo's fear of being weak, which is one of his tragic flaws, drives him to rashness, and in the end it contributes to his own tragedy that his own life falls apart.

Another significant incidence where Okonkwo's life falls apart was when he was thrown out of the clan for seven years. From this event, one can see that Okonkwo's hopes dreams have begun to fall apart. His hopes of being a rich and popular individual had drifted away with this disturbing incident. Okonkwo had no longer had his farm or animals. Also Okonkwo lost faith with most of his friends. This goes to show that Okonkwo lost faith with his friends, like his father lost faith with his friends. Another episode that showed the downfall in Okonkwo's life was when Nwoye, his oldest and favorite son, converted to the white mans.

Okonkwo's life finally shattered after his returning to his village where he finds that everything is changed. After the clansman burn the Church building down, the District Commissioner asks the leaders of the clan, Okonkwo among them, to go and see him for a peaceful meeting. The leaders arrive, and are quickly seized. While they are in detention waiting for the fine to be collected from their people, they are beaten severely by the court messengers and their heads are shaved. They are held in jail until the clan pays a heavy fine. Embittered and grieving for the destruction of his clan's independence, and fearing the humiliation of dying under white law, Okonkwo commits suicide and his life totally falls apart.

Igbo Society Falls Apart: - Like Okonkwo his Igbo society also falls apart. In the first part of the book we see a socially, politically and religiously organic Igbo society. But this organic society becomes divided and virtually loses all energy at the end of the book. Thus, the novel documents the falling apart of the Igbo tribe due to its own brutal rules as well as the coming of the Christian missionaries and the rule of the English government.

The Society Itself Responsible For Falling Apart: - At the beginning of the book we see that the Igbo people have a strong faith in their traditional religion. The religion of the Igbos consisted in the belief that there is a suspense God, the creator of the universe and the lesser gods. The supreme God was called Chukwu. The other gods were made by Chukwu to act his messengers so that people could approach him through them. People made sacrifices to the smaller gods, but when the failed, the people turned to Chukwu. Ancestor worship was also an equally important feature of the religion of the Ibo people. There were man superstitious ideas related with their religious belief. They believed in evil spirits and oracle. One of such Oracles is responsible for Okonkwo's sacrifice of Ikemefuna. This incident underlines the superstitious brutality of traditional Igbo society. We also find the brutality, injustice and the inhuman activities in some other rituals or rules such as – people who are affected by some severe diseases are carried on the Evil Forest to die and they do not get any burial and twain babies are thrown out in the Evil Forest just after their birth. The ultimate result of such brutality is when the people, who are dissatisfied with these rules such as- Nwoye, the mother of three twin babies, get the opportunity to change their religion they do it and the society ultimately falls apart.

Igbo Society Encounters the Colonial Masters and Falls Apart: - Prior to the coming of the white the political life of the Igbo people was also very organic and strong. They were very loyal to their political leaders. After the entrance of colonial masters, the colonial religion, mostly replaces the traditional religion. When the white man arrives, however, they ignore the Igbo's values and tries to enforce his own beliefs and religious practices. Missionaries would convince these tribesmen that their tribe worshipped false gods and that its false gods did not have the ability to punish them if they chose to join the mission. Like many others, Okonko's son Nwoye is also affected by the colonial religion.

The only point in the book in which the title is referenced is Chapter Twenty, when the main character, Okonkwo, and his friend, Obierika, are discussing the invasion of white men into their community. Obierika says, "The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart." his passage clearly ties the destruction of the Igbo people's way of life to sneaky, divisive action on the part of European missionaries and imperialists.

The colonial politics affects the Igbo society. Okonko's life is also affected by the colonial politics. The Igbo people become the victims of the colonial politics and many people die as a result of colonialism. The same things happen to Okonkwo.

The novel concludes with the end of the Igbo society and the death of the hero. In the face of the chaos caused by the incursion of Christianity, Okonkwo becomes a murderer and then hangs himself. His world has literally fallen apart, and it symbolically represents that Igbo society has fallen apart. Thus, we can say, the title of the novel, Things Fall Apart denotes its theme appropriately.

Clash of Civilizations in 'Things Fall Apart'

Things Fall Apart is an amazing novel by Chinua Achebe that illustrates the conflict occurring during the period of British colonization of Africa. Things Fall Apart explores the struggles between the old traditions of the Igbo community and the effects of Christianity on the people of different calibres within that society. The novel is told from the perspective of the native people of Ibo. The novel takes place in Umuofia, in Nigeria, in an area where their culture is indigenous to the Ibo people. In "Things Fall Apart" it seems that the African Ibo culture was strong and functional, such as in its religious beliefs and customs, government, economic, and social coherence. The order of Ibo society became interrupted and began to unravel when the white missionaries entered Africa and introduced Christianity.

The colonial religion first attacked the outcasts of the Ibo society in order to expand on the ideas of Christianity and how their belief system was not an accurate portrayal. The traditional belief system had been corrupted by the impact of the missionaries and there was encouragement of disavowing the traditional beliefs of the Ibo society. There were changes due to the entrance of the white man; it was no longer the same society that had been known to the Ibo people. The missionaries who came to Umuofia set out to reach everyone in order to convert him or her to Christianity. Kiaga approached two outcasts and told them they must shave their hair in order to let go of their heathen beliefs. The Christians even lived in the Evil Forest in order to prove that their belief system was not accurate.

The colonizers used religion as a tool of Conquest in Things Fall Apart. In the novel Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe, the white men who come to Umuofia find success in conquering the village by challenging Ibo religion. Because the first white men to appear in Umuofia were missionaries, the slaughter of Ibo society began with the challenging of the highly-regarded religion of the Ibo people. The white men began their religious assault by openly denouncing the many gods worshipped by the Ibo in order to convert them to the new faith. After accomplishing this, the white men set out to prove that the Christian religion was superior to all others by defying the powers of the Ibo gods when they built their church upon the cursed ground of the Evil Forest. With the Ibo religion being proved powerless, the converts began challenging their former religion by killing the sacred python, revered by the people of Umuofia. By attacking the fundamental teachings of the natives' religion, the Christians were able to effectively conquer the Ibo people.

One of the main themes of the novel is change. It is also seen through religion. The tribe have lived for thousands of years in an untouched and unviolated existence. The arrival of the missionaries and the conversion of many to the Christian faith make it very difficult for some to cope with. Especially those who choose not to convert, and have to watch as their friends/family take a different path. The Clan has a different perception when it comes to the gods. Whereas the Christians believe in only one god, the Ibo have various gods who they worship. There is one supreme god, but they call him Chukwu because "he made all the world and the other gods." They also worship other gods such as the Oracle of the Hills, the sacred python, and the chi, (or personal god). Two of

these are animate gods, in the form of a woman and a reptile. This illustrates another difference between the two religions as the Christian's god is inanimate. The Umofians had a religion that worked out great for them, but when the white men came, they took over their religion and forced them to believe something else. Thus, the colonial religion has brought a change into the system of religion in Ibo society.

Tragedy of an individual or tragedy of society

Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe is a tragedy of an individual as well as the society. The protagonist of the novel, Okonko who was rich and respectable at the beginning of the novel meets a tragic fate at the end of the novel. But when he suffers, his whole tribe also suffers. At the beginning of the novel, the Ibo society was a peaceful, organic society, but at the end of the novel it falls into pieces. Thus the novel records not only the sufferings of Okonkwo but also his whole society.

At the beginning of the play we see Okonko as a prosperous leader of the Ibo people. But the novel ends with his tragic end. Thus, we can say that the novel Things fall apart is a depiction of Okonkwo's tragic fall. Okonkwo was definitely a man of importance for his society. He was a well-known person throughout the 9 villages and beyond. He was a warrior ad wrestler who gained respect through his athletics. He was a fierce-free individual. He hadn't lost one fight or any battles. And for this the people of the village loved him. He was also respected because of his wealth.

Okonkwo had three wives and many children. He was able to take care of his wives and children.But suddenly a disaster takes place in his life. He unconsciously kills the son of a man who had warned him not to kill Ikemefuna. Although the killing was an accident, Okonkwo and his family are forced before nightfall to flee to his distant native village to Manta. When they are gone his compound and his possessions are destroyed by his fellow tribesman in a ritual cleansing and purification of his sin.

When Okonkwo came back to his village he found that everything was changed. After the clansman burn the Church building down, the District Commissioner asks the leaders of the clan, Okonkwo among them, to go and see him for a peaceful meeting. The leaders arrive, and are quickly seized. While they are in detention waiting for the fine to be collected from their people, they are beaten severely by the court messengers and their heads shaved. They are held in jail until the clan pays a heavy fine.

Embittered and grieving for the destruction of his clan's independence, and fearing the humiliation of dying under white law, Okonkwo ends his life. The District Commissioner and his messengers arrive at Umuofia to find Okonkwo has hanged himself. They are asked to take down his body, since Ibo mores forbid clan members to touch it, as suicide is regarded as a ac of weakness and as attack against nature.

Like Okonkwo his Ibo society also meets a tragic fate. In the first part of the book we see a socially, politically and religiously organic Ibo society. But this organic society becomes divided and virtually loses all energy at the end of the book.

At the beginning of the book we see that the Ibo people have a strong faith in their traditional religion. The religion of the Ibos consisted in the belief that there is a suspense God, the creator of the universe and the lesser gods. The supreme God was called Chukwu. The other gods were made by Chukwu to act his messengers so that people could approach Him through them. People made sacrifices to the smaller gods, but when the failed, the people turned to Chukwu. Ancestor worship was also an equally important feature of the religion of the Ibo people. There were man superstitious ideas related with their religious belief. They believed in evil spirits and oracle. One of such Oracles is responsible for Okonkwo's sacrifice of Ikemefuna. This incident underlines the superstitious brutality of traditional Ibo society. Thus we find a very strong and extremely detailed picture of Ibo life society prior to the coming of the white man.

But later the Christianity, the colonial religion, mostly replaces the traditional religion. When the white man arrives, however, he ignores the Ibo's values and tries to enforce his own beliefs and religious practices. Missionaries would convince these tribesmen that their tribe worshipped false gods and that its false gods did not have the ability to punish them if they chose to join the mission. Like many others, Okonkwo's son is also affected by the colonial religion.

Prior to the coming of the white the political life of the Ibo people was also very organic and strong. They were very loyal to their political leaders.The colonial politics affects the Ibo society. Okonkwo's life is also affected by the colonial politics. The Ibo people become the victims of the colonial politics and many people die as a result of colonialism. The same things happen to him.

When conflicts came up between villages, the white government would intervene instead of allowing villagers to settle them themselves. In the novel when the white man's government has come to Umuofia, the clan is no longer free to judge its own; a district commissioner, backed by armed power, judge cases in ignorance of tribal custom.

Things Fall Apart chronicles the double tragedies of the deaths of Okonkwo, a revered warrior, and the Ibo, the tribe to which Okonkwo belongs. In literature, tragedy often describes the downfall of a great individual which is caused by a flaw in the person's character. Okonkwo's personal flaw is his unreasonable anger, and his tragedy occurs when the tribe bans him for accidentally killing a young tribesman, and he returns to find a tribe that has changed beyond recognition. The Ibo's public demise results from the destruction of one culture by another, but their tragedy is caused by their turning away from their tribal gods.

Role of Fear in Okonkwo's Life and Action

Things Fall Apart, written by Chinua Achebe, is a story of Okonkwo whose life is dominated by his fears-"the fears of failures". There are many subtle themes throughout the book Things Fall Apart. One theme that cries out over the rest is Okonkwo's, the main character, fear of weakness as seen through his childhood, his oldest son, and eventually his death. The novel is also a tragedy and Okonkwo is a tragic hero. Okonkwo's tragedy can be connected to a tragic flaw in his character. He was afraid of

being considered weak. His fear motivates him to take actions which are often unnecessary and ultimately destructive. His fear of being feminine leads him to assist in the murder of Ikemefuna whom he loved, to beat his wives, be emotionally distant from his children, and to disown his oldest son.In the end, his fear of being thought weak was his final undoing. He killed the white man's messenger because he did not want the other elders to consider him weak.

An ambitious man who has risen from nothing to a man of importance in his tribe, Okonkwo rules his family with an iron fist. The cause of being so strict and rude to his family is his fear of being considered as weak. Since his childhood, Okonkwo was ashamed of his father, "In his day he (Unoka) was lazy and improvident and was quite incapable of thinking about tomorrow". His father Unoka was a failure in every sense of the word. Unoka was lazy, wasteful and un-ambitious. He loved a life of pleasure without hard work. He was always in debt and was not able to take any titles in accordance with tradition. By the standard of his clan, Unoka was a coward and squanderer. When he was a child, a boy called Okonkwo's father an agbala. This word means "woman" as well as a man who has no title. His carelessness left numerous debts unpaid at his death. Ashamed of his father, Okonkwo worked hard and fought well to gain a reputation of high status and influence in his clan. He acquired three wives, one whom gave him his first son. Okonkwo's first wife, whose name is never mentioned, gave birth to his first son, Nwoye. Okonkwo saw Nwoye weak and lazy from an early age. For this, Nwoye was beaten constantly.

Okonkwo was highly demanding of his family because of his obsession not to be like his father. He mistook this behaviour as masculinity. He wished his son were a promising, manly son like his friend Obierika's son, Maduka, who was also a great fighter. One night the town of Umuofia was told that someone in Mbaino had killed one of their "daughters". The woman was OgbuefiUdo's wife. The blood price for the murder was a virgin and young man to Umuofia. The virgin was given to OgbuefiUdo as his wife. They did not know what to do with the young boy, Ikemefuna. Okonkwo was asked on behalf of the clan to take care of the boy. Secretly, Okonkwo grew fond of Ikemefuna, "Even Okonkwo himself became very fond of the boy-inwardly of course. Okonkwo never showed any emotion openly, unless it be the emotion of anger". Ikemefuna lived with Okonkwo and his family for three years until the time came when the Oracle said that Ikemefuna had to be killed. Okonkwo was warned not to have any part in killing the boy who called him father. He ignored this and upon returning sank into a deep depression which kindled the affliction inside of him. Not only the death of Ikemefuna, but also the accidental killing of Ogbuefi Ezeudu's son, which gets Okonkwo and his family exiled for seven years, aides in his depression. To atone for the killing of his clansmen's son, Okonkwo and his family were cast out of Umuofia and were forced to go live with his mother's clan in Mbanta.

In their second year a group of six missionaries travelled to Mbanta and tried to persuade the people from their false gods of wood and stone to the one true God. They captured Nwoye and he later joined their congregation. When Okonkwo was informed of the news he strangled Nwoye in anger. He questioned how he could have fathered such a weak son. At the end of the seven-year exile, Okonkwo was able to return home. However, the church had taken over Umuofia also. Nothing

refused to integrate with the new visitors. He thought that the clan's failure to remove them was "womanly". Almost happy again, Okonkwo began to accept the new Umuofia. Then the leaders of the clan, including Okonkwo, were taken for ransom by the church. Deeply angered by what was happening, Okonkwo killed one of the leaders at a meeting. The pacification of Okonkwo's clan is what depressed him. He knew his clan would not go to war. This desire to act violently all goes back to his father's lack of desire. In the end the violence settled on Okonkwo, when he hung himself.

In conclusion, all these aspects: his childhood, his first son and Ikemefuna, and his death contribute in explaining Okonkwo's fear of weakness. Okonkwo's life was controlled by his fears. He valued the success of his family and the community with his own success. If Nwoye was weak it was because he had failed as a father. The pacification of the town was a reflection of Okonkwo's failures, he thought. Not being able to control those events, Okonkwo, out of desperation or either out of the pride in his manhood or perhaps both, killed himself.

In the final analysis, Okonkwo's character is typical of tragic heroes in every tragedy. He was a great man but he was destroyed because he had a tragic flaw- fear.

Culture of the Igbo society

"Things Fall Apart" is a novel written in English by Nigerian author Chinua Achebe. The novel depicts the life of Okonkwo, a leader and local wrestling champion in Umuofia - one of a fictional group of nine villages in Nigeria inhabited by the Igbo people. It focuses on his family and personal history, the customs and society of the Igbo and the influence of British colonialism and Christian missionaries on the Igbo community during the late nineteenth century.

Through Achebe's use of language, it is apparent how unique the Igbo's culture is. By using traditional Igbo words, folktales, and songs into English sentences, the author shows us that African languages are comprehensible. Achebe is noted for his inclusion of proverbs from Igbo oral culture into his writing:

"The lizard that jumped from the high iroko tree to the ground said he would praise himself if no one else did."

Okonkwo, explains his capacity for hard work before Nwakibie, his sons and neighbors."The Feast of the New Yam" is an occasion of joy throughout Umuofia to convey thanks to Ani, the earth goddess. Every year the Igbo people celebrate the event before the harvest commences. On the occasion, a large number of people are fed with vegetables soup, fresh yam foo-foo and so on.

In the Igbo society, a man is known for his own achievement and activeness and here a man who fails to progress beyond the junior title is a man without status in the eyes of his people and such a man is called an 'agbala' meaning a woman. The father of the protagonist is called so as he attains no title. In the behaviour of the protagonist, the sense of self-respect is traceable.

Because of the great value placed on masculinity, women are, to a great extent, inferior to men in the Ibo society. Wives' main duty is to serve their husbands. Women's value is directly tied to their ability to produce children, as shown by the fact that the birth of children is "a woman's crowning glory". Wife beating and domestic violence are very common practices. Okonkwo constantly beats his wives for some very trivial matters such as forgetting to prepare meals for him. In one occasion, Okonkwo nearly killed Ekwefi with his gun. Often women are merely properties of men who are even inferior to yams. The value of a man is measured by the number of yams and wives he has, with the former bearing more importance than the latter. When a man suits a woman, he negotiates a bride price using "a small bundle of short broomsticks," showing that women are only treated as properties and commodities in Ibo society.

They had a sharp sense of community, 'The Week of Peace' comes at the end of the carefree season and before the harvest and planting season. During the 'Week of Peace', Okonkwo breaks the peace and is punished, as is the custom, by Ezeani, the priest of the earth goddess. He told Okonkwo, even though his wife may have been at fault, he commits a great evil. During the 'Week of Peace' one has to live in complete peace no matter what the circumstances. The community fears that the evil he did could ruin the whole clan.

Many a superstition runs through the Igbo society as we observe regarding the twin-born babies. They believe that it is a sing of evil omen. For this reason, they cast away the twins in the 'Evil Forest' as soon as they are born. Similarly Okonkwo's father's aliment invites the same consequences and he is not buried with the traditional respect and rituals because a diseased person in the society is left in the forest to die.

The lives of the Ibo people revolve around great traditions and supreme beings. The Oracle in the mountain is greatly respected and feared by the villagers. His decisions are viewed as edicts that people who defy them will be damned. The powerful clan of Umuofia never goes to war unless its case was accepted by the Oracle of the Hills and the Caves. After the Oracle decrees Ikemefuna's death, Okonkwo, despite his affection for Ikemefuna, obeys and kills Ikemefuna. When Chielo the priestess, sent for by Agbala, comes to Okonkwo's hut to get Ezinma, even the fearless Okonkwo gives way after incessantly pleading Chielo to allow Ezinma stay.

Religion has been the integral part of the Igbo society, as they believe in a supreme god, Chukwu, who has created all things and demands obedience. In "Things Fall Apart", the mask, the earth, the legends and the rituals all have significance in the history of the Igbo culture. According to Baldwin:

"Religion looms large in the life of primitive man."

First, there is the use of the mask to draw the spirit of the gods into the body of a person. A great crime in the Igbo culture is to unmask or show disrespect to the immortality of an egwugwu, which represents an ancestral spirit. Toward the end of the novel, a Christian convert unmasks and kills one of his own ancestral spirits. The clan weeps, for "it seemed as if the very soul of the tribe wept for a great evil that was

coming—its own death." They also believe in 'chi' a man personal god and many other gods and goddesses.

To conclude the discussion, it can be said that the Igbo society was much enriched but as soon as the colonisers came to their land, their society, and cultural values commenced falling apart and the old way of life gets disrupted.

Gender Roles in the Igbo Society

In the novel by Chinua Achebe, "Things Fall Apart", the Igbo people are at a watershed moment in their history and culture. The incursion of the colonizing force is changing or threatening to change almost every aspect of their society: religion, family structure, gender roles and relations, and trade, to name just a few. In "Things Fall Apart", Achebe shows how the Igbo society is changing because women, who were typically confined to the home and who had little decision-making power prior to colonialism, suddenly find themselves agents of important social exchanges through the roles they play in the trade that occurs in the market, as well as in the production of the crops that are sold at market.

The novel, "Things Fall Apart" is, at its heart, a novel about a rapidly changing culture. Because of the quick introduction of new ideas in "Things Fall Apart" from the outsiders, nearly every aspect of Igbo culture begins to change, including, rather predictably, the nature of gender relationships. Before the introduction of new cultural influences in "Things Fall Apart" the gender roles were quite standardized as was depicted both by the interactions of Okonkwo and his wives and other Igbo men and women in "Things Fall Apart". Clearly the women were given certain responsibilities and these were not mutable aspects of Igbo culture but were sedentary cultural norms. With new ideas from outside, however, the roles of women in "Things Fall Apart" and Igbo culture began to shift, bringing larger cultural implications. For example, one of the rapid cultural changes that takes place in Igbo society is apparent in terms of the harvesting of crops. While they still do not harvest yams, "a man's crop" (Achebe 22), and symbol of "manliness…[and] great[ness] (Achebe 33), the "coco-yams, beans and cassava" (Achebe 22) become increasingly important to the Igbo and their trade, despite men's clinging to the yam as an important symbol of the Igbo culture. As the result of their position in the enterprise of trading, women had more direct contact with foreigners than did the men. As this contact and their selling success increased, so too did women's influence in society and their boldness in asserting themselves and their ideas and opinions to the powerful male elders who held traditional decision-making power.

For the men in "Things Fall Apart", such a transition represented a particular threat. The main character is a very gender-role oriented male, Okonkwo, for instance, reflected on the colonial enterprise and remarked that the white man "has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart" (Achebe 124-125). Women's growing power, conferred upon them through their status acquired in trading, contested the historical notions of gender relations, summarized in the idea that, as stated by Chinua Achebe in the book says, "No matter how prosperous a man was, if he was unable to rule his women and his children (and especially his women) he was not really a man"

(Achebe 45). Trade, then, and women's role in this vital activity of Igbo society, changed gender dynamics, family relations, and the very concepts upon which Igbo culture was founded. Okonkwo's relationship with his late father shapes much of his violent and ambitious demeanour. He wants to rise above his father's legacy of spendthrift, indolent behaviour, which he views as weak and therefore effeminate. This association is inherent in the clan's language—the narrator mentions that the word for a man who has not taken any of the expensive, prestige-indicating titles is agbala, which also means "woman." But, for the most part, Okonkwo's idea of manliness is not the clan's. He associates masculinity with aggression and feels that anger is the only emotion that he should display. For this reason, he frequently beats his wives, even threatening to kill them from time to time. We are told that he does not think about things, and we see him act rashly and impetuously. Yet others who are in no way effeminate do not behave in this way. Obierika, unlike Okonkwo, "was a man who thought about things." Whereas Obierika refuses to accompany the men on the trip to kill Ikemefuna, Okonkwo not only volunteers to join the party that will execute his surrogate son but also violently stabs him with his machete simply because he is afraid of appearing weak.

Okonkwo's seven-year exile from his village only reinforces his notion that men are stronger than women. While in exile, he lives among the kinsmen of his motherland but resents the period in its entirety. The exile is his opportunity to get in touch with his feminine side and to acknowledge his maternal ancestors, but he keeps reminding himself that his maternal kinsmen are not as warlike and fierce as he remembers the villagers of Umuofia to be. He blames them for their preference of negotiation, compliance, and avoidance over anger and bloodshed. According to Okonkwo, his uncle Uchendu exemplifies this opposition to war mode.

Much of the traditional Igbo life presented in this novel revolves around structured gender roles. Essentially all of Igbo life is gendered, from the crops that men and women grow, to characterization of crimes. In Igbo culture, women are the weaker sex, but are also endowed with qualities that make them worthy of worship, like the ability to bear children. The dominant role for women is: first, to make a pure bride for an honourable man, second, to be a submissive wife, and third, to bear many children. The ideal man provides for his family materially and has prowess on the battlefield. The protagonist in the novel is extremely concerned with being hyper-masculine and devalues everything feminine, leaving him rather unbalanced. Much of the gender theme in the book centers around the idea of balance between masculine and feminine forces – body and mind/soul, emotionality and rationality, mother and father. If one is in imbalance, it makes the whole system haywire.

The Igbo women of Nigeria contribute their quota towards bettering the lot of Africa despite all that worked and still work against them. To these women, globalization has proven to be positive as it has not affected who they are or their traditional roles as African Women. Nigerian history is interesting in the pre-colonial age. Nigeria was a stateless society. The leaders were usually a hierarchy of elders and age groups. The occupation of Igbo women was mainly local trade, farming, pottery, fishing etc. The people actively participated in providing for their families and in the welfare of their communities. For the Igbo, sex and gender are different, while sex is biologically determined, gender is determined by role. So some womer

(masculine women) simply because of the roles they play in the society and not because of their sexual acts. Sex determined by sex organs and therefore biologically determined, determined Nwoke (man) and Nwanyi (woman). Gender on the other hand, determined by role plays, is constructed culturally and socially. That defined male/masculine as Oke and female/feminine as Nne. Early contact with the whites established legal commerce, slave trade, Christianity and education, and imposition of the "Victorian gender ethos" on Igbo women. Women's status reduced to those of children and they could not inherit, must submit to their husbands, only male heads of households, no more dual-sex political system, no more religious roles, suppression of the voice of Igbo women.

The New Gender Construct laid grounds for political, occupational, educational reforms. Sex and gender roles combined. Male meant man; and female meant woman. Men trained in a way that facilitated their taking over from the Colonial Masters. Women trained in occupations that enabled them to attend hands and feet to their families mainly their husbands and children. Occupations included seamstresses, teachers, housewives, childcare, cooking, etc. There was more advanced technology. Colonialism enabled men to delve into areas that were predominantly women's like farming, palm oil production, salt mining, etc. Also, natural resources, new jobs and migration to other places. They had a good rapport with the colonial masters and the Igbo had the majority of workers in many government offices and also occupied the highest ranks in the military. The British rule in Nigeria also made way for more educated Igbo women. There were more Igbo women in the public sectors than men. The colonial period helped the Igbo people to escape from slavery. They learnt to speak broken English and Igala languages. The people continued to serve their community and the colonial masters with new linguistic skills. Igbo Women have been able to hold up and find their place in the History of both Nigeria and Africa. They have become very active in the political, economic, and social arenas. The Igbo has produced many women lawyers, Professors, Teachers, Engineers, CEOs of businesses and enterprises, many of them have occupied different positions in the government etc. Statistically, Igbo women in the US are all educated people. The Igbo men who come here usually have first degrees or at least high school diplomas and they marry equally educated Igbo women who can easily fit in. Most Igbo women are high earners and even earn more than their husbands. Thus they contribute more in most cases to the economic development of their people.

Though a lot has changed in the social status of the Igbo woman, their roles have not changed as they continue to be wives, mothers, daughters and sisters and they continue to play their traditional roles of being their families' economists and managers both in their natal communities and communities of marriage. The Igbo women do not just lie down and bemoan themselves and their situations, they have turned so many tragedies into victories and are using globalization and its agents as strong and positive tools to advance the causes of the Igbo nation and Nigeria as a whole.

Colonialism in "Things Fall Apart"

It is undeniable that literature, aside from depicting the creative imagination of humanity, has also served to record the various things which has happened to humanity

in the course of history. Though it is known that literature has fictitious elements in it, it also quite known that literature has been able to employ certain truths about society and the world at large by the incorporating facts in its pages. Thus, while literature has managed to be about fairy tales or romantic novels and others, it has also managed to depict serious issues concerning the psychology of being a child, the characteristics of the Victorian era and even global issues like racism, capitalism and colonialism. In fact, the latter issue, which is on colonialism, is what will be explicated in this essay as to how it has affected a certain group in Africa. In the famous novel of Chinua Achebe entitled Things Fall Apart, it can be seen how colonialism has affected people and has managed to pull them apart in many directions that it even eventually destroyed relationships of families, friends and tribes. Though the novel is a work of fiction, there is a certain truth in how colonialism has indeed affected people to the point that the life of the protagonist is destroyed and resulted to his own death.

Achebe's novel can mostly be seen as a narrative on the life of a single member in an African tribe, but on a bigger and deeper perspective, the book embodies the collective situation and life of the African people at the time wherein outside forces are trying to change the traditional practices of the people. In the novel, the strong warrior by the name of Okonkwo is depicted as the protagonist and his various struggles concerning his tribe and the changing times are shown. Okonkwo is heralded as a most apt and talented farmer from the clan of Umuofia and has become quite known for having such positive and appreciated traits. However, Okonkwo is having a hard time in trying to reign in his personality as he refrains from becoming like his father while trying to keep with the traditions and culture of his people. In the end though, as the English colonizers try to teach the people regarding the “truth” on God and certain practices, Okonkwo realizes that he cannot keep up with the changing times. He takes his own life in the end as the remaining people of his clan fully embrace change and the new things that the colonizers are teaching them.

In the novel, it is quite evident that Okonkwo is the central figure. However, his life is not the central point or theme in the novel. Instead, the theme relies on how the battle of tradition versus modernization takes place in the form of the culture of Okonkwo's clan and the teachings of the English colonizers; as how Gikandi (2000) puts it:

The central theme of the novel is what happens to the values that define Okonkwo's cultural community, and his own sense of moral order, when the institutions he and fought so hard to sustain collapse in the face of European colonialism (ix).

It may be seen that European colonialism is something which is vile as it has totally destroyed the culture and traditions of a group of people which in turn destroyed their identity. However, in how Okonkwo and his tribesmen practice their tradition, it can be seen that colonialism also has good effects since it has stripped the rather inhumane and illogical practices of the people such as how they exalt cultural violence. This type of violence can be seen in certain practices they had like “ritual sacrifices, punishment for crimes, and other kinds of communal sanctioned violence” which is normal and accepted by the clan but is not entirely humane to the missionaries (Hoegberg, 1999, 69). Of all the positive effects of colonialism as appearing in the novel and more than the economic progress it brings, it is the lessening of ignorance of the cla

avenue for new knowledge and erasure of such violent cultural practices which is more poignant and more impacting.

On the other hand, colonialism has also had its negative and appalling effects by how the missionaries and the European officers have completely stripped the identity of the tribe and more than forced them to accept the new teachings while eradicating the tribe's previous teachings with the argument that such things were not true. It is not a matter of whether such traditions are true or not—what matters is that a person practices ethical customs that does not strip away the basic human right of anybody. Ironically, while colonialism wanted to put forth new knowledge on "true" faith and eradicating unlawful customs, the nature of forcing the Christian faith towards people who are reluctant to accept them can also be judged as an unlawful act.

In conclusion, there are many aspects of how colonialism can affect a certain group or certain person as how it was portrayed in Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart. Economically and socially, colonialism shows its effects by the growing opportunities given to people, making them more prosperous and more open to a wide avenue of profits and discovery. On the aspect of culture, religion and traditional practices, it is inevitable that those things take a complete turn for change as people would tend to be more open or forced to new knowledge and information, making them re-think on the previous things they do know and practice. These aspects in turn affect the most important facet of the person or the people which is the psychological aspect—in trying to influence how a person or the group thinks, it will pave the way and become the determiner if there would be a chance for a change to occur. The effects of colonialism can be seen in two ways as with all things in this world, as either positive or negative and it should be accepted as such. While colonialism showed that something as important to the people like tradition and culture can be erased or changed, it is undeniable that colonialism has also brought on positive changes for the people. In the end though, what matters is that it is important to not lose one's sense of identity in the process of change and still keep one's own pride in heritage, culture and tradition—while people embrace modernity, one should never forget one's history.

'Things Fall Apart' : Case against imperialism

When Chinua Achebe showed the horrors of colonial rule in 'Things Fall Apart,' the narrative easily became the African story that impinged itself on our consciousness. The novel epitomized the case against imperialism

The death of the renowned Nigerian writer, Chinua Achebe, has thrust one of the most popular African books in the news. Although Achebe wrote multiple books and produced several works of scholarship, 'Things Fall Apart' acted as the catalyst for his popularity, sending the Nigerian writer to the highest plateaus of academic fame. How did 'Things Fall Apart,' a book written about the Igbo people in Nigeria, become an explanatory voice for colonially oppressed societies all over Africa? The literary tenor used by Achebe to write 'Things Fall Apart,' is the first reason behind the book's popularity. Any exhaustive commentary on 'Things Fall Apart,' must recognize the book's flair for weaving Igbo words and phrases with the English language. By partly Africanizing the English language

to tell an African story, Achebe was able to show a pre-colonial Igbo society equipped with the ability for self-rule. Through the book's main character, Okonkwo, Achebe showed how pre-colonial Igbo society dealt with crime and punishment. When Okonkwo committed what could be termed in today's legal systems as manslaughter, the response from the oracles at Umuofia was swift and judicious. Once it became clear that Okonkwo's accidentally-discharged gun was responsible for killing a citizen of the land, the oracles pronounced a verdict, which ordered Okonkwo's seven-year exile from the land he loved. Despite his enormous stature in Igbo society, Okonkwo was subjected to the rule of law through a cultural edict, forcing a seemingly untouchable man into seven anguishing years of exile.

Depiction of a politically organised people: - By the time Okonkwo served his seven year sentence in banishment, Umuofia-his beloved land was already chafing under the assault of imperialism. European mercenaries, deceptively casting themselves as 'missionaries,'were already in Umuofia to carry out a frontal assault on the political, cultural and social institutions which held Okonkwo's people together. The tragic story of Ikemefuna, which revealed the truest depths of Okonkwo's compulsive feelings of insecurity, also showed us another feature of Igbo society. Contrary to racist falsities, most of which opine that pre-colonial African societies were clusters of disorganized tribes, Achebe's 'Things Fall Apart' proved otherwise. Governance and conflict-resolution worked in tandem in Okonkwo's Umuofia. When the land of Umuofia felt offended by the killing of its citizen in a neighbouring jurisdiction, the young Ikemefuna was handed over—through an emissary - to the people of Umuofia as a symbol peace. Throughout his short lifespan, the young Ikemefuna served as a conciliatory symbol from the clan which sued for peace. Indeed, Ikemefuna's presence in Okonkwo's household was seen in Umuofia as a gesture of peace. There were times when the people of Umuofia waged war, but only after the failure of pacifism. Similarly, Europeans—from the Peace of Westphalia in the 17th century to the emergence of Nazi Germany in the last century—did go to war on multiple occasions when conflict-resolution proved futile. Despite all the bloody episodes in its history, imperial Europe did justify the conquest of Africa by postulating that 'civilization' is an exclusive, Western virtue! 'Things Fall Apart' is both a refutation of, and a counterblast to, the racist theories used to demean pre-colonial Africa as a heathenish land without God or government! Chinua Achebe successfully showed that before things literally fell apart, Africans lived under various systems of government overseen by the rule of law.

The multiple faces of 'Things Fall Apart': - Apart from its utility as an African response to European imperialism, 'Things Fall Apart' has other uses in academia. The book has proven itself as a work of scholarship usable in multiple, academic disciplines. Prescribed in some African countries as a literature book, 'Things Fall Apart' has also been used in American universities as a sociology book. Additionally, "Things Fall Apart" can lend itself to the voracity of a historian because book deals with the political, cultural and social developments of a people, whose history was perverted by foreigners.

Sociologically speaking, 'Things Fall Apart' deals with the behavioural patterns of a society that suffered a civilizational eclipse when attacked from outside. Lastly, 'Things Fall Apart' has been internationally used as a literature textbook because its European and African characters have stirred a lot of pensiveness among

Europeans have spent centuries, trying to justify their uninvited presence in Africa. With its sociological teachings, 'Things Fall Apart' can be used to ask a specific question: Why did Europeans force their so-called "civilizing mission" on a people who were readily spiritual and culturally sure of themselves? Even today, in the twenty-first century, the colonial rampages seen in 'Things Fall Apart," continue in several guises, mostly through Western agencies like the IMF and international trade, which has been booby-trapped enough to be called 'unfair trade.' There is a reason why things have fallen apart in Africa: a rape victim—psychologists say—could live with the trauma of defilement for an endlessly long time! When the infliction of horror is both physical and psychological, the ensuing trauma can be eternally destabilizing. Little wonder the subversive presence of Europeans in Umuofia, disoriented Okonkwo so much that he committed suicide. Today's African countries are a bigger representation of Okonkwo's Umuofia, where normalcy was replaced with the chaos unleashed by European colonialists.

The destructiveness of imperialism: - Colonial rule lasted well over a century in some African countries. Britain pompously took over Sierra Leone and kept the country as a personal property for at least 150 years! Colonial rule was very thorough in its destruction of Africa, both from a psychological and socio-economic perspective. Land-seizures and the total usurpation of African authority are few of the horrors committed in Africa by colonial Europe. By the time Europeans pulled out of Africa in the 1960s, the damage was already done. After a century of colonial degradation, the skills needed to run a modern, nation-state, became dangerously scarce in the newly-independent African States. Portuguese colonial rule, for example, proved so damaging that Africans were NOT allowed to acquire any skills other than those needed to make them serve as cooks and servants. When Portugal grudgingly pulled out of Angola in 1975, the newly-independent Angolan state staggered with incompetence, nervously searching for teachers, doctors and the managerial competence needed to run a country. Colonial rule was the crime that came close to enslaving the African all over again. When Chinua Achebe showed the horrors of colonial rule in 'Things Fall Apart,' the narrative easily became the African story that impinged itself on our consciousness. Chinua Achebe has passed onto the land of our silent ones. However, the African story he told in 'Things Fall Apart,' will always remain piercingly loud.

Okonkwo as a tragic hero in "Things Fall Apart"

In Chinua Achebe's novel "Things Fall Apart" Okonkwo is a tragic hero. Aristotle's Poetics defines a Tragic Hero as a good man of high status who displays a tragic flaw 'hamartia' and experiences a dramatic reversal 'peripeteia', as well as an intense moment of recognition 'anagnorisis'. Okonkwo is a leader and hardworking member of the Igbo community of Umuofia whose tragic flaw is his great fear of weakness and failure. Okonkwo's fall from grace in the Igbo community and eventual suicide, makes Okonkwo a tragic hero by Aristotle's definition.

Okonkwo is a man of action, a man of war and a member of high status in the Igbo village. He holds the prominent position of village clansman, due to the fact that, he had shown incredible prowess in two intertribal wars. Okonkwo's hard work had made him a wealthy farmer and a recognized individual amongst the nine villages of Umuofia and

beyond. Okonkwo's tragic flaw is not that he was afraid of work, but rather his fear of weakness and failure that stems from his father's, Unoka, unproductive life and disgraceful death.

"...his whole life was dominated by fear, the fear of failure and weakness....... It was not external but lay deep within himself. It was the fear of himself, lest he should be found to resemble his father."

Okonkwo's father is a lazy, carefree man whom has a reputation of being poor and his wife and children have just barely enough to eat... they swear never to lend him any more money because he never paid back. Unoka has never taught Okonkwo what is right and wrong, and as a result Okonkwo has to interpret how to be a good man. Okonkwo's self-interpretation leads him to conclude that a good man is someone who is the exact opposite of his father and therefore anything that his father does is weak and unnecessary.

Okonkwo's fear leads him to treat members of his family harshly, in particular his son, Nwoye. Okonkwo often wonders how he, a man of great strength and work ethic, could have had a son who is degenerate and effeminate. Okonkwo things that,

"No matter how prosperous a man was,if he was unable to rule his women and his children ... he was not really a man"

Okonkwo wrestles with his fear that any sign of weakness will cause him to lose control of his family, position in the village, and even himself. Like many heroes of classical tragedy, Okonkwo's tragic flaw, fear, also makes him excessively proud. Okonkwo's downfall is a result of the changes created by the coming of the British Colonisers to Igbo. The introduction of the Colonisers into the novel causes Okonkwo's tragic flaw to be exacerbated. Okonkwo construes change as weakness, and as a result of his interpretation, Okonkwo only knows how to react to change through anger and strength. He derives great satisfaction, "hubris" or proud arrogance, from the fact that he is a traditional, self-made man and thinks that to change would mean submitting to an outside force (Christianity).

Following Okonkwo's seven year exile, the village Okonkwo once knew has changed due to the influence of Christianity and the influence of the British missionaries and officers. Okonkwo's initial reaction is to arm the clan against the Colonisers and drive the British people out of Igbo.

"He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart" (152).

Okonkwo has always used his strength and courage to protect the community from destabilizing forces, and as Okonkwo is a traditional man, the introduction of Christianity poses a threat to all the values, morals and beliefs he sought to protect. Okonkwo resists change at every step and instead resorts to violence toward anything he perceived as a threat to his culture or values.

Okonkwo's arrogant pride makes him believe that the clan leaders would eventually reunite the clan and drive the British Colonisers out of Umuofia. Hoping that the clan will follow his lead, Okonkwo beheads a messenger of the British who is sent to break up a village meeting regarding the possibility of going to war. However, the clan instead of following Okonkwo's symbolic action is shocked by Okonkwo's brutality. Okonkwo recognizes ("anagnorisis") that Umuofia would not go to war, because the clan "had broken into tumult instead of action". Okonkwo knows that he must now face his disgrace alone.

The Igbo culture had made Okonkwo a hero, but the Igbo culture changed with the coming of the British Colonisers. Okonkwo, a hero, would rather die than be humiliated by his enemies and by committing suicide Okonkwo prevented the European Colonisers from getting revenge. Aristotle's statement, "Man, when perfect, is the best of animals, but, when separated from law and justice, he is the worst of all", embodies the rise and fall of Okonkwo in Chinua Achebe's novel. Okonkwo, like many tragic heroes before him, maybe a hero but his tragic flaw prevents him from achieving true greatness as a human being.

Use of Language in Things Fall Apart

Writers in Third World countries that were formerly colonies of European nations debate among themselves about their duty to write in their native language rather than in the language of their former colonizer. Some of these writers argue that writing in their native language is imperative because cultural subtleties and meanings are lost in translation. For these writers, a "foreign" language can never fully describe their culture.

Choosing a Language: - Achebe maintains the opposite view. In a 1966 essay reprinted in his book Morning Yet on Creation Day, he says that, by using English, he presents "a new voice coming out of Africa, speaking of African experience in a world-wide language." He recommends that the African writer use English "in a way that brings out his message best without altering the language to the extent that its value as a medium of international exchange will be lost. [The writer] should aim at fashioning out an English which is at once universal and able to carry his peculiar experience." Achebe accomplishes this goal by innovatively introducing Igbo language, proverbs, metaphors, speech rhythms, and ideas into a novel written in English.

Achebe agrees, however, with many of his fellow African writers on one point: The African writer must write for a social purpose. In contrast to Western writers and artists who create art for art's sake, many African writers create works with one mission in mind — to re-establish their own national culture in the postcolonial era. In a 1964 statement, also published in Morning Yet on Creation Day, Achebe comments that

African people did not hear of culture for the first time from Europeans. . . . their societies were not mindless, but frequently had a philosophy of great depth and value and beauty, . . . they had poetry, and above all, they had dignity. It is this dignity that African people all but lost during the colonial period, and it is this that they must now regain.

To further his aim of disseminating African works to a non-African audience, Achebe became the founding editor for a series on African literature — the African Writers Series — for the publishing firm Heinemann.

The Use of English: - Achebe presents the complexities and depths of an African culture to readers of other cultures as well as to readers of his own culture. By using English — in which he has been proficient since childhood — he reaches many more readers and has a much greater literary impact than he would by writing in a language such as Igbo. Writers who write in their native language must eventually allow their works to be translated, often into English, so readers outside the culture can learn about it.

Yet by using English, Achebe faces a problem. How can he present the African heritage and culture in a language that can never describe it adequately? Indeed, one of the primary tasks of Things Fall Apart is to confront this lack of understanding between the Igbo culture and the colonialist culture. In the novel, the Igbo ask how the white man can call Igbo customs bad when he does not even speak the Igbo language. An understanding of Igbo culture can only be possible when the outsider can relate to the Igbo language and terminology.

Achebe solves this problem by incorporating elements of the Igbo language into his novel. By incorporating Igbo words, rhythms, language, and concepts into an English text about his culture, Achebe goes a long way to bridge a cultural divide.

The Igbo vocabulary is merged into the text almost seamlessly so the reader understands the meaning of most Igbo words by their context. Can any attentive reader of Things Fall Apart remain unfamiliar with words and concepts represented by chi, egwugwu, ogbanje, and obi? Such Igbo terms as chi and ogbanje are essentially untranslatable, but by using them in the context of his story, Achebe helps the non-Igbo reader identify with and relate to this complex Igbo culture.

Chi, for example, represents a significant, complex Igbo concept that Achebe repeatedly refers to by illustrating the concept in various contexts throughout the story. Achebe translates chi as personal god when he first mentions Unoka's bad fortune. As the book progresses, it gradually picks up other nuances. As discussed in the Analysis section for Chapter 3, the chi concept is more complex than a personal deity or even fate, another frequently used synonym. Chi suggests elements of the Hindu concept of karma, the concept of the soul in some Christian denominations, and the concept of individuality in some mystical philosophies. The understanding of chi and its significance in Igbo culture grows as one progresses through the book.

Another example of Achebe's incorporation of Igbo elements is his frequent reference to traditional Igbo proverbs and tales. These particular elements give Things Fall Apart an authentic African voice. The Igbo culture is fundamentally an oral one — that is, "Among the Igbo, the art of conversation is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten" (Chapter1). To provide an authentic feel for Igbo culture would be impossible without also allowing the proverbs to play a significant role in the novel. And despite the foreign origin of these proverbs and tale

relate very well to many of them. They are woven smoothly into their context and require only occasional explanation or elaboration. These proverbs and tales are, in fact, quite similar in spirit to Western sayings and fables.

Modern-day readers of this novel not only relate easily to traditional proverbs and tales but also sympathize with the problems of Okonkwo, Nwoye, and other characters. Achebe has skillfully developed his characters, and even though they live in a different era and a very different culture, one can readily understand their motivations and their feelings because they are universal and timeless.

Speech patterns and rhythms are occasionally used to represent moments of high emotion and tension. Consider the sound of the drums in the night in Chapter 13 (go-di-di-go-go-di-go); the call repeated several times to unite a gathering followed by its group response, first described in Chapter 2 (Umuofia kwenu. . .Yaa!); the agonized call of the priestess seeking Ezinma in Chapter 11 (Agbala do-o-o-o!); the repetitious pattern of questions and answers in the isa-ifi marriage ritual in Chapter14; the long narrated tale of Tortoise in Chapter 11; and the excerpts from songs in several chapters.

Achebe adds another twist in his creative use of language by incorporating a few examples of Pidgin English. Pidgin is a simplified form of language used for communicating between groups of people who normally speak different languages. Achebe uses only a few Pidgin words or phrases — tie-tie (to tie); kotma (a crude form of court messenger); and Yes, sah — just enough to suggest that a form of Pidgin English was being established. As colonialists, the British were adept at installing Pidgin English in their new colonies. Unfortunately, Pidgin sometimes takes on characteristics of master-servant communication; it can sound patronizing on the one hand, and subservient on the other. Furthermore, using the simplified language can become an easy excuse for not learning the standard languages for which it substitutes.

Achebe's use of Igbo language, speech patterns, proverbs, and richly drawn characters creates an authentic African story that effectively bridges the cultural and historical gap between the reader and the Igbo. Things Fall Apart is a groundbreaking work for many reasons, but particularly because Achebe's controlled use of the Igbo language in an English novel extends the boundaries of what is considered English fiction. Achebe's introduction of new forms and language into a traditional (Western) narrative structure to communicate unique African experiences forever changed the definition of world literature.

Pronunciation of Igbo Names and Words: - Like Chinese, the Igbo language is a tonal one; that is, differences in the actual voice pitch and the rise or fall of a word or phrase can produce different meanings. In Chapter 16, for example, Achebe describes how the missionary's translator, though an Igbo, cannot pronounce the Mbanto Igbo dialect: "Instead of saying 'myself' he always said 'my buttocks.'" (The form k means strength while k means buttocks.)

Igbo names usually represent meanings — often entire ideas. Some names reflect the qualities that a parent wishes to bestow on a child; for example, Ikemefuna means my power should not be dispersed. Other names reflect the time, area

circumstances to which a child is born; for example, Okoye means man born on Oye Day, the second day of the Igbo week. And Igbo parents also give names to honour someone or something else; for instance, Nneka means mother is supreme.

Prior to Nigerian independence in 1960, the spelling of Igbo words was not standardized. Thus the word Igbo is written as Ibo, the pre-1960 spelling throughout Things Fall Apart. The new spellings reflect a more accurate understanding and pronunciation of Igbo words. The List of Characters includes a pronunciation that uses equivalent English syllables for most of the main characters' names.

To The Lighthouse

Twentieth Century Novel

The Novel as the Modern Epic
The stream of Consciousness Novel
The modern Psychological Novel

Introduction: Modern novels have taken place of the ancient epics. The magnitude of epic is not its volume or narrative enlargement; rather it is expansion of thought and perception. An epic reflects the conscience of an age, its life style and thought equilibrium. Thus, from Homer to Milton the epics become the carriage of social, moral and communal representation. Later, the same search of age – consciousness is done, at least tried, through the dramas. The dramas have their limitation in its time frame and dramaturgic setting. Even Shakespeare fails to cross these limitations. After many currents and cross currents of prose-lyrics become multi-faceted, many – sided, complex and abundantly rich in it astonishing variety. The modern novelists are reading the conscience of his characters through the medium of his own, and by the process the dimensional mirror of novel is reflecting an age conscience which we have already read in epics. Modern novel is truly the 'comic prose epic'. (Fielding)

Dialogism: Mikhael Bakhtin has pointed out a singular characteristic of the novel – the dialogic quality. The traditional epics compact diverse elements in life and looks upon humanity with a vaster sweep of vision. The novels, however, actively assimilate aspects of life – crisis, correlation and combination – out of which a dimensional thought is expressed. In the 19th century, Dickens and Balzac have successfully depleted the multidimensional qualities in their pragmatic fictional works.

In all these efforts there have been a giant leap into the terrain of humanism but yet the possibility of grossness looms large. The totality of the storyline seems here mechanical – a piling of facts, elements, incidents and characters. Here is no harmony, rather assimilation. Henry James thus accuses these traditional

monsters'. Thus through the passage of James, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Tomas Mann there comes an inwardness in the novel and give birth to the stream of consciousness novel.

The Stream of consciousness Technique in Fiction: A withdrawal from the external phenomena into flickering half shades of the author's private world is the basic pattern of stream of consciousness novel. It occupies with time, subjectivity, inwardness, absence of action, plot and catastrophe. The stream of consciousness novel does not adhere to the concept of reality. From the Freudian and Youngian concept here the reality lies not in the outer actions, but in the inner working of the human mind, in the inner perceptions. Consciousness is a constant flow, not jointed, and not chopped up in bits. It is the stream of thought, of consciousness, or of subjective life. By this technique, the novelists try to catch the flow of life before it hardens into intellectual concepts and mechanical habits.

The novel based on this technique is mostly psychological. Emphasis lies on the individual and that too on the inner working of his mind. There is definite change in the concept of reality. There is decay of plot, decay of character. Actually the entire method of characterization is changed. The 'stream of consciousness' technique novelists record the impressions upon the mind of the character. It is the interior monologue of the character.

The modern novel is free and frank treatment of sex, love and marriage. The pre occupation of the modern novel with sex themes is very much due to the theories of psychologists like Freud and Havelock Ellis and the frustration, boredom and brutality caused by the two devastating world wars. The writers' life of Kafka, James Joyce, and Henry James rightfully exhibits this.

The novels written by Stream of Consciousness writers clearly reflect the decay of plot and there is a tendency of discontinuity instead of continuity of action. They do not particularly care about neatly finishing off a given action, following it through the fall of the curtain. In short, these novels are like incomplete sentence. The great modern novels like Ulysses by Joyce or Pilgrimages by Dorothy Richardson are still stories, but they are stories without an ending, and the characteristic modern novel is a story without an ending. Despite of these, these novels are a serious art form which is well constructed in its aesthetic unity. Henry James, Conrad, Mrs. Woolf and other novelists have given careful thought to the aesthetics of the novel and propounded their own theory.

A few notable writers of Stream of consciousness novels: Undoubtedly Dorothy Richardson is the English writer who is the pioneer in this field and who presents stream of consciousness writing at its purest. But among the other writers Mrs Woolf is notable writer whose Mrs Dalloway and To The Lighthouse are her immortal creation. Her Mrs. Dalloway is the interior monologue of Clarrisa Dalloway whose party remains a delusive notion of our culture. Clarrisa in her stream of thought finds out the hoax meaningless sociological norms and customs. The suicide of Septimus has no impact on anybody even to Dr Brads who instigated her to commit suicide. The crisis of the society haunts in this novel.

James Joyce's Ulysses is a masterpiece in this genre. The hero of the novel Leopold Bloom and his monologue of a single day in the slum of Dublin city constitut

novel. Bloom is loitering to and fro, interacts with different persons – particularly with his wife and affectionate son like youth Stephen Dedalus. Within these twenty four hours of stream of conscience the three thousand years history of European culture, creative and experimental assimilate into a harmonious whole. His other novel A Portrait also roughly defines the stream of consciousness in the opening and closing pages of the novel. The emphasis in the stream of consciousness method is on the psychic being of the characters and the associate mode is kept in the forefront of Stephen's consciousness.

Virginia Woolf's To The Lighthouse is an experiment towards a new method of satisfactory re-creating the reality inherent in human personality. The Pilgrimage by Dorothy Richardson is without plot, comedy – tragedy, love interest or catastrophe. Here is only Miriam Henderson, living from day to day, experiencing, feeling, and reacting to the stimuli of the outside world of people and things.

Conclusion: The stream of Conscience is also called the psychological novel, the novel of subjectivity, the novel of the interior monologue. Enriched by the philosophic thinkers like James, Freud, Jung, Adler and Bergson, the novelists like Proust, James Joyce, Dorothy Richardson and Virginia Woolf preoccupy with the subjectivity, inwardness, absence of plot and action and to the deepest recesses of the human psychology. But above all these novels as an organized symmetry have tried to rich the 'dialogism' and 'carnivalesque' – the two true essence of any epic writing.

Virginia Woolf

Virginia Woolf was born on January 25, 1882, a descendant of one of Victorian England's most prestigious literary families. Her father, Sir Leslie Stephen, was the editor of the Dictionary of National Biography and was married to the daughter of the writer William Thackeray. Woolf grew up among the most important and influential British intellectuals of her time and received free rein to explore her father's library. Her personal connections and abundant talent soon opened doors for her. Woolf wrote that she found herself in "a position where it was easier on the whole to be eminent than obscure." Almost from the beginning, her life was a precarious balance of extraordinary success and mental instability.

As a young woman, Woolf wrote for the prestigious Times Literary Supplement, and as an adult she quickly found herself at the centre of England's most important literary community. Known as the "Bloomsbury Group" after the section of London in which its members lived, this group of writers, artists, and philosophers emphasized nonconformity, aesthetic pleasure, and intellectual freedom, and included such luminaries as the painter Lytton Strachey, the novelist E. M. Forster, the composer Benjamin Britten, and the economist John Maynard Keynes. Working among such an inspirational group of peers and possessing an incredible talent in her own right, Woolf published her most famous novels by the mid-1920s, including The Voyage Out, Mrs. Dalloway, Orlando, and To the Lighthouse. With these works she reached the pinnacle of her profession.

Woolf's life was equally dominated by mental illness. Her parents died when she was young—her mother in 1895 and her father in 1904—and she was prone to intense, terrible headaches and emotional breakdowns. After her father's death, she attempted

suicide, throwing herself out a window. Though she married Leonard Woolf in 1912 and loved him deeply, she was not entirely satisfied romantically or sexually. For years she sustained an intimate relationship with the novelist Vita Sackville-West. Late in life, Woolf became terrified by the idea that another nervous breakdown was close at hand, one from which she would not recover. On March 28, 1941, she wrote her husband a note stating that she did not wish to spoil his life by going mad. She then drowned herself in the River Ouse.

Woolf's writing bears the mark of her literary pedigree as well as her struggle to find meaning in her own unsteady existence. Written in a poised, understated, and elegant style, her work examines the structures of human life, from the nature of relationships to the experience of time. Yet her writing also addresses issues relevant to her era and literary circle. Throughout her work she celebrates and analyses the Bloomsbury values of aestheticism, feminism, and independence. Moreover, her stream-of-consciousness style was influenced by, and responded to, the work of the French thinker Henri Bergson and the novelists Marcel Proust and James Joyce.

This style allows the subjective mental processes of Woolf's characters to determine the objective content of her narrative. In To the Lighthouse (1927), one of her most experimental works, the passage of time, for example, is modulated by the consciousness of the characters rather than by the clock. The events of a single afternoon constitute over half the book, while the events of the following ten years are compressed into a few dozen pages. Many readers of To the Lighthouse, especially those who are not versed in the traditions of modernist fiction, find the novel strange and difficult. Its language is dense and the structure amorphous. Compared with the plot-driven Victorian novels that came before it, To the Lighthouse seems to have little in the way of action. Indeed, almost all of the events take place in the characters' minds.

Although To the Lighthouse is a radical departure from the nineteenth-century novel, it is, like its more traditional counterparts, intimately interested in developing characters and advancing both plot and themes. Woolf's experimentation has much to do with the time in which she lived: the turn of the century was marked by bold scientific developments. Charles Darwin's theory of evolution undermined an unquestioned faith in God that was, until that point, nearly universal, while the rise of psychoanalysis, a movement led by Sigmund Freud, introduced the idea of an unconscious mind. Such innovation in ways of scientific thinking had great influence on the styles and concerns of contemporary artists and writers like those in the Bloomsbury Group. To the Lighthouse exemplifies Woolf's style and many of her concerns as a novelist. With its characters based on her own parents and siblings, it is certainly her most autobiographical fictional statement, and in the characters of Mr. Ramsay, Mrs. Ramsay, and Lily Briscoe, Woolf offers some of her most penetrating explorations of the workings of the human consciousness as it perceives and analyses, feels and interacts.

About To the Lighthouse

To the Lighthouse (1927) is widely considered one of the most important works of the twentieth century. With this ambitious novel, Woolf established herself as one of the leading writers of modernism. The novel develops innovative literary techniques to reveal women's experience and to provide an alternative to male-dominated views of

reality. On the surface, the novel tells the story of the Ramsay family and the guests who come to stay with them at their vacation home on the Hebrides Islands in Scotland. At its heart, however, the novel is a meditation on time and how humans reckon with its relentless passage.

The novel was written and published during one of the most dense and impressive periods of development in English literary history. The modernist period gave rise to many ground-breaking and enduring masterworks, such as T.S. Eliot's The Waste Land, William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury, and James Joyce's Ulysses. This was also a period of rapid intellectual achievement, and Woolf's emphasis on consciousness and a character's inner lives is consistent with the scientific and psychological ideas posited at the time. As Sigmund Freud explored theories of consciousness and sub consciousness, Virginia Woolf wrote a novel that focuses not on the events of the external world but on the richness and complexity of mental interiority.

Thus, to convey this sense of human consciousness, Woolf's narrative departs from the traditional plot-driven structure as it is often expressed by an objective, third-party narrative. Instead she incorporates highly innovative literary devices to capture the thought process, using in particular stream of consciousness and free indirect discourse. Given that the novel is defined by subjectivity, it focuses on the subjectivity of reality, experience, and time. The novel also represents the interweaving of various perspectives and individual trains of thought that, strung together, constitute a cohesive whole.

Character List

Mrs. Ramsay: - Mrs. Ramsay is the loving and hospitable wife of Mr. Ramsay. She is highly domestic, focusing on her roles as mother and wife. She deeply admires her husband, although she cannot tell him that she loves him. She is responsible and strong, but she dies unexpectedly in her fifties.

Mr. Ramsay: - Mr. Ramsay is dominated by rationality and scientific reason. He is in search of truth and greatness, and he fears that he is rather inadequate for not achieving his aims. Neither affectionate nor sentimental, he nevertheless inspires admiration in his wife, although she becomes irritated with his insensitivity.

Lily Briscoe: - A young, unmarried painter friend of the Ramsays. She is extremely fond of Mrs. Ramsay and feels a profound sense of emptiness after she dies. She begins a portrait at the beginning of the novel that she cannot finish until the end, ten years later, when the Ramsays reach the Lighthouse.

James Ramsay: - The youngest Ramsay child, James is six years old when the book begins. He adores his mother and is violently resentful of his father. He enjoys cutting images out of magazines and wants desperately to go to the Lighthouse when he is young.

Paul Rayley: - A young friend of the Ramsays, visiting them at their summer home, Paul proposes to Minta Doyle on the beach as Mrs. Ramsay wished.

Minta Doyle: - A young woman visiting the Ramsays at their summer home, Minta accepts Paul Rayley's marriage proposal.

Charles Tansley: - An odious atheist whom none of the Ramsays particularly like, Charles is one of Mr. Ramsay's philosophy pupils. He is insulting and chauvinistic, trying to discourage Lily from painting. He is often concerned with the affairs and status of others and is very self-centred. He finds Mrs. Ramsay quite beautiful and is proud to be seen walking with her.

William Bankes: - An old friend of the Ramsays visiting their summer home, William is a botanist. He is a gentle man of about 60, and Mrs. Ramsay hopes that he will marry Lily Briscoe--making thinly veiled attempts at getting them together. He and Lily remain close friends, and she trusts him deeply.

Augustus Carmichael: - An unhappy poet who takes opium and achieves little success until after World War I. Because of his controlling wife, he is not fond of Mrs. Ramsay.

Andrew Ramsay: - The oldest son of the Ramsays, Andrew accompanies Paul Rayley and Minta Doyle on their engagement walk to the beach. He is a gifted mathematician, but he dies fighting in World War I.

Jasper Ramsay: - One of the Ramsay sons. He enjoys shooting birds, which disturbs his mother, while Mr. Ramsay thinks that doing so is normal for a boy of his age.

Roger Ramsay: - One of the Ramsay sons, Roger is adventurous and most similar to his sister, Nancy.

Prue Ramsay: - Prue is the oldest of the Ramsays' daughters, and her mother expects her to be an exceptional beauty when she grows up. Although Prue marries, she dies during the following summer of an illness related to childbirth.

Rose Ramsay: - One of the Ramsay daughters, Rose is aesthetically inclined. She enjoys making beautiful arrangements and choosing her mother's jewelry.

Nancy Ramsay: - One of the Ramsay daughters, Nancy is adventurous and independent, secretly hoping for a life much different from her mother's. She does not seem domestic. She accompanies Paul Rayley and Minta Doyle on their engagement walk to the beach.

Cam Ramsay: - Cam is the Ramsays' youngest daughter. She is an energetic and mischievous child, and Mrs. Ramsay laments that she must grow up and suffer. Cam sails with James and Mr. Ramsay to the Lighthouse in the final section of the novel.

Mrs. McNab: - The witless and leering housekeeper, Mrs. McNab is asked to enter the Ramsays' home after years of disuse to open the windows and dust the bedrooms.

Macalister: - A fisherman friend who accompanies the Ramsays to the Lighthouse.

Macalister's boy: - The fisherman's son who rows the Ramsays to the Lightl

Badger: - The Ramsays' toothless dog.

Kennedy: - The Ramsays' lazy gardener.

Mrs. Bast: - A woman who comes to help Mrs. McNab clean the Ramsays' summer home during the "Time Passes" interlude.

George Bast: - Mrs. Bast's son, who also helps clean the Ramsays' house.

Mrs. Beckwith: - A visitor to the Ramsay house at the Lighthouse.

To The Lighthouse : Plot Overview

To the Lighthouse is divided into three sections: “The Window,” “Time Passes,” and “The Lighthouse.” Each section is fragmented into stream-of-consciousness contributions from various narrators.

“The Window” opens just before the start of World War I. Mr. Ramsay and Mrs. Ramsay bring their eight children to their summer home in the Hebrides (a group of islands west of Scotland). Across the bay from their house stands a large lighthouse. Six-year-old James Ramsay wants desperately to go to the lighthouse, and Mrs. Ramsay tells him that they will go the next day if the weather permits. James reacts gleefully, but Mr. Ramsay tells him coldly that the weather looks to be foul. James resents his father and believes that he enjoys being cruel to James and his siblings.

The Ramsays host a number of guests, including the dour Charles Tansley, who admires Mr. Ramsay’s work as a metaphysical philosopher. Also at the house is Lily Briscoe, a young painter who begins a portrait of Mrs. Ramsay. Mrs. Ramsay wants Lily to marry William Bankes, an old friend of the Ramsays, but Lily resolves to remain single. Mrs. Ramsay does manage to arrange another marriage, however, between Paul Rayley and Minta Doyle, two of their acquaintances.

During the course of the afternoon, Paul proposes to Minta, Lily begins her painting, Mrs. Ramsay soothes the resentful James, and Mr. Ramsay frets over his shortcomings as a philosopher, periodically turning to Mrs. Ramsay for comfort. That evening, the Ramsays host a seemingly ill-fated dinner party. Paul and Minta are late returning from their walk on the beach with two of the Ramsays’ children. Lily bristles at outspoken comments made by Charles Tansley, who suggests that women can neither paint nor write. Mr. Ramsay reacts rudely when Augustus Carmichael, a poet, asks for a second plate of soup. As the night draws on, however, these missteps right themselves, and the guests come together to make a memorable evening.

The joy, however, like the party itself, cannot last, and as Mrs. Ramsay leaves her guests in the dining room, she reflects that the event has already slipped into the past. Later, she joins her husband in the parlor. The couple sits quietly together, until Mr. Ramsay’s characteristic insecurities interrupt their peace. He wants his wife to tell him that she loves him. Mrs. Ramsay is not one to make such pronouncements, but she concedes to his point made earlier in the day that the weather will be too rough for a trip

to the lighthouse the next day. Mr. Ramsay thus knows that Mrs. Ramsay loves him. Night falls, and one night quickly becomes another.

Time passes more quickly as the novel enters the "Time Passes" segment. War breaks out across Europe. Mrs. Ramsay dies suddenly one night. Andrew Ramsay, her oldest son, is killed in battle, and his sister Prue dies from an illness related to childbirth. The family no longer vacations at its summerhouse, which falls into a state of disrepair: weeds take over the garden and spiders nest in the house. Ten years pass before the family returns. Mrs. McNab, the housekeeper, employs a few other women to help set the house in order. They rescue the house from oblivion and decay, and everything is in order when Lily Briscoe returns.

In "The Lighthouse" section, time returns to the slow detail of shifting points of view, similar in style to "The Window." Mr. Ramsay declares that he and James and Cam, one of his daughters, will journey to the lighthouse. On the morning of the voyage, delays throw him into a fit of temper. He appeals to Lily for sympathy, but, unlike Mrs. Ramsay, she is unable to provide him with what he needs. The Ramsays set off, and Lily takes her place on the lawn, determined to complete a painting she started but abandoned on her last visit. James and Cam bristle at their father's blustery behavior and are embarrassed by his constant self-pity. Still, as the boat reaches its destination, the children feel a fondness for him. Even James, whose skill as a sailor Mr. Ramsay praises, experiences a moment of connection with his father, though James so willfully resents him. Across the bay, Lily puts the finishing touch on her painting. She makes a definitive stroke on the canvas and puts her brush down, finally having achieved her vision.

"To the Lighthouse" : Historical Context

Victorian to Modern: - The period of Virginia Woolf's life spanned the transition from the Victorian to the modern world. In the nineteenth century, the industrial revolution had made Britain the 'factory to the world' and solidified its economic power. The British Empire was at the height of its power and influence. In people's daily lives the church occupied a central place, and class positions and gender roles seemed fixed. Yet between the death of Queen Victoria in 1901, when Woolf was 19, and the end of the Second World War, almost every aspect of British life changed. The impact of two world wars, prolonged economic depression in the 1930s, and the rise of the USA and the Soviet Union as rival world powers meant that by the latter half of the twentieth century, Britain had lost its global pre-eminence, and witnessed radical social, cultural, and political changes.

When Virginia Woolf was born in 1882, horses and carriages rattled past her home in Kensington; by the time she died in 1941, formations of jet aircraft roared overhead and threatened oblivion from the air. Less deadly, but no less revolutionary, the radio, the telephone and the automobile altered the rhythms and expectations of everyday life. The expansion of the voting franchise and increases in leisure time for workers meant that class divisions were weakened, and more of the population than ever before had a voice in politics and a share of cultural life. The creation of a welfare state in 1945 represented to many in Britain a clean break from a world organized by the wealthy, for the wealthy.

As the radical ideas of thinkers such as Marx, Freud, and Einstein began to take hold, and the influence of religion weakened, people began to challenge orthodoxy and tradition, and agitate for fairer treatment of the poor and of women. It was in this spirit of modern rebellion that Virginia moved with her adult siblings out of the family home and into the (then rather seedy) London district of Bloomsbury to forge a new kind of living arrangement. Virginia and her sister Vanessa rejected the idea of a home presided over by a woman like their mother, the Victorian 'angel in the house,' and determined that instead of serving tea and looking decorative, they would take part in intellectual discussions with their brothers and friends. At the same time, however, Woolf and her friends and acquaintances in the free-thinking 'Bloomsbury Group' never questioned the necessity of employing servants to run even their most progressive of households.

To the Lighthouse in its time: - The First World War broke out suddenly in the summer of 1914 and dragged on far longer, and at vastly greater cost, than anyone had dared to predict. In Britain, thousands of young men responded to appeals to join up in defense of nation and 'civilization,' and found themselves stuck, in Ezra Pound's words, 'eye-deep in hell,' living in trenches alongside rats and corpses, and measuring their progress and victories in inches. The destruction of the landscape of battle, of human bodies, and of lives was unprecedented and indescribable, and for many writers and artists like Woolf, grouped under the loose term 'modernist,' it represented a decisive, irreparable break from the past and a need for new forms of representation in art and literature.

To The Lighthouse (1927), along with Woolf's two preceding novels Jacob's Room (1922) and Mrs. Dalloway (1925), emerges from the period of painful recovery from the war, and displays Woolf's innovations in prose fiction. Most strikingly, the major events of the novel -are contained in brief, condensed parentheses, while the day-to-day thoughts and memories of the characters expand to fill the surrounding pages. Although the novel is set on an island off the coast of Scotland, the house and surrounding landscape (including the lighthouse) are closely based on St. Ives, Cornwall, where the Stephen family spent their summers until Virginia's mother's death in 1895. It has therefore often been read as one of Woolf's most autobiographical novels. To the Lighthouse was first published by the Hogarth Press, established by Virginia and her husband Leonard in 1917 in the basement of their home, Hogarth House, in Richmond, west London. Woolf called it 'easily the best of my books,' and it sold so well that she and Leonard were able to buy their first car.

To the Lighthouse : Major Themes

Ephemerality: - Ephemeral means something which lasts for a short period of time. Few novels capture the ephemeral nature of life as poignantly as Virginia Woolf's To the Lighthouse. Reality, when conceived of as a collection of fleeting moments, seems as chaotic and fluid as ocean waves. Each of the main characters struggles with this realization, and they all grasp for symbols of permanence and stability despite their understanding of the transience of experience. Mrs. Ramsay, consumed by a need to connect herself to lasting experiences, looks to the pulsating glow of the Lighthouse to unite her experience with a sense of endurance. For her, the steady stroke of the Lighthouse light represents stability and permanence. For this reason, she connects herself to it, unites herself with it, in the hope of gaining a similar sense of connection

both to her present and to eternity. In fact, she seeks not only to unite herself with the permanent objects in the physical world, but also to unite her friends, family, and guests in the creation of lasting beauty.

Whereas Mrs. Ramsay's search for permanence lies in the emotional realm of experience, her husband's is based entirely in the intellectual sphere. He longs to transcend his own lifetime with an important philosophical contribution, yet feels practically certain that this goal is unachievable. Lily Briscoe suffers from a similar fear that her paintings will be thrown into the attic, never to be fully appreciated and never to make a lasting impression.

By the culmination of the novel, however, Lily is able to surrender this need for permanence and meaning, and she is thus finally able to fulfil her artistic vision. This final scene suggests that Lily can only achieve a sense of fulfilment because she is able to relinquish her need for a permanently significant existence. She finally embraces the ephemeral nature of the countless experiences that constitute a lifetime.

Subjective Reality: - The omniscient narrator remained the standard explicative figure in fiction through the end of the nineteenth century, providing an informed and objective account of the characters and the plot. The turn of the 20th century, however, witnessed innovations in writing that aimed at reflecting a more truthful account of the subjective nature of experience. Virginia Woolf's To the Lighthouse is the triumphant product of this innovation, creating a reality that is completely constructed by the collection of the multiple subjective interiorities of its characters and presented in a stream-of-consciousness format. Woolf creates a fictional world in which no objective, omniscient narrator is present. There is a proliferation of accounts of the inner processes of the characters, while there is a scarcity of expositional information, expressing Woolf's perspective on the thoughts and reflections that comprise the world of the Ramsays.

Time is an essential component of experience and reality and, in many ways, the novel is about the passage of time. However, as for reality, Woolf does not represent time in a traditional way. Rather than a steady and unchanging rhythm, time here is a forward motion that both accelerates and collapses. In "The Window" and "The Lighthouse," time is conveyed only through the consciousness of the various characters, and moments last for pages as the reader is invited into the subjective experiences of many different realities. Indeed, "The Window" takes place over the course of a single afternoon that is expanded by Woolf's method, and "The Lighthouse" seems almost directly connected to the first section, despite the fact that ten years have actually elapsed. However, in "Time Passes," ten years are greatly compacted into a matter of pages, and the changes in the lives of the Ramsay's and their home seem to flash by like scenes viewed from the window of a moving train. This unsteady temporal rhythm brilliantly conveys the broader sense of instability and change that the characters strive to comprehend, and it captures the fleeting nature of a reality that exists only within and as a collection of the various subjective experiences of reality.

The Presence of the Lighthouse: - The Lighthouse is distant, old, and set against a landscape that fades to the farthest horizon, encompassing the length of visible space. This is a majestic image of a pillar of presiding stability and constant observation. It is a presence that extends beyond the physical and chronological boundaries of the Ramsay's

and their world, observing them and illuminating the rooms in which the contents of their minds are bared.

The Lighthouse offers a life force to Mrs. Ramsay and her family, propelling both the plot (the novel opens with the conflict surrounding James's desire to go to it) and the streams of consciousness that ensue. It has a clear and significant presence in this world, yet it is inanimate, not conscious, and it is a figure characterized by its distance from the immediate events of the novel. It seems somewhat elusive and intangible, having indistinct boundaries and features. The setting of the Lighthouse recedes into a realm "uninhabited by men" and therefore signifies a realm and life force that the characters cannot enter themselves. It is distant, intangible, and elusive.

Yet its qualities are permanent and ever-present. The Lighthouse is Mrs. Ramsay's source of stability and permanence, and it is the force that defines and joins the members of the Ramsay family. It is even present in their home during the ten years that the family is not there-presiding over the abandoned house.

Art as Unity and Permanence: - In the novel, art is defined by Lily (the novel's central artist) as something able to unify disparate elements into a cohesive whole. When she looks at her canvas, awaiting the fulfilment of her vision, she contemplates how she will incorporate several people and objects into the work in order to create a unified and singular product. This goal, she believes, is the responsibility of the artist, and her artistry represents her way of finding a sense of meaningful permanence in her existence.

Unity is also directly associated with permanence in the novel. Mrs. Ramsay's most active desire is to create moments of complete connection and unity between people. At her dinner party, she is disturbed by the lack of cohesion, and it is not until a fleeting moment when everyone seems to merge and assimilate into a single unit that she feels fulfilled. Such moments provide her with a sense of stability and endurance, for she knows that they will continue to exist in the memories of others even after she is dead.

In Mrs. Ramsay's preoccupation with cohesion, and in the connection between cohesion and art, Mrs. Ramsay herself comes to be a sort of artist. Lily acknowledges this figuration near the end of the novel, creating yet another connection with the deceased woman.

The Dichotomous Representation of Water: - Water has a great role throughout the novel, in particular as the characters spend a great deal of time looking at the sea that separates the Ramsay's summer home from the Lighthouse. The symbolism of the water is complex, however, for it seems to represent both permanence and ephemerality. Mrs. Ramsay enjoys listening to the waves beating against the shore. The rhythm is steady and constant, serving as a symbol of consistency and eternity. She learns to depend upon this sound, and it soothes her, providing a deep sense of stability.

Yet water also represents a destructive and erosive force. As Mr. Ramsay stands outside viewing the sea, he reflects that the piece of land beneath his feet will one day be completely worn away and consumed by the sea. In this sense, the sea is a constant and eternal force that magnifies its effects over time and ultimately proves the ephemerality of whatever it touches.

Time: - Time is one of the major themes of To the Lighthouse. Most of the adult characters fixate on the concept of time in one way or another. Mrs. Ramsay cannot help but notice that the present moment becomes the past, and she seeks objects in the external world to ground her in the moment. She also frets endlessly about how time will change her children's lives. She does not want James and Cam to grow up, for she knows that they will inevitably suffer. In essence, she wishes to stop time for her children, allowing them to be young and carefree forever.

Mr. Ramsay is obsessed with the future and, more specifically, the future of his career. He desperately longs to achieve greatness as a philosopher, but is almost certain that he will not, and he is preoccupied by envisioning the future and predicting whether or not he will be recognized and remembered. He is grief-stricken with the notion that no one will read his books after he has gone, and he laments the fact that young scholars are not interested in his work because they are, after all, the future leaders in the field.

Lily Briscoe is also preoccupied with time, but her fixation changes shape over the course of the novel. Originally, she shares similar concerns with Mr. Ramsay, wondering if her paintings will amount to anything and whether anyone will ever see them. By the final section of the novel, however, her thoughts are located more in the past and in her memories of Mrs. Ramsay. It is partially the effect of these memories that propels her forward and brings her vision into focus.

The Subversion of Female Gender Roles: - Many of the women in To the Lighthouse either overtly or silently subvert conventional female gender roles. Lily Briscoe, for example, has no desire to marry, but rather wants only to dedicate herself to her work (much like Mr. Ramsay and Mr. Bankes). She is independent and self-sufficient, and she is able to disregard Mr. Tansley's chauvinistic comments about women being unable to paint. Despite Mrs. Ramsay's persuasion, she holds her ground throughout the novel, refusing to become any man's wife. These choices and ideas were very unconventional in the early 20th century.

Three of Mrs. Ramsay's daughters (Nancy, Rose, and Cam) also silently reject the life that their mother chose for herself, in all of its domesticity. They know that they want their lives to be different and more complex than what they perceive as the limited realm of wife-mother, and they are headstrong and adventurous.

Moreover, the novel promises only misfortune for the women who accept the roles carved out for them. Mrs. Ramsay dies unexpectedly at a relatively young age. Prue, shortly after getting married, dies as a result of childbirth. Even Minta, who had been a somewhat unconventional lady, suffers in her marriage, for Paul leaves her for another woman. The novel seems to punish the women who accept positions as wife and mother, while it abounds with young women who are sure that they want a different existence.

To The Lighthouse : Stream of Consciousness Novel

The phrase "Stream of Consciousness" was coined by William James to describe the flow of thoughts of the waking mind. It is a person's thoughts and conscious reactions to events, perceived as a continuous flow. In literature it is a literary style in which a character's thoughts, feelings, and reactions are depicted in a conti

uninterrupted by objective description or conventional dialogue. The related phrase "interior monologue" is used to describe the inner movement of consciousness in a character's mind. The use of devices of the stream of consciousness and the interior monologue marks a revolution in the form of the novel because through these devices the author can represent the flux of a character's thoughts, impressions, and emotions and reminiscences (recollections), often without any logical sequence.

According to Virginia Woolf, the conventional novel did not express life adequately. She was of the opinion that **life was a shower of ever-failing atoms of experience, and not a narrative line**. Life, she said, was a luminous halo (radiance), a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to end. She tried to experiment with the same technique in her novel, 'To the Lighthouse'. In which the characters reveal themselves very much in the same way. Although she depicts character through the inner consciousness of the person whom we meet in this novel but she herself remains the controlling intelligence, speaking in the third person. While she very seldom slips in comments of her own, she remains the narrator, telling us what is going on in the various minds.

Virginia Woolf shows us a particular person in this novel **not only through the consciousness of that person himself or herself**, **but also through the consciousness of the other persons.** We are given the interior monologues of the various characters in this novel, and it is largely through the twin devices of stream of consciousness and the interior monologue that we come to know the various characters. Thus we see Mrs. Ramsay not only through her own consciousness but through the consciousness of Mr. Ramsey, the child James, Lily Briscoe, Mr. Tansley and Mr. Bankes. Similarly we come to know Mr. Ramsay not only through his own consciousness but also through the consciousness of Mrs. Ramsay, the young James, Lily Briscoe, and Mr. Bankes. In fact, every character in the novel is presented to us through his own consciousness and also through the consciousness of the other characters. At the same time, the characters are occasionally presented to us directly by the all-knowing author of the novel, and also sometimes bits of conversation or dialogue between the characters.

Mrs. Woolf's Concern in writing novels was not merely to narrate a story as the older novelists did, but to **discover and record life as the people feel who live it**. Hence it is **she rejected the conventional technique of narration and adopted a new technique more suited to her purposes**. It is for this reason that in 'To The Lighthouse' she did not tell a story, in the sense of a series of events, and has concentrated on a small number of characters, whose nature and feelings are represented to us largely through their interior monologues. In order to capture the inner reality, the truth about life, she has **tried to represent the moving current of life** and **the individual's consciousness of the fleeting movement**, and secondly, also to **select from this current and organize it** so that the novel may penetrate beneath the surface reality and may give to the reader a sense of understanding and completeness.

The readers are not placed directly within the minds of characters, as in the modern psychological novel, but the **central intelligence of the novelist** is constantly at work as the narrator, controlling and organizing the material, and illuminating it with its comments, and order emerges out of chaos. The interior mc

characters are, no doubt, given, but the novelist, **the central intelligence**, is also constantly busy, organizing the material and illuminating it by frequent comments. In this respect Mrs. Woolf's technique of narration is quite different from that of the "Stream of Consciousness" novelists. Far from being a stream of Consciousness novel, 'To the Lighthouse' is the objective account of a central intelligence that approaches and assumes the characters. Consciousness, but does not become completely identified with any one consciousness. This central intelligence is thus free to comment upon the whole in what seems a completely impersonal manner, as this short passage shows:

"It is a triumph' said Mr. Bankes, laying his knife down for a moment. He had eaten attentively. It was rich; it was tender. It was perfectly cooked. How did she manage these things in the depths of the country? He asked her. She was a wonderful woman. All his love, all his reverence, had returned; and she knew it."

"It is a French recipe of my grandmother's said Mrs. Ramsay, Speaking with a ring of great pleasure in her voice. Of course it was French. What passes for cookery in England is an abominations; it is pulling cabbages in water. It is roasting meat until it is like leather. It is cutting off the delicious skins of vegetables. 'In which', said Mr. Bankes,

"All the virtue of vegetables is contained" Here the central intelligence is reporting a part of the dinner Conversation.

Suspense and Curiosity are another aspect of Mrs. Woolf's technique of narration. She taking us into the middle of scene; Mrs. Ramsay's opening remark is the answer to unstated question, which we have to supply by picking up clues from what follows. The reader's natural curiosity thus becomes involved. We wonder who these people are, what they are talking about and so on. As we read on, prompted by this desire to know, we begin to recognize a pattern in the narrative at same time as we assimilate names, facts, ideas. Then, too, the pattern begins to establish itself; the **pattern** that is, of **Conversation** and **reaction**, of the actual words in the first person and the present tense, and the reflections of the characters in the third person and the past tense. This violence of feeling is seen first in the child, James and seems natural to the exaggeration of childhood; we are thus prepared in an acceptable way for the emotions of the adult character, Tempe real by age and experience, but made more complex too.

The **third person narration** is a very Common novel device used by Virginia Woolf. She is very careful to mock her direction of the narrative as little noticed as possible. Her use of direct speech for the interior monologues of her characters makes it easy for her to work into these mental soliloquies a number of statements and ideas which are outside the range of knowledge of character she is dealing with.

When, for example, at the beginning, she describes the feelings of James about his father, she moves from what the child is thinking to what Mrs. Ramsay habitually did and said, through impersonal sentences:

"Had there been an ate handy, a poker, or any weapon that would have gashed a hole in his father's breast and killed him, there and then James would have seized it. Such were the extremes of emotion that Mr. Ramsay excited in his children's bre

mere presence : Standing: disillusioning his son and casting ridicule upon his wife, who was ten thousand times better in every way than he was (James thought), but also with some secret conceit at his own accuracy of judgment. What he said was true. It was always true. He Was incapable of untruth; never tampered with a fact; never altered a disagreeable word to suit the pleasure or convenience of any mortal being, least of all of his own children, who sprung from his loins, should be aware from childhood that life is difficult……."

We can see the two currents of thoughts flowing together. Just as this third person narration makes it possible for Virginia Woolf to move smoothly from one character to another, so in the novel as a whole it is a unifying Principle.

The **completion of the circle** is another quality of Virginia Woolf. If the arrival at the lighthouse and the completion of Lily Briscoe's picture complete the circle of the book, and if Time Passes forms a sort of landing between the upward movements of The Window and the downward, resolving movements of The Lighthouse, we find here the same structural design. The Part I conforms to this design. Section II, when the fairy tale is finished and James has gone, a perfect moment, rich with solitude and revelation, certainly forms a peak that communicates its exaltation to the second half of the chapter, which however, never reaches the same intensity at this may moment.

To sum up, Virginia Woolf has employed the lighthouse as a symbol and it has a number of undertones of meaning, and serves the purpose of a unifying factor in the novel. The **action moves on normal constructional lines from scene to scene** and **from the mind of one person to that of another**. These shifts from one consciousness to another and these movements are made further easy by allowing every incident to take place in a close knit homogenous world. 'To The Lighthouse' is a masterpiece of Construction. It is an organic whole. It is a great work of art which fully deserves the praises that have been lavished on it.

"To The Lighthouse" : Symbolism

Written from multiple perspectives and shifting between times and characters with poetic grace, "To the Lighthouse" is not concerned with ordinary story telling. Rather through integrate symbolic web it reads the mind and recounts the passage of multiple experiences of different characters in the novel. The **key symbols** in "To the Lighthouse" are – **the sea, the lighthouse, Lily's painting, the window, and the personalities of Mrs. Ramsay and Mr. Ramsay**. They are all woven together, along with many other less important ones, into a central meaning, which suggests Mrs. Woolf's conception of life and reality. Let them study closely under the following heads.

The **sea** as the **eternal flux of time and life** The Sea with its waves is to be heard throughout the novel. It symbolizes the eternal flux of time and life, in the midst of which we all exist; it constantly changes its character. To Mrs. Ramsay at one moment it sounds soothing and consoling like a cradle song, at others, "like a ghostly roll of drums remorselessly beating a warning of death it brings terror. Sometimes its power "sweeping savagely in, "seems to reduce the individual to nothingness, at others it sends up 'a fountain of bright water" – which seems to match the sudden springs of vitality in the human spirit.

The Lighthouse holds a whole **cluster of suggestion.** It is a mystery, yet a concern for day-to-day living. It is at once distant and close at the mercy of its destructive forces. The **lighthouse surrounded by sea** always **illumines and clarifies the human condition** in some way. Farther, it is the quest for the values the lighthouse suggests. The tower is frequently shadowed in mist, its beams are intermittent in the darkness, the moments of assurance they bring the momentary, but upon these assurances reality rests, by landing on the general doubts, something which seems to triumph over the eternal cycle of change. To **reach the lighthouse is to establish a creative relationship.**

Indeed, the lighthouse is the most important symbol and different critics have explained it in different ways. For example Russell declares that the lighthouse is the feminine creative principle. Jon Bennett calls the alternate light and shadows of the lighthouse the rhythm of joy and sorrow, understanding and misunderstanding. F.L. Overcarsh finds the novel as a whole an allegory of the old and New Testaments: Mrs. Ramsay is Eve, the Blessed virgin and Christ; Mr. Ramsay is among other things God the Father; the lighthouse is Eden and Heaven. The strokes of the lighthouse are the persons of the Trinity, the third of them, long and steady representing the Holy Ghost. The lighthouse as symbol has not one meaning, that it is a vital synthesis of time and eternity: an objective correlative for Mrs. Ramsay's vision, after whose death it is her meaning.

The Window is a symbol of a **view to oneself.** It is from the window that we have the little of the part-I of "To the Lighthouse". It is not a transparent but a separating sheet of glass between reality and Mrs. Ramsay's mind. Mrs. Ramsay experiences such moments of revelation and integration at watching the window. It is the very symbol of the imperfection of our knowledge and riddle of human mind. It is debates about philosophy, particularly theories about visual reality on the three main philosophers of British empiricism, John Locke, George Berkeley, and David Hume. The basic argument of empiricism is whether or not a person can be empirically certain that objects have a distinct and continued existence apart from our perceptions of them.

The **characters** are carefully arranged in the novel in their relation to each other, so that a **definite symbolic pattern emerges**. Mrs. Ramsay pervades the whole book. Mrs. Ramsay is the mother of the Ramsay family who dies during the middle section of the novel. A beautiful, caring woman, she means all things to all people, and each character of "To the Lighthouse" has a different perception of her personality. Lily sees her as a mother, and doesn't think she has ever inspired romantic passion. William Bankes and Charles Tansley adore her, and think she doesn't realize how beautiful she is. The children see her as the "Lighthouse" of their lives—the stable, warm force that protects and guides them. She is above all the creator of fertile human relationships symbolized by her love of match making and her knitting; and of warm comfort symbolized by her green shawl. Just as Mrs. Ramsay stands for creative vitality, so Mr. Ramsay stands as the symbol of the sterile, destructive barriers to relationship. Just as Mrs. Ramsay is described in images of fertility and the warmth and comfort of love and harmony with others, Mr. Ramsay is evoked in images of sterility, hardness and cruelty and of deliberate isolation. It is to be noted that Mr. Ramsay is the father of the family is the most misunderstood character in the book, a man whose children hate him because they think he is viciously unemotional and cold.

Lily's Picture has also got symbolic importance. Lily sees that Mrs. Ramsay's gift of harmonizing human relationship into memorable moments is "almost like a work of art" and in the book art is the ultimate symbol for the enduring 'reality'. In life, as Mrs. Ramsay herself well knows relationships are doomed to imperfection, and are the spot of time and change; but in art the temporal and the eternal unity in an unchanging form-through, as in Lily's picture, the form may be very inadequate. We cannot doubt that Lily's struggles with the composition and texture of her painting are a counter part of Virginia Woolf's tussles and triumphs in her own medium, but she chooses poetry as the image that reminds mankind that the ever changing can yet become immortal. Lily is a Postimpressionist painter, descendant of a poor family, and has spent most of her life taking care of her father. In many ways, Lily is the chorus figure of the book—providing the histories of the characters and commenting on their actions. The beginning and completion of her painting form the frame of To the Lighthouse, and her final line, "**I have had my vision,"** is the final line of the novel, acting as Woolf's own comment on her book.

To sum up, the use of symbols serve the purpose of introspection, self-awareness, and openness to the unconscious in the novel. Composed on the flow of sensations, thoughts, memories, associations, and reflections in the ambit of symbol the action moves on normal constructional lines from scene to scene and from the mind to mind. There is less complication. These shifts from one consciousness to another and these movements are made further easy by allowing every incident to take place in close-knit homogeneous world. To The Lighthouse is a masterpiece of construction through symbolism. It is an organic whole.

"To the Lighthouse" : Study of Human Relations

"To The Lighthouse" has a galaxy of fictional characters whose earnest endeavour is to establish, with varying degrees of success, happy and healthy relationship with the people around them. Accepting this as its main theme, the novel may justly be called a study of the ways and means by which satisfactory human relationship might be established with the people around them. This is because human beings seemed to Mrs. Woolf isolated and communication between them partial and often far from satisfactory.

In human society **words** are the main sources of communication between one person and another. Unfortunately words are very often **inadequate** for the purpose. This is one of the main reasons for the **failure to establish healthy and satisfactory human relationships**. The difficulty is that very often **words cannot express the full complexity of a character's thoughts and feelings**. Then again what the words express is only a fraction of what a character thinks and feels, and as a result they become **misleading**. These aspects of **verbal inadequacy** were quite evident to Mrs. Woolf. And many of her characters reveal this inadequacy in a distinct manner. Lily feels this strongly as in the third part of the novel when she is seen standing near to Carmichael on the lawn and trying to explain Mrs. Ramsay:

"And she wanted to say not one thing, but everything. Little words that broke up the thought and dismembered it, said nothing. 'About life, about death; about Mrs. Ramsay'—no she thought one could say nothing to nobody. The urgency of the moment

always missed the mark. Words fluttered sideways and struck the object inches to low. Then one gave it up; For how could one express in words these emotions of the body?"

Very often it is found that **silence is more expressive and eloquent than words**. And Lily realises it fully. She feels in greater communication with Carmichael than if they had spoken. There sitting on the lawn in perfect silence they seem to understand each other perfectly well without exchanging even a single word. And in the final chapter of the novel Lily justly feels: **'They had not needed to speak. They had been thinking the same thing and he had answered her without, her asking him anything'.** Thus it is revealed to us that silence is often more expressive and more eloquent than words —words that fail to express 'these emotions of the body', and lead to the establishment of happy human relationships.

In the novel we also find that how **trivial things** of very little importance are **greatly helpful** in es**tablishing congenial human relationships**. In the beginning of the third or final movement of the book we find Mr. Ramsay the widower coming to Lily demanding sympathy. She really feels very helpless and words fail her in the beginning. Suddenly his boots catch her eyes and she praises his boots. This brings great relief and Mr. Ramsay feels satisfied. Apparently Lily's remarks may seem silly or comic. But 'Mr. Ramsay smiled. His pall, his draperies, his infirmities fell from him'. Thus it helped to establish perfect sympathy and understanding between Lily and Mr. Ramsay and Lily 'felt her eyes swell and tingle with tears'.

Congenial and satisfactory human relationships are essential for happiness in our life. Logic, reason and intellect are of very little help to us for this purpose. It is through emotions that we can establish such relationships. **Emotional understanding and a genuine sympathetic attitude are greatly needed for satisfactory relationships** even between parents and children, and husband and wife. In the very first scene of the novel we find how far the lack of these mental aspects Mr. Ramsay becomes an intolerable tyrant or a 'sarcastic brute' in the eyes of his children. He tells James the dire truth 'it won't be fine'—without caring a bit for a young child's dreams and desires. James feels like gashing a hole in his father's breast to kill him there and then. But Mrs. Ramsay with her loving soul and sympathetic understanding wins the heart of the children and is tremendously loved and admired by her children. She undoubtedly soothes them by telling them that the weather might change for the better. But it is only to make the world a better and happier place.

Virginia Woolf shows us in many ways that **Mrs. Ramsay plays a very significant part** in To the Lighthouse to **establish communication between people**. This is first revealed in her genuine attempts to get Paul and Minta as well as Lily and Mr. Bankes married. And it is shown very nicely and convincingly at the dinner party where she makes the most sincere effort to get people talking, to involve them and so to create something of the time they are together.

There is a note of pretence and falsehood even in the **husband-wife relationship between Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay**. Mrs. Ramsay cannot but praise Mr. Ramsay to his face just to booster up his confidence in a way she feels should not be necessary. He is in constant need of being reassured. His fear of failure, his resentment that he has achieved less than he should have and that his books will not last, pervert his judgement, leading him to see in praise of other men's works disparagemen

of himself. This undoubtedly puts a strain on his wife and she has to conceal things for him. Again on Mr. Ramsay's, side too there is some sort of reserve. Mrs. Ramsay's pessimistic conviction of the misery of life distresses him, and then he is unable to communicate with her in her moods of sadness.

The first movement of the novel The Window, traces the pattern of their relationship very skilfully from one extreme to another. In the very first scene we find them at their farthest apart when their disagreement about going to the Lighthouse brings out their difference quite sharply in their attitudes to life. Mr. Ramsay is upset, is rather infuriated. **"The extraordinary irrationality of her remark, the folly of women's minds enraged him.....and now she flew in the face of facts, made her children hope what was utterly out of the question, in effect, told lies."**

Mrs. Ramsay's Attitude brings **final reconciliation**. Mrs. Ramsay is also upset in her own way. With her loving heart and sympathetic bent of mind she wants to make people happy in this world and longs for protecting her children from losing the contented innocence of childhood. Hence her husband's irrational and stern attitude seems to her equally repugnant, **"to pursue truth with such astonishing lack of consideration for other people's feelings, to rend the thin veils of civilization so wantonly, so brutally, was to her so horrible an outrage of human decency".** But very soon after this incident they begin to come together again. It starts with Mrs. Ramsay's apology. And after this we find that the remaining sections of 'The Window' move towards the moment at the end, when the firm severity of the masculine mind, which she admires in him, curbs her gloomy thoughts and she is able, though indirectly, to assure him of her love.

"And as she looked at him she began to smile, for though she has not said a word, he knew, of course that she loved him".

To sum up, We may now rightly assert that "To the Lighthouse" reveals a very close study of the ways and means by which satisfactory and congenial human relationships might be established. Mrs. Ramsay is the centre around which action and movement are built. She plays the most significant role as a force by holding together almost all the characters and incidents of this great novel.

Constrictions of family life & concept of god

In "To the Lighthouse" Woolf tried not only to recover the memories of her childhood but also to record her tangled feelings about Victorian marriage and family life as well as about the substitutes for them that some rebellious modern spirits had proposed. Well she says in the following lines:

"… so that is marriage, Lily thought, a man and a woman looking at a girl throwing a ball…And suddenly the meaning which for no reason at all as perhaps they are stepping out of the Tube or ringing a doorbell, descends on people, making them symbolical, making them representative, came upon them and made them in the dusk standing, looking, the symbols of marriage, husband and wife."

Throughout her novel, she stresses the fact that **each one of us is alone** in a world where family bonds are nothing but manacles to personal freedom and that we live in a universe ungoverned by an All-mighty God. Her view of the world, though, is by no means a bleak one as there is the light and warmth of Art to surround us and unify us. Woolf's father, Leslie Stephen describes the family as a sort of First Cause. Virginia Woolf, though, born in 1882 was destined to witness and be a part of a remarkable change as far as family and marriage were concerned. Consequently, the way she depicts Mr. Ramsay in "To the Lighthouse" is her way of showing the insecurity, confusion and even the desperation hiding behind the Iron-mask of the Powerful Patriarch.

She **stripes the King of the House** off his psychological defences and leaves him naked before us. She wants us to see the Victorian Myth of domestic relationships collapse. Her psychological stripping of her major characters- like Strachey's in Eminent Victorians- is a version of The Emperor's New Clothes. This "emperor" here, Mr. Ramsay cannot communicate with his children, he is impatient, demanding, short-tempered and so self-absorbed that he is always preoccupied with his professional success seeking confirmation from his wife. He has, also, idolized Mrs. Ramsay as a perfect representative of the Victorian Patriarch Moreland he strongly holds that each sex is destined to live and act in its own private sphere with no interferences of any kind. Tansley's remark **"women can't write, women can't paint"** is nothing but a more crude articulation of Mr. Ramsay's attitude.

Virginia Woolf wants to emphasize the "**sexual polarization of Victorian** family life" and the effect it had on the women and offspring of a typical Victorian family. Mrs. Ramsay, who "often felt she was nothing but a sponge sopped full of human emotions "reads her son the Grimm's tale "The Fisherman and His Wife'. Woolf's choice of this story is by no means a random one; it voices Mr. Ramsay's belief that women are inferior to men and should conform to their wishes. Mrs. Ramsay is, nevertheless, the only one who believes in family and in fact uses all her charm to bring people together. She is the luminous Angel of the House and an ardent matchmaker. Apart from her, no one else is happy with marriage or family life.

Every single character in "To the Lighthouse" stresses the right to choose. Mr. Ramsay regards his wife and family as impediments to his nobler aim to reach letter "R" intellectually. **"He would have written better books if he had not married**". Mr. Bankes justifies the fact that Mr. Ramsay broke his promise assuming that married life must be a burden: **"He had seen him divest himself of all those glories of isolation and austerity which crowned him in youth to cumber himself definitely with fluttering wings and clucking domesticities**".

Charles Tansley disapproves of Mr. Ramsay's career after his marriage by saying: **"Of course Ramsay had dished himself by marrying a beautiful woman and having eight children."** Lily Briscoe, too, chooses work and Art over getting married as she thought she, "need never marry anybody and she felt an enormous exultation". Woolf, though, does not blame any of her characters for their belief that vocation; work and family life cannot be integrated. She blames the Victorian World, which groomed and nurtured her characters. Woolf wants to stress that ossified sexist beliefs, as well, as the idolization of Women as Angels of the Hearth and of men as devoted people of career, have isolated people from each other. In this sense the self-pitying utter

Ramsay **"we perished, each alone"** is a realistic cry: a morn depicting the core of human relationships in his times. Mrs. Ramsay is obsessed with trying to push people towards the altar of marriage. She wants Mr. Bankes and Lily to get married. Lily, though, prefers her Art, while Mr. Bankes, at the dinner table, thinks to himself: **"How trifling it all is, how boring it all is, compared to the other thing-work."**

One of Mrs. Ramsay's children rushes off to the attic **"to escape the horror of family life".** She knows that her daughters, Cam and Prue, already have dreams different from hers: **"infidel ideas which they had brewed for themselves of a life different from hers; in Paris, perhaps; a wilder life; not always taking care of some man or other."** After Mrs. Ramsay's death, in Part III, the traditional Victorian family is turned upside down. We see a change in everything. Women can be devoted careerists and artists too, unmarried people can feel happy and fulfilled with themselves, unlike Lily's past declaration that she felt **"a skimpy old maid, holding a paint brush in the lawn"** and of course, love is not always the basis of a marriage. Paul Rayley and Minta Doyle, the couple brought together by Mrs. Ramsay's hard efforts is not happily married. Lily remains a "spinster"; Mr. Bankes remains a "bachelor" and as Lily says to the spirit of Mrs. Ramsay: **"It has all gone against your wishes… Life has changed completely".** Minta's frequent infidelities and Paul's taking up a mistress haven't broken up their marriage, though**: "far from breaking up their marriage, that alliance had righted it. They were excellent friends".** Life changes and what is moral or immoral changes as well.

The whole book is about change that is why it characterized as an inclusive Fiction. It allows divergences to coexist in order to bring about harmony. Her characters move towards the same goal through different paths. Mr. Ramsay and his son are brought together when the former praises the boy. While at the same time, Lily Briscoe finishes her painting and concludes her "vision". Symbolically, the past returns and shapes the present. Mrs. Ramsay comes back in Lily's picture and the murderous instinct towards his father is wiped out from James' heart. All the tiny threads of the story come together, forming a harmony and a delight that owes nothing either to a God or to an ossified Victorian Institution but to life, love and the power of people to change things and transform them.

To the Lighthouse" : A Portrait of a Real Woman

Virginia Woolf was an important precursor in Feminism. She comes after a long line of eminent Victorians of her own sex, who have joined the immortals of English literature-George Eliot, Jane Austen and the two Bronte's. She was not of their stature but only against their background can her peculiar feminine contribution to English novel be fully assessed or appreciated.

'To the Lighthouse' **projects challenges** or **realization of productive and creative possibilities of female characters** like **Mrs**. **Ramsay**, **Lily Briscoe**, **Nancy Ramsay**, and other characters who move around these central characters. These characters are to be studied with the feministic point of view and built as a portrait of real woman in the Victorian England as well as its relevance in the present scenario.

Generally speaking, the word 'sex' plays an essential role in defining the gender of a woman when she is put in the flow of Society's stream of socialization. The existence of a woman is not supposed to identify by the physical appearance, but by the actions and thoughts also. There is no any suspicion in telling truth that 'Sex' is born identity whereas 'Gender' is coined identity by society in which a woman lives. It is imposed upon her to behave, to think and to play a female role in specific way.

To commence with the idea of writing a novel by lady novelist (not female novelist) itself is a strong element in discussing these female characters. Virginia portraits female characters as a **typical female**, doing her household work, beguiling other family members what they would prefer to have and docile as a passive character, actively participating in what she is supposed to do. Character like Mrs. Ramsay is depicted as a working woman in the house, as **not responsibility but as a duty**. Because the atmosphere is created in such a way that they should not create any problem or complain, found by the boss (husband) Mr. Ramsay.

From start of the novel to its end, it names her as Mrs. Ramsay, not her actual name. She directly seems to be a subjugated woman with the name of **superiority's surname**. The very logic lies in this context is that Mrs. Ramsay plays her duty what her imposed name will urge her to do.

Apart from naming the characters, female character **Mrs. Ramsay plays plenty of roles** like a **wife, a mother, a care-taker, organizer of the household work, protector of her family's reputation and social credit, friend, as a relative matchmaker** for Lily and Tansley and so on and so forth. It is incredible to assume that such a **multi-dimensional responsibility** performing her duties simultaneously, defines the role of woman in the society. Such a female character, having eight children to bring up, taking much care of them not being distracted toward evil path and being practical in the flow of the time, seems impossible for a moment but Woolf has portrayed such motherly figure in her novel. But the sudden sharp turn in the novel, revealing Mrs. Ramsay's unexpected death. It challenges the modern codes and conducts of Post-Modern time in which the people fail to recognize the need and necessity of the women.

People do not value of what they keep or what they have. Mrs. Ramsay might have been respected by family members and guests but being not there, may not make Mr. Ramsay need of her but changing time changes the minds of the people, too. Death of Mrs. Ramsay does matter, because there is a crucial association between her and the lighthouse. To adjust people and other things and to reach people to the lighthouse, Mrs. Ramsay seemed **much active** as far as male's contribution to organize life and sustenance is concerned.

The novelist **selects the female characters to arrange a day for the lighthouse**, to **keep balance in social relationships**, and what is more important is to satisfy male-ego. She makes her husband uncomfortable because of her being died. She makes other characters to talk about the person who is died now. Why the novelist plays with the female characters is still in vagueness. Life before her death was like; she was lonely but never alone. It means, albeit, she was never surrounded by the people, felt lonely and never satisfied by the intimate relatives being with her.

Mrs. Ramsay thinks that with whom she was living, are 'sterile' and incapable, and that **"if she did not do it, nobody would do it."** So taking care of children and guests, Mrs. Ramsay ponders that the way she was playing a role of giver and arranger, will not be maintained by others. She sees life not as it should be but as it may be. Deferring from her husband, she finds her children's happiness in telling what they want to deserve. The happiness of the children like James and others, is not supposed to mar, rather it is to be maintained, and increased.

Mrs. Ramsay's attitude toward children and relatives, somehow, keeps Mr. Ramsay separated, because what is real and the fact is to be taught to the children. But somewhere, Ramsay fails to realize that such a delicate and fragile period of kids should be kept joyful and society known enough. To help children to see world beautifully, goes to the side of Mrs. Ramsay and it is followed. But ramset interrupts this cycle of learning. James asks for visiting the lighthouse and his urge causes invisible controversies among the husband and wife.

Woolf **challenges the wrong perception about the male's mind-set**. The children become happier when a mother interacts with them yet she speaks a lie but it is a white lie that makes children very happy. Generally, progenies are more inclined to mother's way of nurturing. So Mr. Ramsay feels jealousy and tells that that day's weather would be drowsier and cloudy, not good for him. This can be called a creative faculty of female to bring up offspring. She is an artist, the house, husband, children and relatives are her medium; if indeed if the purpose of the art for her, as it is for Lily, is to unite and allow them to experience the life together in brief, prefect understanding, then the party is nothing less than her masterpiece, impeccably perfect one.

When the matter of creation comes forward, Lily Briscoe's interest in painting comes as a part of studding her role in the society and place of creative and flowered faculty of mind. Tansley always debases her paintings and gives several examples of famous paintings of the other countries. Hence creative ability of the women is suppressed in terms of demotivating them. Just the critical words of the male characters make whole novel as a feministic text taking Post-Modern generation into consideration. Lily is an independent, educated little creature, not confined to the home domestically. Women want to be free in their thinking. Their thoughts are bound by the invisible shackles of male's criticism.

Even **other female characters**, moving around these two, **play a vital role** that is mentioned in the starting of the essay. They are not much mentioned itself suggests that existence of women in the society is mandatory but if the crisis occurs becomes **compulsory**. The concept of morality in depicting Mrs. Ramsay defers from page to page of the novel and incidents to incidents. To endure, to suffer, to be subdued and docile, and not to remain talkative but it engenders the readers to think that male-dominated society should claim women's place in it.

In a nutshell, the depiction of a woman in the novel is subjugated by the educated husband who is a philosopher and intellectual. Various readings of the novel bring the point of stream of consciousness that it also affected by feministic reading. One character thinking about what he [or she] thinks about what,

in the novel. Thinking process is lacking the need of Mrs. Ramsay who is not supposed to die but to remain alive until the last page of the novel to come.

"To the Lighthouse" : The relation of art and life

In "To the Lighthouse" we find that Mrs. Ramsay opens the novel and Lily Briscoe closes it, as the stuff of life may be converted, through a particular medium, to a work of art. So, if life and art are viewed as polar opposites in "To the Lighthouse", Mrs. Ramsay and Lily Briscoe may be regarded as their respective exponents. And in our first view of Mrs. Ramsay she is already the subject of Lily's painting. The main reason for Mrs. Ramsay becoming the chief character of the novel is that as personification or as abstraction, life is longer than art. Probably, that is why Part I, in which life dominates, is almost twice the length of Part III, in which art is the focal centre.

Art Needs Life to Nourish It: - It cannot be disputed that art can be nourished only in life. But whereas art needs life to nourish it, life is often unaware of the power of art to give it permanence. Thus, although Lily the painter is in love with Mrs. Ramsay and, we may add, with all her family and their diverse doings, she cannot take Lily's painting seriously. Thus, too, Mrs. Ramsay's quite literal short-sightedness is played against Lily's 'vision'. To Lily it seems ironic that Mrs. Ramsay presided with immutable calm over destinies which she completely failed to understand; Mrs. Woolf wants to suggest that life may be its own worst enemy, even as the artist may rebel against art's strict exigencies. Although it is only momentary, Mrs. Ramsay 'felt alone in the presence of her old antagonist, life'. And Lily is 'drawn out of gossip, out of living, out of community with people into the presence of the formidable ancient enemy of her....this form....roused one to perpetual combat.'

Mrs. Ramsay and Lily: - It may be noted that the two women are not monolythic symbols, but reveal vivid personalities behind their major meaning. Hence it is not 'artistic' Lily but 'living' Mrs. Ramsay, who is endowed with rare beauty. But both women have a slightly exotic quality—Lily her Chinese eyes, and Mrs. Ramsay, a Hellenic face. And both women dress soberly in grey. Inspite of her easy, direct spontaneity, we never become familiar enough with Mrs. Ramsay to learn her first name. On the other hand, Mrs. Ramsay calls Lily by her Christian name, suggesting the pure virgin which by Part III, when she is forty four becomes a skimpy old maid holding a paintbrush'. These humanizing details root the character to a literal ground, so that they never become figures of allegory, but rather magnetic poles for particular lines of force.

Mrs. Ramsay Dominates Part I Completely: - In Part I we find that Mrs. Ramsay who is at the heart of all the busy, indiscriminate activities of her large family and her too numerous summer guests. With her masterfulness, her positiveness, something matter-of-fact in her enables her to manage superbly other people's lives, from trivial to important aspect. On the other hand, Lily can barely manage to manipulate her paint brushes, and shrinks from anything strange on her canvas. And then by Part III Lily has become aware of a fundamental difference between herself and Mrs. Ramsay. Mrs. Ramsay might fall occasionally into meditation but she 'disliked anything that reminded her that she had been seen sitting thinking.' But both in Lily the painter and Mr.

Carmichael the poet there was some notion about the ineffectiveness of action, the supremacy of thought.

Efforts to Render Her Actions Effective: - We find Mrs. Ramsay bending all efforts to render her actions effective. The most important of them is her endeavour to supply emotional sustenance for her husband and children and it is found that when she dies they are left in a chaotic confusion. This is clearly revealed in the opening of Part III. This is how Lily felt after coming back to that old summer-house after so many years:

"She had come last night when it was all mysterious, dark. Now she was awake…..There was this expedition—they were going to the Lighthouse, Mr. Ramsay, Cam, and James. They should have gone already-they had to catch the tide or something. And Cam was not ready and, James was not ready and Nancy had forgotten to order the sandwiches and Mr. Ramsay had lost his temper and banged out of the room". Mrs. Ramsay is a very ardent match-maker and she also feel protective towards the whole male sex. She is also eager to help the poor and the sick. And then she is found striving earnestly for the unity and integrity of social scenes such as her dinner party. Lily Briscoe also acknowledges Mrs. Ramsay's manipulation of life. But, ironically, Mrs. Ramsay is seen 'making' while Lily merely 'tried'. But unfortunately Mrs. Ramsay's efforts are doomed from the start; life cannot stand still; time must pass. It is only in another sphere can moments be given permanence. And the notable difference between the two is that Mrs. Ramsay has the rare beauty of ordering a scene so that it is, 'like a work of art', but it is Lily who creates a concrete work of art.

Lily and Her Art: - From our first view of Lily in the first part of the novel, 'standing on the edge of the lawn painting' to the significant final view, 'Yes, she thought laying down, her brush in extreme fatigue. I have had my vision'-the insistence is upon her art. From the very beginning, inspite of all her doubts and diffidence, she is found painting with stubborn integrity to her vision, in the bright colours which Mr. Paunceforte's pastels have rendered unfashionable. It is the resolution to move her tree to the centre of the canvas that sustains her through the dinner party, protects her against Charles Tansley's pronouncement that women cannot paint or write. And by Part III we find that Lily's paint brush has become for her 'the one dependable thing in a world of strife, ruin, chaos' and she seems more sure of her technique: the lines are nervous, but her brush-strokes are decisive. It is she who imagines the artistic creeds of Carmichael "how 'you' and 'I' and 'she' pass, and vanish; nothing stays all changes; but not words not paint". Yet even then, even to the final brush-stroke that brings the novel to a close, she continues to be haunted by the problematical and shifting relationship of art and life.

Part III: Art and Life: - This relation of art to life has been most beautifully treated in Part III of the novel. The structure of this section is based upon the shuttling back and forth between Lily on the island and those in the boat watching the island, who in turn get further away. This is accompanied by the corresponding movement of those in the boat getting closer to the Lighthouse and Lily, getting closer to the solution of her aesthetic problem. And the determining factor of each is love (the art of life), which might perhaps be defined as order or the achievement of form in human relations through the surrender of personality. Lily finishes her pa

sympathy for Mr. Ramsay which she had previously refused to give. James and Cam give up their long-standing antagonism towards their father. Mr. Ramsay himself, at the same time, attains a resolution of his own tensions and worries. Hence 'the two actions, the arrival at the lighthouse and the last stroke of the push are also united; both are acts of completion and it is obvious that they are meant to happen together.'

In "To the Lighthouse", Mrs. Virginia Woolf Stood Apart from her Age

Virginia Woolf turned over in our minds to be "stood apart from her age", for she had no part and parcel with the noisy trafficking of the years between the wars. Virginia Woolf is more in the mood of investigating and portraying the inner realities of human mind than the husk of life or external world. In a word, this would be appropriate to say that Virginia Woolf's novels do not mirror her age. Now we would discuss how far this remark is in the vicinity of verisimilitude. A momentous work of art may or may not be triumphant in having immediate approbation but to be significant at all, it may, in some direct or indirect, have contemporary significance.

Even a work of universal importance is willy-nilly a work of contemporary judiciousness. The plays of Shakespeare are the case in point. Of course, this does not mean that an exceptional writer always keeps him busy in social nit-picking. It interprets and expresses the contemporary truth which is more than mere social criticism. The statement that Virginia Woolf stood apart from her age is not entirely accurate; Virginia Woolf's opus is an oeuvre of considerable contemporary momentousness. The period between two great wars was a period of transition, a period of breaking up and settling down, a sort of cultural weekend between two full weeks of full time cultural activity. The two days of the weekend reflect the twenties and thirties respectively of this century. There is a considerable difference between these two decades. The imaginative and romantic literature of the twenties is not so much of sociological importance. It does not concern itself with the study of man as a member of a community. It falls in twenties that Virginia Woolf bore the best of her talented part of work.

To be truly a representative of this age, this oeuvre could only communicate the "Orts, scraps and fragments" of a distinguished and disintegrated society. If by standing apart from her age, we mean that in her composition, she is aloof from the contemporary scene in its material manifestations, the predicaments of business, industry and politics, the charge is veracious. Virginia Woolf did not stand apart from her times in the sense that she did not leave alone the fundamental law of literature that is of spiritual significance to the age and the people for which it is jotted down. Most of her novels are related to stream of consciousness movement. Mrs. Ramsay is the protagonist of the novel "To the Lighthouse". Her stream of outlook has divergent traits. Like all other women, her children, her shabbiness, gossip and rumours of surroundings are her concern. Only at times, the problem of suffering death and penury captivate her imagination. Her stream of thought bears the fillip of her personality.

Another universal phenomenon, the novelist presents and exhibits in her work of fiction through Lily Briscoe. She shows us that from what sort of circumstances, an artist undergoes in the process of creation. Lily like Mrs. Ramsay puts her endeavours to denude reality. She paints her picture, which is accomplished with flying cc

the journey "To the Lighthouse" comes off. Unlike James Joyce, Mrs. Virginia Woolf unveils the contemporary colour of stream of awareness through a number of characters. Many of her novels as Mrs. Dalloway, The Waves, Between the Acts, The years and To the Lighthouse are the evidence of the reality that Mrs. Virginia Woolf has not stood apart from her age.

Moreover, Virginia's staging of her age is according to the grapevine hidden but through the characters that she has dilated, it turns out to be lucid like daylight that she is not in some dingy, shabby, in-house world where the outer circumstances cannot enter. She exudes the breath and odour of realistic human behaviours in her works. So by all means we can opine that Virginia is a writer of extreme understanding of human behaviours and psychology, she lives in a time specific but thinks and visualises it in universal backdrop. That is why, sometime critics feel that she stood apart from her age, but it is not possible for a realistic writer like Virginia to turn a deaf ear to the cries of her age.

"To The Lighthouse" as a novel of manners presenting a picture of the middle class academic society

Introductory Remarks: - In her one of the most well-known essays included in The Common Reader: First Series, while expressing her views about the early work of James Joyce Virginia Woolf has given us her ideas about the significance of small events which are worth noting. This is what she says about it.

"Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness. Let us not take it for granted that life exists more fully in what is commonly thought big than in what is commonly thought small. Anyone who has read The Portrait of The Artist as a Young Man or what promises to be a far more interesting work, Ulysses now appearing in The Little Review will have hazarded some theory of this nature as to Mr. Joyce's intention. Mr. Joyce is concerned at all costs to reveal the flickering of that innermost flame which flashes its messages through the brain, and in order to preserve it he disregards with complete courage whatever seems to him adventitious, whether it be probability, or coherence, or any other of those signposts which for generations have served to support the imagination of a reader when called upon to imagine what he can neither touch nor see.... If we want life itself, here surely we have it."

Treatment of Minor Events: - A careful study of Virginia Woolf's novel clearly reveals that there is a tendency to give importance to minor and random events such as measuring the stocking, a fragment of a conversation with the maid, a telephone call, or throwing of the mutilated fish into the sea in To The Lighthouse. According to an eminent critic—great changes, exterior turning points, let alone catastrophes, do not occur and though elsewhere in To The Lighthouse such things are mentioned, it is hastily, without preparation or context incidentally, and as it were only for the sake of information." This is how Time Passes, the second part of To The Lighthouse tragic deaths of Prue Ramsay and Andrew Ramsay are announced and that also in brackets:

"[Prue Ramsay died that summer in some illness connected with child-birth, which was indeed a tragedy, people said. They said nobody deserved happiness more.]"

And this about Andrew:

"[A shell exploded. Twenty or thirty young men were blown up in France, among them Andrew Ramsay, whose death, mercifully, was instantaneous]". The same tendency is revealed in works of some very different writers, such as Proust of France or Hamsun of Norway. But we now find writers presenting minor happenings, which are insignificant as exterior factors in a person's destiny, for their own sake or rather as points of departure for the development of motives, for a penetration which opens up new prospective into a milieu or a consciousness or the given historical setting. "They have discarded presenting the story of their characters with any claim to exterior completeness in chronological order, and with the emphasis on exterior turning points of destiny. James Joyce's tremendous novel—an encyclopaedic work, a mirror of Dublin, of Ireland, a mirror too of Europe and its millennia—has for its frame the externally insignificant course of a day in the lives of a school teacher and an advertising broker. It takes less than twenty-four hours in their lives—just as To The Lighthouse describes portions of two days widely separated in time.',

Importance of Apparently Small Affairs: - Very often Virginia Woolf has tried to reveal the importance of small and trivial affairs just to suggest the deal of inadequacy of human relationship. In the first part of To The Lighthouse we find Mrs. Ramsay having a feeling of a very disagreeable sensation when she becomes conscious of the fact that she had to hide many small things from her husband—that the mending of the greenhouse roof would cost fifty pounds, 'that his last book was not quite his best book.' She sadly felt that all this diminished the entire joy, the pure joy, of the two notes sounding together'. Then the sight of Augustus Carmichael shuffling past strongly reminded her the inadequacy of human relationships. She remembered how odious it was on the part of Mrs. Carmichael to turn her husband out of their house. She could never understand Mr. Carmichael, the poet, whom Lily Briscoe understood and appreciated so much and who seemed to her 'like on old pagan god, shaggy with weeds in his hair and the trident…..in his hand'. So the Carmichael and the fairy story of the fisherman and his wife, which Mrs. Ramsay was reading to James, her youngest son, become the symbol of the inadequacy of human relationships to her.

A Picture of Middle Class Society: - Virginia Woolf's special linking for this apparently small and trivial affairs is mainly responsible for making To The Lighthouse a picture of the middle class society. Ralph Freedman has elaborately discussed this point in his book. According to him:"To The Lighthouse-like most novels by Virginia Woolf—is also a novel of manners. Not only the Ramsays and their observer Lily Briscoe but also of the other figures comprise a picture of middle class academic society at the beginning of the Georgian era. Characters are treated with the sharp satire and the eyes for the incongruous within prescribed conventions which is the heritages of Jane Austen. As in its traditional prototypes, the novel is set in a rambling summer-house where society can be depicted at leisure with ample opportunity for personal interaction. Charles Tansley, the 'atheist', blundering, aggressive, 'writing his dissertation is treated with pitiless satire at one moment and with warm insight at another. The fastidious bachel

William Bankes, is shown with excellent manners and his limited sensibility. On the other hand, old Mr. Carmichael, the social blunderer, emerges as a successful lyrical poet who alone can communicate with Lily Briscoe. This group is carefully devised as a satire portrait of the times, and of a particular way of life, but it also suggests a pattern of sensibilities illustrating the movement of the narrative. The dinner table, divided between husband and wife, acts as a magnetic field in which the members of his group are in continuous suspension, drawn hither and thither by either pole." Thus we may conclude by asserting that the depiction of this particular aspect of life is really a distinctive feature of this great novel.

To The Lighthouse : Characters as vehicle for ideas

Virginia Woolf discarded both the first person and the third person narration in her novel because she found the method of narration known as **multiple inner points of view** as the **best means to project her theme** in the novel. Therefore, the mental processes of the characters seem to be presented without any interference from the author. The external world is depicted through its reflection in the observing consciousness.

The effect of **this narrative mode is to force the reader to construct the world of the novel for himself and to apply his own judgments to that world**. While the omniscient narrator at one end of the scale of narration guides the reader carefully through the fictional world and the values by which that world is to be assessed, the multiple inner viewpoint of novel provides no certain or reliable 'truths' and forces the reader to become the novelist's active partner in creating the novel's fictional world. Another effect of this narrative mode is to concentrate the reader's attention on how characters experience events rather than on what is experienced.

Virginia Woolf's method of creating the characters in "To the Lighthouse" is a cumulative one. Our knowledge of the characters depends on the accumulated impressions of them we receive, both from their own reflections and observations and from the responses they elicit from the other characters.

In "To the Lighthouse" **The characters are used as a Vehicle** of Virginia Woolf's ideas. The reader is obliged to recreate for himself the characters of this novel. The opening section of the novel gives us a clear impression of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay. The two, as they are presented here, provide a study in contrasts; Mrs. Ramsay is portrayed in images of softness and fertility — the fountain, the flowering fruit tree —while Mr. Ramsay is symbolised by the arid scimitar, the beak of brass. The husband-wife, male-female polarity of this opening section is a theme developed through the novel, and is reflected in the contrasting qualities of intellect possessed by both.

Mrs. Ramsay is **portrayed** as **possessing instinctive, intuitive intelligence**, while her husband's intellect is of the rational and orderly variety symbolised by his perception of human knowledge as a series of letters of the alphabet. To over-emphasise the symmetry of these characteristics is, however, to do an injustice to the complexity and suggestiveness of the novel's characterisation. These symbolic intimations of characters are part of a larger scheme of characterisation which provides a psychologically realistic

series of portraits. A fine example of the powerful juxtaposition of symbolic and realistic portraiture can be found in the description of Mrs. Ramsay as she sits with her husband after the dinner party. There is psychological realism in the description of her puzzling over her husband's desire for fame, and in the description of a mind drifting through association rather than logic from one idea to another.

As Mrs, Ramsay's is the dominating point of view in the early sections of the novel; the reader may easily be persuaded to take her side. She appears to represent feminity, maternity and sympathy, and we feel some aversion from the uncompromisingly severe truthfulness of Ramsay and Charles Tansley. Our sympathy is increased when we look through her eyes at her reflection in the mirror and see a fading beauty that is a model of unselfishness. This early limited version of her character and that of her husband is soon modified by her complex reflections about Charles Tansley, who arouses in her a mixture of maternal desire to please and protect and an equally strong feeling of repugnance based on his awkwardness.

Her attitude towards the young student reveals social condescension and snobbery. When her husband corrects her forecast of the weather, she responds with strong anger to what she feels is blindness to the feelings of others, and a sense of martyrdom and moral superiority. She dwells on their financial insecurity and her suspicion that his most recent book is not as successful as earlier ones. Another guest, Mr Carmichael, makes her feel uncomfortable because he makes no demands on her; her characteristic response is to feel pity for him. Yet she is aware of the ambiguity of her emotional response, however much she may try to evade personal responsibility.

She wishes to keep her youngest son and daughter in a state of perpetual childhood, and she admits to herself that she prefers 'boobies' to intelligent young men, for she can control children and boobies. This manipulative element in her character is alien to her perception of herself, and she is puzzled that Minta's mother should have accused her of alienating her daughter's affections. Mrs Ramsay defends herself from this accusation by direct reference to her appearance, to her fading beauty and to the shabbiness of her clothes, all of which are made to reflect her internal self-sacrifice as a kind of theatrical costume signifying goodness and thereby absolving her of hostile criticism.

Mrs Ramsay instinctively identifies herself with Lily the artist and with Carmichael the poet. Like them, she is a creator but her medium is human beings and her form, human relationships. The novel makes it clear that she is only partially successful in her art; the radiance of her dinner party may draw people together momentarily, but it is inevitably destroyed by time. Paul and Minta may have their courtship of intense happiness under her guidance, but time destroys their marriage. Mrs Ramsay's attempts to shield her children from the force; of mutability are defeated and she too is destroyed by her familiar antagonist, death.

The complexity of Mrs. Ramsay's character is revealed through her consciousness of reality and the language and images she uses to describe it. It is created also through her reflection in the eyes of the other characters. The three male guests-Tansley, Bankes and Carmichael show varying responses to her. Carmichael is emotionally self-sufficient and is aware of the degree of manipulation involved in Mrs. Ramsay's se

Bankes, Ramsay's long-time friend and colleague, responds to her mystery and beauty, but is also partially conscious of her destructive powers. Tansley also responds to her beauty but is even more attracted by her pity for him. The young couple, Paul and Minta, are completely under her spell and obey her wish that they should marry. The Ramsay children respond with love and with varying degrees of admiration, ranging from James who adores her unquestiongly, to Jasper who reflects that 'being his mother she lived away in another division of the world'.

Lily Briscoe's perception of Mrs. Ramsay and how she responds is more complex than any of the other characters. She is fully aware of her friend's ability to dominate through love and pity, but she also recognises her worth. Of all the characters in the novel, Lily is the one who fully grasps the ambiguities of her hostess' character and comes to love the whole Mrs. Ramsay. It is Lily who has the final vision of Mrs. Ramsay, and it is Lily who makes that vision permanent through her art. Mr. Ramsay is, in many respects, the direct antithesis of his wife. He loves her very deeply, but can still be infuriated by her disrespect for factual truth. His worship of truth matters more to him than the feelings of his friends and family. His intellectual integrity gives him a quality of aloofness, but this is deceptive for he loves and needs his family more than his seemingly emotional but inwardly withdrawn wife. Unlike Mrs. Ramsay, Mr. Ramsay gives little thought to his effect on others; he stalks around the garden reciting poetry aloud, contemptuous of the responses of his family and guests. He makes overt demands on the sympathies and emotions around him. These traits are quite different from his wife's acute self-consciousness and her covert manipulation of others.

Like the character of Mrs. Ramsay, **Mr. Ramsay's is portrayed through his own consciousness and through the eyes of those who see him**. An apparently contradictory web of images surrounds him: he is hard and arid like a scimitar, cruel as a beak of brass that gorges upon his wife's energy and fertility. Yet he is also an intrepid explorer the sailor who travels where lesser mortals do not care. He is a loving, protective paterfamilias who responds with warmth to the sight of a mother hen and her chickens, and who can be overwhelmed by admiration for his wife.

The other characters, especially Bankes and Lily, flesh out the details of his portrait. Bankes remembers Ramsay as a young bachelor and, in accordance with Bankes' own emotional aridity, regrets the domestic and emotional aspects of Ramsay's life which he feels, have weakened his potential and destroyed their friendship. Yet Bankes envies his friend and sees him in a powerful image that combines elements of Ramsay's intellectual integrity and domestic affection as the father with the child on his shoulder, looking at a picture of in eruption, Lily is, once more, the most astute and balanced of the observers, noticing his single-minded fidelity to the truth as well as his egotistical pursuit of sympathy and admiration, while acknowledging his tenderness and courage. In Virginia Woolf's portrayal of Mrs. Ramsay following the dinner party we noted a balance between symbolism and realism in the very language and style of the novel. This equilibrium is apparent also in the depiction of the Ramsays as a couple. Their portrait is drawn in a manner which makes them credible in terms of psychological realism but they exist also as powerful, generalised symbols.

To The Lighthouse : Concept of Time

Virginia Woolf admitted that life reflected in fiction is not a regularly patterned universe with an objective existence; it is a state of mind. Life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end.

Because existence is not objective, it cannot be absolute. And even time, as thoroughly interwoven into the fiber of being, cannot be absolute itself. This is why all of Virginia Woolf's novels are, in one way or another, experiments upon the concept of time. Perhaps the most obvious is "Mrs. Dalloway", which envisions time as a complex interplay between the present experience and what remains in our minds in the form of memories. But other novels, like "To the Lighthouse", make use of the concept of time in a much deeper sense: they create an intricate temporal fabric that is meant to underline the destructive force of the universe, upon which the human being watches helplessly. "To the Lighthouse" is an elegy upon time and that is why time appears in such novels as a complex entity itself.

The Window

"To the Lighthouse" is made up of three distinct parts, each of which envisions time differently. In the first section, entitled "The Window," Virginia Woolf conceives of time as a matter of psychology rather than chronology. She creates what the French philosopher Henri Bergson termed durée, a conception of the world as primarily intuitive and internal rather than external or material. "The Window" deals with the minute details of a single afternoon and evening, stretching them out into a considerable piece of prose: we are able to follow the thoughts of the key figures of the Ramsays as they take care of their guests at the holiday house in the Hebrides. This is how we also realize that time itself is interiorized and seen different by the two protagonists, it is actually a mosaique of the different perceptions each of the guests at the house have. For Mr Ramsay, time is not forgiving. As a philosopher, he most fears for his popularity and that in the end, he will be forgotten under the thick veil of time:

And his fame lasts how long? It is permissible even for a dying hero to think before he dies how men will speak of him hereafter. His fame lasts perhaps two thousand years. And what are two thousand years?. What, indeed, if you look from a mountain top down the long wastes of the ages? The very stone one kicks with one's boot will outlast Shakespeare. His own little light would shine, not very brightly, for a year or two, and would then be merged in some bigger light, and that in a bigger still.

It seems that the only comfort he can find is not in knowledge, which seems relative and absurd, but in the surrendering to the soothing existence of his family:

Who shall blame him? Who will not secretly rejoice when the hero puts his armour off, and halts by the window and gazes at his wife and son, who, very distant at first, gradually come closer and closer, till lips and book and head are clearly before him, though still lovely and unfamiliar from the intensity of his isolation and the waste of ages and the perishing of the stars, and finally putting his pipe in his pocket and bending his

magnificent head before her—who will blame him if he does homage to the beauty of the world?

He considers their existence the only beauty of life, but is also embarrassed, as an intellectual individual, for his incapacity to fully admire the beauty of the world without remorse and with detachment.

Mrs. Ramsay, on the other hand relies more on intuition than on intelligence in order to make sense of the world. She even admits that the intellectual air of the men around her (including her husband) is sometimes too tiring for her simple, yet beautiful and gracious mind: "they were walking on and Mrs. Ramsay did not quite catch the meaning, only the words, here and there … dissertation … fellowship … readership … lectureship. She could not follow the ugly academic jargon, that rattled itself off so glibly." She accepts the passing of time just as well as she accepts the authoritative nature of her husband, because she knows she can make the world better with her beauty and give everything the air of rightfulness:

She went out of her way indeed to be friendly. She bore about with her, she could not help knowing it, the torch of her beauty; she carried it erect into any room that she entered; and after all, veil it as she might, and shrink from the monotony of bearing that it imposed on her, her beauty was apparent. She had been admired. She had been loved. She had entered rooms where mourners sat. Tears had flown in her presence. Men, and women too, letting go to the multiplicity of things, had allowed themselves with her the relief of simplicity. It injured her that he should shrink. It hurt her. And yet not cleanly, not rightly. That was what she minded, coming as it did on top of her discontent with her husband;

But at the same time, there are things that startle her. First, it is the fact that some people are immune to her charms and accuse her of trying to impose a philosophy upon life on everyone. Then, there is the transactional level of life, the financial problems for example, that contrast so deeply with her natural, pervading beauty. And thirdly, it is her own fear that her children will grow up and lose the innocence of childhood. These are all signs that in the end time wins the fight, and that the temporary paralysis that happy moments instill is just a fleeting victory upon the inevitable nature of the universe.

Time passes

And indeed, in the second chapter of the novel, "Time Passes" Mrs. Ramsay is defeated and with her the narrative flow of the beautiful summer day is disrupted. Many of the characters from the first section disappear. In "Time Passes" time is fully objective and compresses an entire decade into barely twenty pages. Virginia Woolf chooses to portray the effects of time on objects like the house and its contents rather than on human development and emotion. "Time Passes" validates Lily's and the Ramsays' fears that time will bring about their demise, as well as the widespread fear among the characters that time will erase the legacy of their work. Here, everything from the garden to the prized Waverley novels slowly sinks into oblivion.

Because the focus shifts from psychology in "The Window" to chronology in "Time Passes," human beings become secondary concerns in the latter section of the novel. This effect replicates the anxieties that plague the characters. Mr. Ramsay's fear that there is little hope for human immortality is confirmed as Virginia Woolf presents the death of the novel's heroine in an unadorned aside:

[Mr Ramsay, stumbling along a passage one dark morning, stretched his arms out, but Mrs Ramsay having died rather suddenly the night before, his arms, though stretched out, remained empty.]

What we learn of the central character in this brief section is presented as an aside, set apart by brackets. Here, Virginia Woolf starts to chart the relentless, cruel, and more conventional passage of time by adopting the tone of news bulletins and marching orders. The passage may well allude to the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, a husband losing his wife at the gates of Hell.

This choice is remarkable on two levels. First, thematically, it skillfully asserts that human life is, in the natural scheme of things, incidental. Second, the offhand mention of Mrs. Ramsay's death challenges established literary tradition by refusing to indulge in conventional sentiment. The emotionally hyperbolic Victorian deathbed scene is absent for Mrs. Ramsay, and Virginia Woolf uses an extreme economy of words to report the deaths of Mrs. Ramsay, Prue, and Andrew.

In this section, the darkened tone that begins to register toward the end of "The Window" comes to the fore both literally and figuratively. Mrs. Ramsay's death constitutes the death of womanhood and the dismantling of domesticated power in the novel. With the deaths of Prue and Andrew, the world's best potential and best hope seem dashed. Prue's death in childbirth strikes out at beauty and continuity, while Andrew's demise brings out the impact of war and the stunting of masculine potential so important to the novel's historical context. In a way, the novel miniaturizes a vast historical moment for Europe as a whole. "Time Passes" brings to the Ramsays destruction as vast as that inflicted on Europe by World War I. When the Ramsays return to their summer home shaken, depleted, and unsure, they represent the postwar state of an entire continent.

The Lighthouse

In the final part of the novel, named "The Lighthouse", Virginia Woolf returns to the narrative technique of the first chapter, giving the time back its subjective nature. In fact, if we try to see the novel through the eyes of the young James, who wanted to go to the lighthouse in the first chapter, we realize that the writer wants to give the impression that only a day had passed. The short intermezzo chapter Time Passes has taken place during the night and now the morning finds the remaining characters returning at the house in the Hebrides.

Gently the waves would break (Lily heard them in her sleep); tenderly the light fell (it seemed to come through her eyelids). And it all looked, Mr Carmichael thought, shutting his book, falling asleep, much as it used to look.

But there is a fundamental difference between the time here and the time of the first chapter. If at first time was more of a sensorial perception, now time makes a different imprint upon the minds of the characters; it operates to forge the matter of memory, "leaf upon leaf." And we might say that memory, concretized, and does appear to James just as they enter into a strange proximity with the lighthouse that has lain for so long in imagination only.

"He could see the white-washed rocks; the tower, stark and straight; he could see that it was barred with black and white; he could see windows in it; he could even see washing spread on the rocks to dry. So that was the Lighthouse, was it?"

The lighthouse that comes into view as they approach in the boat emerges as a solid, material object in contrast to the "silvery, misty-looking tower with a yellow eye" that had sat nestled among "leaves and flowers" of "that happy world" of his past. Both are the lighthouse, he quickly decides, as Virginia Woolf insists on leaving open the ethics of memory and immediate experience to their inherent pluralisms:

"For nothing was simply one thing. The other Lighthouse was true too"

Not only may memory be traced as a physical impression "folded" within, returned to as a material object, but in the middle of the novel Mrs. Ramsay imagines the past as something "sealed up" that one might return to through volition. During the climactic dinner party that occupies the exact center of the novel, Mrs. Ramsay takes brief moments out of her demanding role as orchestrator and unifier of the diverse needs of her guests to take respite in the past: "that dream land, that unreal but fascinating place, the Mannings' drawing-room at Marlow twenty years ago; where one moved about without haste or anxiety"

The past is "more real than the present" because it is available both to experience and re-experience – to understanding and to the enhanced re-cognition involved in knowing again. As Henri Bergson proposes in his 1911 lectures at Oxford, "We tend to represent the past as if it were non-existent"; while this is an "illusion," he claims, that is essential for life, it is "dangerous in the highest degree." Further, "the past makes a body with the present and continually creates with it." One's position toward the past is open both to the on-going becoming of the past, and to a stabilization of previous experience that the present cannot yet offer.

For Woolf – as for Freud – the intenser moments of the past leave palpable psychic and sensual remains, while memorialization itself, and especially writing of the past, becomes a way of approaching a temporality deepened by the past's enduring becoming.

Cubist Time

As a conclusion, in To the Lighthouse, Woolf approaches time with a near-cubist depiction. We end up with a triangle of temporality, with each aspect of past, present, and future often synchronically evoked. In retrospective, we could say that the second part, "Time Passes," works as a pure present, rendered with an acceleration of narrative time alongside a condensation of intensely lyrical prose; while

section, “The Lighthouse,” as the pure, realized and realizable, future. This seems simple, but what is interesting is that in this text the present is always anticipating its future while registering the materiality of the past, while the future finds its meaning in enacting a similar return.

After Part One – which already through its title, “The Window,” proposes a kind of vantage outlook to both space and time – the text changes its focus from futurity to anteriority, from hoping for a trip to the lighthouse, to alternately remembering and repressing the past and its original motherly figure. The novel as a whole bears the pressure of answering to the intensely pure willed, desiring “I” of James as a six-year old boy. From the moment when James’s desire – with all the profound metaphorical significance this yearning implies (we wonder if James does not want to go to the root of symbol or to the heart of metaphor itself in wanting to go “to the lighthouse”) – is refused, his delighted fervour is transformed into a memory of thwarted desire.

Mr. Ramsay : The Two-Dimensional Character

In the novel, To the Lighthouse, Virginia Woolf illustrates the character of Mr. Ramsay, a husband and father of eight children. As a husband, he degrades and mentally abuses his wife, Mrs. Ramsay, and as a father, he disparages and psychologically injures his children. Yet, Mr. Ramsay has another side -- a second dimension. He carries the traits of a very compassionate and loving husband and a securing and nurturing father. Although Woolf depicts Mr. Ramsay as crude, brusque, and insensitive, he, nonetheless, desires happiness and welfare for his family.

Even though Mr. Ramsay frequently scolds and denounces Mrs. Ramsay, he still seeks happiness and comfort for his wife. For example, after Mrs. Ramsay lies to James about the next day's weather, "He [Mr. Ramsay] stamped his foot on the stone step. 'Damn you,' he said." (31) Mr. Ramsay devastates his wife's emotions. Because of a little lie, the temperamental Mr. Ramsay hurts, if not kills, Mrs. Ramsay's emotions. Still, right after the incident, Mr. Ramsay self-reflects and "[he was] ashamed of that petulance [that he brought to his wife]." (32) Mr. Ramsay understands and regrets the sorrow he brought on Mrs. Ramsay. He sympathizes with her and is "ashamed" for what he had done. Mr. Ramsay wants to appease his wife and make her happy as a result of the torment that he inflicted on her. Next, Woolf again illustrates Mr. Ramsay's insensitive dimension when Mr. Ramsay makes Mrs. Ramsay "bend her head as if to let the pelt of jagged hail, the drench of dirty water, bespatter her unrebuked." (32) Mr. Ramsay is heartless to his wife's feelings; it is as if he enjoys "drenching" Mrs. Ramsay and enjoys seeing her in mental anguish. However, Woolf later contrasts the callous Mr. Ramsay with a more sensitive and caring Mr. Ramsay:

So stiffened and composed the lines of her face in a habit of sternness that when her husband passed… he could not help noting, the sternness at the heart of her beauty. It saddened him, and her remoteness pained him. (64)

Therefore, here Mr. Ramsay is portrayed as a sympathetic and caring husband that is "pained" by the expression of sorrow on his wife's face. Mr. Ramsay is sensitive to his wife's feelings and desires her well-being. Woolf illustrates the inconsistency of Mr. Ramsay's character through his and Mrs. Ramsay's interactions.

Next, Woolf portrays Mr. Ramsay as a brusque and callous father by his harsh interactions with his children, when his true motive is to help and secure his children's welfare. Mr. Ramsay is depicted as a father whom, "had there been an axe, or a poker, any weapon that would have gashed a hole in [Mr. Ramsay's] breast and killed him, there and then, James would have seized it," because of the Mr. Ramsay's constant, pessimistic rambling, "it won't be fine." (4) Mr. Ramsay is depicted as a sharp, deadly, and sarcastic killjoy that destroys the anticipation and happiness of his child, James. His children regard him with the utmost rancor that they even think of stabbing him to death. However, little do his children know that, "he [Mr. Ramsay] was incapable of untruth; never altered a disagreeable word to suit the pleasure… of any human being, least of all of his own children, who… should be aware from childhood that life is difficult; [he would instill] courage, truth, and the power to endure." (4) The main purpose for his bluntness is not to intentionally hurt his children, but instead to strengthen them. He wants his children to grow up as successful, self-sufficient people. Thus, even though Mr. Ramsay does have a crude dimension in his character, he also has a second dimension of sensibility.

Virginia Woolf pictures the character of Mr. Ramsay as an authentic human being; he has a second-dimension that allows him to have both evil and sincere attributes. She does not write about either a very humble and generous man or a very insolent and cruel man; instead, Woolf gives the readers a real character with both traits that allow readers to understand the foibles of characters like Mr. Ramsay.

Mrs. Ramsay : A powerful Charter alive & dead

Introductory Remarks: - Mrs. Ramsay, one of the finest creations of Virginia Woolf, is without the least shade of doubt the central figure around which action and movement in To The Lighthouse is built. She is definitely radiating through the entire novel and impregnating all the other characters, major or minor. From the very beginning of the novel, structurally or psychologically, she is the cohesive force and the source of unity in it. In fact the first part of the novel is completely dominated by the towering personality of this great lady. It is none but Mrs. Ramsay who holds together almost all the divergent characters and the various incidents of the novel. All the characters of the novel have gathered at the summer house of the Ramsays in the Isle of Skye. All have their own inhibitions and idiosyncrasies and hence are incapable of establishing a rapport with one another. So she has to provide a cohesive force to bring the scattered stones together and to carve out a unified structure.

Mrs. Ramsay: the Opening Scene: - In the very opening scene of the novel the focus is in on Mrs. Ramsay. She serves as the model for Lily Briscoe as is found sitting at the window that links the lawn with the interior. People come and people may go, but Mrs. Ramsay's part is like that of a milestone in movement of various characters. Mr. Ramsay and Charles Tansley are first to come to Mrs. Ramsay. And Mrs. Ramsay's impressions about them, as revealed in her stream of consciousness, fill out the scene for the readers. Then Mr. Bankes and Lily Briscoe come within the range of her vision. So Mrs. Ramsay becomes the centre around which all seem to be moving. A large variety of people with all their ideas and idiosyncrasies take part in this novel. And the most remarkable thing is that Mrs. Ramsay with her great tact, sympathy and understanding holds them all together.

The Dinner Party: Mrs. Ramsay's Unifying Force: - Mrs. Ramsay's great role as a unifying and cohesive force is superbly revealed to us at the dinner party that forms the climax of the first movement of To The Lighthouse. In this sense she performs very creditably her duty of connecting the different individuals. And for this she has also to engage herself with some of them. Lily and Charles Tansley are at opposite poles. Her look falls on Tansley and she strongly feels :

"Nothing seemed to have merged. They all sat separate. And the whole of the effort of merging and flowing and creating rested on her. Again she felt, as a fact without hostility, the sterility of men, for if she did not do it nobody would do it,..."

Hence we find Mrs. Ramsay, simply by a look, compelling Lily to be considerate to Tansley. Thus she tactfully intervenes and Tansley is brought out of his isolation. He gets the required attention to make him feel at ease. Next Mr. Carmichael is also brought out of himself by the beauty of that 'yellow and purple dish of fruit' placed on the middle of the table. Even old Mr. Bankes, who thinks it to be a terrible waste of time to attend such dinners, feels elated and reconciled after hearing from her that he has just relished a French recipe of her grandmother's. Thus it is clearly revealed to us that 'the whole effort of the merging and flowing and creating rested on her'.

Mrs. Ramsay's Warmth and Compassion: - An emblem of Mrs. Ramsay's compassion or power to heal is the 'nurse carrying a light across a dark room' assuring a cross or fractious child; the light here stands for what Mrs. Ramsay has it in her power to give to others. A similar kind of emblem is used by Mrs. Ramsay herself in her reflection on her own beauty and ability to succeed with people: 'She bore about with her, she could not help knowing it, the torch of her beauty'. The 'light' here is that quality to attract people which people respond to, and through which they find access to her compassion. The warmth and brightness of Mrs. Ramsay's 'light' creates the 'circle of 'life' into which she can take her husband and make him secure. It fills the house too as she created drawing-room and kitchen, set them all aglow'. It is responsible too for the almost golden world of the Ramsay children, or of the childhood which she fosters and cherishes. So she creates a sun-filled world, though it has its shadows. And in her world she wants men and women to be united and become fruitful like herself. She offers her protection to all. At the intellectual level she offers her protection and inspiration to both science and art—to Lily Briscoe the painter, to Bankes the botanist, to Carmichael the poet, to Tansley the scholar and above all to her husband the philosopher. Thus she seems to have the whole of the other sex under her protection. For all this some critics suggest that Mrs. Ramsay may rather be taken as a symbol of the female principle in life.

Two Kinds of Truth and Mrs. Ramsay: - James Hafley has rightly remarked:

"To The Lighthouse is really the story of a contest between two kinds of truth—Mr. Ramsay's and Mrs. Ramsay's. For him truth is factual truth; for her truth is the movement towards truth; since truth is always being made, and never is made, the struggle for truth is the truth itself. The form of this novel at once expresses and verifies Mrs. Ramsay's truth. According to Bergson, certainty can follow only from factual extension of knowledge resulting in scientific order, such is the order which Mr. Ramsay sees."

So it is evident that Mr. Ramsay's is a logical scientific procedure toward truth.

"Mrs. Ramsay, on the other hand, knows by intuition rather than analysis and is, therefore, able to know reality-mobility, qualitative rather than quantitative diversity, time instead of space, movement itself and not merely the path of movement in space."

This shows that Mrs. Ramsay knows that feeling for others consideration and sympathy, are the eternal truths which never perish like the scientific and matter of fact truth which her husband seeks. That is why we find that ultimately Mr. Ramsay's truth—factual truth—is short-lived and Mrs. Ramsay's truth, which is the movement towards truth, prevails in the long run, in fact the second and final movement of To The Lighthouse clearly establishes that it is none but Mr. Ramsay 'had blundered' and Mrs. Ramsay's intuition in spite of its apparent illogicality has triumphed.

"Time Passes": Testing of Mrs. Ramsay's Truth: - "Time Passes," the second part of the novel, has been hailed as a masterpiece of description, probably unsurpassed in twentieth century English prose. But, in fact it is actually the testing of Mrs. Ramsay's vision by Mr. Ramsay's facts, and the apparent triumph of those facts, During the ten years' time everything seems to be slowly gravitating towards inevitable doom and destruction. "But there was a force working; something not highly conscious; something that leered, something that lurched…..They come with their brooms and pails at last, they get to work." And slowly some rusty laborious birth seems to take place. And the birth brings the house back to what it was and we find the Ramsays, Lily Briscoe and Mr. Carmichael back to the old summer-house after a lapse of ten years. The long night is over. And though she is no more in the land of the living, it reveals the ultimate triumph of Mrs. Ramsay's illusions.

Dominates even after Death: - The dominating personality and the imposing physical presence of Mrs. Ramsay is felt by us only in the first part of To The Lighthouse. In the second part all of a sudden we find: "Mr. Ramsay stumbling along a passage stretched his arms out one dark morning, but, Mrs. Ramsay having died rather suddenly the night before, he stretched his arms out, they remained empty." Even then she pervades the whole book. Her influence on the important characters, especially on Lily Briscoe and Mrs. Ramsay, is really very significant. In the final movement of the novel Mrs. Ramsay is constantly presented through Lily Briscoe's consciousness, and her full significance as a uniting force is clearly revealed. It is the apparition of this great lady, at the same window in the same summer-house, which enables Lily Briscoe to complete her picture after a lapse of ten years. And at the very same moment Mr. Ramsay, who under-took the journey to the lighthouse with Cam and James to fulfil one of Mrs. Ramsay's cherished wishes, lands at his destination. This shows how Mrs. Ramsay dead is more powerful than Mr. Ramsay living.

Conclusion: - So in the last part of the novel it is clearly revealed to us that it is Mrs. Ramsay who is right and not Mr. Ramsay. And her 'lies' are proved to be the truth that can refute Mr. Ramsay's 'facts'. Mrs. Ramsay's feeling for others, consideration and sympathy are the eternal truths — truths that never perish like the scientific and matter-of-fact truth sought by Mr. Ramsay.

The theme of "To The Lighthouse" is concerned with subject and object and Nature of reality

Introductory: Different Interpretations: - "To The Lighthouse" is, without any shade of doubt, a very complex novel having different interpretations from different critics. There is a general agreement that "To The Lighthouse" centres on questions of general order and chaos, male and female, permanence and change and intellection and intuition, the critics are far from unanimous in the actual tracing out of these themes. Thus, for example, it is clear that the simultaneous completion of Lily Briscoe's painting and arrival of Mr. Ramsay, James and Cam at the Lighthouse are somehow functioning together to complete the book, but no two critics have agreed as to what the function means as an ending of what has gone before. One claims that Mr. Ramsay is undergoing a transition from his former intellectual personality to a newly discovered intuitive view, while another critic says that Lily is moving from a concern with form, that is art, to a concern with content, that is life. Another critic sees in the ending a shift from time to the timeless, while a fourth one sees here a shift from egotism to selflessness, and a fifth critic thinks of this simultaneous convergence as a clumsy device which solves no problem."

We can multiply such examples, but it is evident that the dominant tendency is to interpret the thematic conflict—whatever it may be—as an antithesis to two mutually exclusive terms, one of which must be rejected in favour of the other. In fact, the full significance of the trip to the Lighthouse is not grasped. It is, more or less, seen as a one way affair. But a closer study of the novel will reveal that this either-or strategy is hardly adequate for dealing with the multiplicity of points of view through which each character is seen in the first section, the descending and the ascending movement of the second section and the shifting simultaneity of events which shape the third.

Relation of Self to Others: - It is mainly the first part of the novel that deals with the relation of self to others. Very soon it becomes clear that not one single trait or characteristic of a person can be seized upon and cherished in order to know him or her. Mrs. Ramsay for instance, is really a warm and beautiful woman, yet annoyingly concerned with ordering the lives of others. And this is quite clear from the resentment which many of her circles express against her mania for marriage. She is, no doubt, maternal.

Mr. Ramsay: - Next, let us take the example of Mr. Ramsay. Often he shows himself as a self-dramatising domestic tyrant, but still he is to be admired as a lone watcher at the dark frontiers of human ignorance. He is, no doubt, a detached and a lonely philosopher, yet he cannot but crave the contact of his wife and children. He is grim, yet optimistic, austere, yet fearful for his reputation; petty and selfish, and yet capable of losing himself completely in a novel of Scott; alert, yet he thrives on the simple company and the humble fare of fishermen.

Lily and Others: - In the same way Lily Briscoe is also a complex figure. She is a spinster disinterested in ordinary sexual attachment; she is nevertheless capable of a fierce outburst of love. She is, no doubt, an artist perpetually terrified by a blank canvas

but still she is able to find a solution to the complex problem of art-life relationship. In the same way Mr. Bankes, Mr. Tansley, all are double beings or complex figures of the novel. And we find that the climax of the first section occurs at the dinner, a brilliantly dramatic communion meal where each ordinary ego, with its petty aggression and resentment, is gradually blended with the others into a pattern of completion and harmony. Thus it is clear that double vision or multiple perspective is very much necessary to know and understand human personality. And in this section we are able to have just such a perspective, as each character is presented from at least two points of view.

Man to Nature: - We have seen how in the first section the relation of self to others has been dealt with. And Part II of the novel deals with the relation of man to nature. It does not portray merely the ravages of time and tide affecting the Ramsay family and their summer house. In addition the almost complete destruction of the house, we have also a chance to see its equally dramatic renewal. And then it is seen that its focus is on the comic-epic figure of Mrs. McNab, who lurches through the house wiping and dusting, breaking into a long dirge of sorrow and trouble, yet who feels, 'looking sideways in the glass, as if after all, she had some consolation, as if indeed there were twined about her dirge some incorrigible hope'. Thus, it is she and her two helpers, Mrs. Bast and her son, who fetch up from oblivion all the Waverly novels, and who rescue the house from impending doom and destruction.

Further, we find in this very section that the fortunes of the Ramsay family suffer so many setbacks. Mrs. Ramsay dies unexpectedly, Andrew is killed in the battlefield in France, and Prue dies of childbirth. Even then we are made to understand that Mr. Ramsay's work will endure, for the fate of his books was somehow tied up with the Waverly novels. Also, as the next section proceeds to demonstrate the family continues to develop. Thus it is clearly evident that section two or the central section of this great novel, therefore, demonstrates not the victory of natural chaos over human order, but rather the reverse. Man's power and will to live ultimately prevail over death and destruction.

Relation of Art to life: - Now, in the third section of the To The Lighthouse, the third level of the theme, the relation of art to life is treated. We find that the structure of this section is based upon the shuttling back and forth between Lily on the island and those in the boat watching the island, who in turn get further away. This is accompanied by the corresponding movement of those in the boat getting closer to the Lighthouse and Lily gelling closer to the solution of her aesthetic problem. And it must be noted that the determining factor in each case is love (the art of life), which might perhaps be defined as order or the achievement of form in human relations through the surrender of personality. Hence we find Lily brushing her painting as she feels the upsurge of that sympathy for Mr. Ramsay, which she had previously been stubbornly unable to give. James and Cam give up their longstanding antagonism towards their father. Mr. Ramsay, himself, at the same time, attains a resolution of his own tensions and worries. The point is not that they have made a one dimensional transition from this to that attitude, but that, since each is aware simultaneously both of what is receding and what is approaching, each has received in his way a sense of double vision.

Double Vision through Imagery: - A closer look at the imagery of the book, its figure of speech, its scene and plot may further demonstrate the presence of this double vision. To begin with, the Lighthouse itself as the most conspicuous image functions in two ways as something to be reached, and as source of flashing light. This means has a symbolic role to play. As a source of light, it appears in two connections, first, as it impinges upon the consciousness of Mrs. Ramsay in the first section after she had finished reading to James, and second, as it flashes upon the empty house in section two.

Thus we find that Mrs. Ramsay, the busy mother of eight children often feels the need 'to be silent, to be alone. Often she muses upon the alternating flashes of light in a mood of detachment, peace and rest. And this musing gives her a sense of victory over life, and she identifies herself with the third stroke—the long steady stroke—which becomes for her an image of purity and truth, of strength and courage, searching and beautiful. Her self, having shed its attachments, was free for the strongest adventures. When life sank down for a moment, the range of experience seemed limitless ... Losing personality, one lost the fret, the hurry, the stir, and there rose to her lips always some exclamation of triumph over life when things came together in this peace, this rest, this serenity, and pausing there she looked out to meet the stroke, of the Lighthouse, the long steady stroke, the last of the three which was—her stroke.'

Now this can be taken as the thesis of her emotional cycle, the antithesis is evoked as her mood soon changes into one of the grim recognition of inevitable facts of 'suffering, death, the poor', and she gradually descends from her state on triumphant freedom from the fact, the hurry and the stir by seizing upon the light from a different perspective, 'for when one woke, all one's relation changed'. Looking now at the light, it is the remorseless, the pitiless.

Reconciliation of Opposites: - Then it is found that only when these two moods become reconciled, will the cycle be complete. The second view seems 'so much here, yet so little hers', and then her meditations are crowned in their third phase by 'exquisite happiness, intense happiness', and she cries out, 'It is enough. It is enough'. It seems to be apparent that by seeing the long steady flash of light in two different aspects—as an image of expansion and release and, then, as an image of contraction and confinement, she has received the final intuition of the truth about the nature of reality. And this intuition is that one must be both subjectively involved, and objectively detached from life, and that true happiness rests neither in the one sphere nor in the other exclusively, but in achieving a harmonious balance, however fragile, between the two. Now she can rest contented, if only for a moment.

The second part or the middle section of the novel portrays the death and rebirth of the decaying and deserted house. Here the light makes its second appearance by gliding over the rooms gently as if it laid its cares arid lingered stealthily and looked and came lovingly again. It is clear from the sentence which follows immediately that this is one side of doubleness. 'But in the very lull of the loving caress as the long stroke leant upon the bed, the rock was rent asunder; another fold of the shawl loosened; there it hung, and swayed'. And a few pages on, just before the arrival of the forces of renewal in the house, in 'that moment, that hesitation when dawn trembles and night p

Lighthouse beam as an image of expansion and release (life-love-hope) and contraction and confinement (death-destruction-terror) held in relation, entered the room for a moment, 'sent its sudden stare over bed and wall in the darkness of winter looked with equanimity at the thistle and the swallow, the rat and the straw.' So we find that the three moods—loving care, tearing apart and equanimity are well represented by the light, It may now be asserted that only by going through the opposing experience or multiple perspective one can get a comprehensive view of life.

Lily's Experience: Doubleness of Reality: - In the third section of the novel, Lily's brush descends in stroke after stroke when she begins her painting for a second time. 'And so pausing and so flickering she attained a dancing rhythmical movement, as if the pauses were one part of the rhythm and the stroke another, and all were related. 'Thus, in each of the lighthouse beam itself, her vision begins to emerge in stroke and pause in alternation, and 'the truth, the reality which suddenly laid hands upon her emerged stark at the back of appearance and commanded her attention'. In other words, as the light flickers, as it goes and comes back, Lily begins to see the course that her painting was to take. This flicker, which to an ordinary observer is an endless dull repetition, holds Lily's mind and enables her to discover the truth and reality that the appearance signifies to her. The stroke and pause of the Lighthouse beam symbolise the problem of subject and object and the perception of nature of reality. Hence it may be concluded that reality has always a doubleness; and this can be understood only through a double vision.

Subject, Object and Native of Reality: - We find this phrase—subject and object and the nature of reality—in the first part of To The Lighthouse. Andrew Ramsay has used this phrase in answer to a question from Lily Briscoe about the content of his father's books. And the words are significant and have underlying meaning also. In fact it is exactly this problem which works its way through the novel on three perceptible levels—human relations, metaphysics and aesthetics. The novel can be seen to have been built around the problem of how the knower looks at the known, how one person looks at another, how man looks at nature and how the artist looks at life. These points have been discussed in detail in the foregoing paragraphs. We have shown how the main characters of To The Lighthouse look at the world in various ways. In fact three specific ways of seeing the object can be examined in To The Lighthouse through the eye of the artist (Lily Briscoe) through the eye of a child (James Nancy and Cam), and through the feminine creative eye of Mrs. Ramsay, whose vision might be solid to be that of a poet. Hence the characters see themselves and the world differently and very often bring the objective world into subjective consciousness.

Conclusion: - To understand life and the nature of reality the need of double vision is essential. We may now conclude with the very apt comments of Norman Friedman on this point: "A right understanding is achieved by those who try to understand the nature of reality simultaneously from two different stand points—subjective and objective—through which one must pass in making the transition from one perspective to the other. From whatever view point we regard life, whether it be that of a detached philosopher ironically contemplating from a height' or that of the busy mother and the house wife frantically involved in the fever and fret of daily routine, one must give it up in favour of the other, becoming immersed in the waters of transition and emerging with a double perspective (synthesis). In

involvement in life and a certain detachment from it are necessary to understand it fully. Doing only one of the two would naturally give a partial view of a life, which can be quite misleading. One has to strike a balance, to lose which is to give way to the chaos, of a black and lovely darkness on the one side, and to the disorder of a terrifying and senseless force on the other."

To The Lighthouse : Virginia Woolf's lyricism

Introductory remarks: - To rigidly define the form of a lyrical novel is rather a baffling task. A lyrical novel is a blend of lyrical poetry and the novel in the usual sense. In it the usual scenery of fiction becomes a texture of imagery. It also shifts the reader's attention from men and events to a formal design. It has generally a poetic style. But this is not all. Any novel may rise to such great heights of language or present its narrative in imagery.

In fact the most important and distinguishing feature of a novel of this genre is that it transcends the casual and temporal movement of narrative within the framework of fiction. It rather uses the novel to perform the function of a poem. For such a novel it is not a matter of prime importance to reproduce external life truthfully. It discards the method of achieving objectivity through the dramatic and narrative form of the traditional novel, but combines the world in a strongly inward, yet an aesthetically objective norm. Thus its form is neither dramatic nor didactic, but poetic in the limited sense of being lyrical. And, generally speaking, a lyric is a short poem which a single emotion, usually personal, is expressed, although originally it was intended to be sung with the lyre. So it is musical and at the same time subjective, as it is built round a single mood, emotion or impression.

Mrs. Woolf and Lyrical Novel: - Virginia Woolf was in quest of a meditative form through which she could convey simultaneously a picture of life and manners and a corresponding image of mind. In fact her essay 'Mr. Bennett and Mr. Brown opened the door of the novel to fresh conventions, foreshadowing a lyrical manner for the English novel through the conversion of characters and scenes into symbolic imagery. She sought to convey inner life and she realised that this could be best done in a lyrical manner. Finding that the conventional novel of motives and environment had proved insufficient she has suggested in one of her famous essays that its form should be such that it provides like poetry 'the outline rather than details, and stands further back from life in order to achieve the symbolic distance of impersonality.'

Lyrical Method: - Ralph Freedman has pointed out that in Virginia Woolf's search for a form in which the inner and the outer can be combined, she conceived of the moment as a concentration of the manifold elements of life into significant images or scenes. In addition to the literary use the moments also serve the epistornological function of clarifying the implication of consciousness for the artist's experience of life, a version of the imagination. In fact, for Virginia Woolf the inner and the outer are included in a single whole. The thing is that consciousness combines disparate elements and form; these elements thus combined, the moment moves to associations and memories which expand perceptions into scenes. But when the perceptions are being expanded into

scenes, the consciousness always remains aware of the objects which feed its cognition, and realizes that for the time being these things are freed from their time-bound existance. So we find that Mrs. Woolf's lyrical narrative is based on a design in which various contents of consciousness are juxtaposed. David Daiches has rightly remarked that the method is to 'distil a significance out of the data discovered by the personal sensibility and by projecting that significance through the minds of others, to maintain an unstable equilibrium between lyrical and narrative art.' And the unstable equilibrium between the lyrical and narrative art shows how Virginia Woolf brilliantly achieves the telescoping of the poet's lyrical self and the novelist's omniscient point of view. For Mrs. Woolf, poetry is a symbolic relationship between the individual self and its range of experience. So we find that the omniscient self of the poet-novelist is crucial to her concept of lyrical novel.

Poetic Prose: - We already know that Virginia Woolf's aim was to convey inner life, to display life as an aspect and function of the mind. And she realised that the resources of ordinary prose were really inadequate for this purpose. Hence she had to adopt a very peculiar, a very individual style. Hers is a poetic style with poetic rhythms, repetitions and poetic imagery. We find her using vivid symbols and metaphors which carry a complex aura of associations and emotions just to enable her to enhance the expressiveness of the language. Hence her style becomes superbly allusive and suggestive. Rhythms, assonances, cadences and poetic refrains are the distinctive features of her poetic prose. R.L. Chamber's apt remarks regarding this aspect of her style is worth noting: "This prose that approximates to poetry is not a spurious or hybrid form, but a genuine and legitimate medium of expression in its own right. Virginia Woolf is in a great tradition, which includes the names of Plato and John Donne and Sir Thomas Browne and the translators of the authoriscal version of the Bible. Furthermore it is a fact that by writing a poetic prose, by borrowing from the technique of poetry, while retaining the essential prose rhythms, all these writers exercised a true artistic insight into the possibilities and limitations of their medium. They realised the enormous advantage that was to be had for their purpose in shunning as far as possible that extreme pole of prose. Virginia Woolf realised this better than anyone else who was writing prose in her time."

"Time Passes" Its Lyricism: - The poetical character or the lyric note of Virginia Woolf's style is fully in evidence in the lyrical nature of Part II entitled, Time Passes in her To The Lighthouse. Jean Guiguet has very nicely dealt with a very beautiful analysis of the lyrical aspect of this chapter. The lyrical character of the "Time Passes" has been compared with the opening of chapter 5 of Orland.

In these two passages Mrs. Woolf treats of her favourite theme, 'this impersonal thing, the flight of time. 'She has taken recourse to the same cosmic elements which bring about change-wind, water, light, shade, conceived of as mysterious powers, as an army of goblins attacking objects one by one to corrode them, to transform them, disintegrate them. Whether night in invading the Ramsays' house or rainy gales assaulting the whole of England, the change of scale is scarcely noticeable, for the proportions of the opposing forces remain the same : man and his world on the one hand, and on the other the elfin army, unseen and immeasurable. The vision is the same in both cases.

The Lyricism is Impersonal: - In Time Passes the lyricism is essentially personal or subjective, hence doubts have been expressed if the lyrical quality of this chapter in this novel is genuinely lyrical. So Jean Guiguet has discussed this point in great detail. There is no character, no individual consciousness, no voice uttering the poetic words. There is only a scene taking place independent of any spectators, life pursuing its course independent of any living being. Is this depersonalization not antagonistic to the very essence of lyricism? If by lyricism we mean the expression of exalted feelings, as in Shakespeare's sonnets, the Immortality Ode or Epipsychidion, it rather becomes difficult to accept 'Time Passes' as a lyric. Nevertheless the presence of an 'I' of an individual consciousness as the seat of such feelings, is perhaps only an accidental element in lyricism, a literary convention and all things considered, a superficial characteristic. In the poems above mentioned, we are scarcely concerned with the 'I', which has no distinct features and is only the transparent support for the emotion—love, anguish, nostalgia, aspiration —which is the real substance of the poem. That Virginia Woolf did away with this support is not surprising; it follows logically from her principles.

Abstraction in this Lyricism: - Evidently there is a degree of abstraction in this lyricism. Facing the cosmos, thinking about it and enduring it, we have only the anonymous human beings 'we', 'one', whoever', the indefinite subject of an infinitive verb. This degree of abstraction appears to be a characteristic of one aspect of Virginia Woolf's lyricism. Without passing through the intermediary of any individual experience it attempts to render directly the relations between the man and the universe. These are thus reduced to their most elementary form. The themes of traditional lyricism, nature, love and death are convenient labels for those fundamental complexities of which each poet creates his characteristic variant or blend. They are, in fact, so many questions without intelligible answer, whose mystery the artist tries to prove obliquely by means of a whole system of transpositions, whose evocative value and whose load of symbolism are destined to act on the sensibility and intelligence of the reader, so as to convey to him the inexpressible reality. And the two questions that absorbed Virginia Woolf and provided the matter for her lyric outbursts are the same as those which she asked and tried to answer under all the forms with which her art experimented in turn: time and—personal identity. They are complementary to such an extent that one cannot be contemplated without the other.

Abstraction made Concrete and Perceptible: - It is really creditable for Virginia Woolf to succeed in giving body and substance to what abstract thought had devitalized. She apprehends time in the form of the changes it brings about, just as an artist is recognised through his creation. But change is also an abstraction to make it concrete and perceptible to the sense, it is necessary to expand the present until it contains the past too, and to insert, between the two limits, mobility, or rather mutation, which includes permanence within change. And Jean Guiguet has pointed out that the opening of sections 3 and 9 of part I is quite significant in this connection.

"But what after all is one night? A short space, especially when the darkness dims so soon, and so soon a bird sings, a cock crows, or a faint green quickens, like a turning leaf, in the hollow of the wave. Night, however, succeeds night. The winter holds a pack of them in store and deals them equally evenly, with indefatigable fingers. They lengthen; they darken."

"The house was left, the house was deserted. It was left like a shell on a sandhill to fill with dry salt grams now that life had left it. The long night seemed to have set in; the trifling airs nibbling, the clammy breaths fumbling seemed to have triumphed. The saucepan had rusted and the mat decayed. Toads had nosed their way Idly aimlessly, the swaying shall swung to and fro."

There is not a verb here, either standing alone or modified by an adverb, which fails to indicate some alteration: yet at the same time, under the change of aspect, of colour, of texture, we feel the enduring nature of night, of the house, of the wave, of the breeze, the saucepan or the shawl. This seems to be a description, although distended by time and undermined by mutability; but that which is describable, that which is seen, is only a means of expressing the indescribable, the invisible, that is contained within it. Surely this is described and precisely that abstract-concrete reality so necessary to Virginia Woolf. These images and sensations, merging together in the synthesis of an inner landscape over and above all their plastic value, have a lyrical quality or symbolic power which makes them linger in the mind.

Words with Double Aspect: - It has also been explained that all the words in the two passages have a double aspect, night, the wave, the grain of salt, the wind, the toad, rust—these are agents of decay and destruction, the forces of time warning against the forces of life: the bird, the leaf, the house, the shawl...And so such passages expand into abstraction without a break, imperceptibly: the words, ruin, corruption, oblivion, insensibility of nature, which occur later are associated with so many images and sensations that they take on fresh life, an almost physical content. Meditation is superimposed on things seen, and it does not obliterate it, rather recalls it constantly. A few lines indeed can give no idea of the richness and artistry of these pages, in which words invoke and answer one another from one paragraph to the next, while awakening distant echoes from the book's truest horizons. Their music moreover, adds to their incantatory power and perfects their poetic character.

Conclusion: - Virginia Woolf undoubtedly chose prose for her medium of expression, but her prose is a poetic-prose, 'prose that approximates to poetry'. In spite of her great achievements she is, in fact, not the originator of 'the stream of consciousness' novel in England. Dorothy Richardson precedes her as the Path-finder. But she fully deserves the credit for poetising and musicalising the novel of subjectivity. Allusions and images, rhythm, refrain and metaphors all these combine to make Virginia Woolf's style poetic. The great novels of Virginia Woolf not only reveal the stream of consciousness of their characters but flow like a stream themselves soothing our soul with its musical murmur.

"To the Lighthouse" : Virginia Woolf's as a Novelist

Introduction: - Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) was an English novelist, essayist, biographer, and feminist. Woolf was a prolific writer, whose modernist style changed with each new novel. Her letters and memoirs reveal glimpses of Woolf at the center of English literary culture during the Bloomsbury era. Woolf represents a historical moment when art was integrated into society, as T.S. Eliot describes in his obituary for Virginia.

"Without Virginia Woolf at the center of it, it would have remained formless or marginal…With the death of Virginia Woolf; a whole pattern of culture is broken."

Virginia Woolf broke free from tradition; she had also to discard the current form of the novel. But then she was driven to invent her own technique which would express her own vision of life. Her formula for the novel was not humanity in action but in a state of infinite perception. The novel in her hands is not just an entertainment, or propaganda, or the vehicle of some fixed ideas or theories, or a social document, but a voyage of exploration to find out how life is lived, and how it can be rendered as it is actually lived without distortion. She concentrates her attention on the rendering of inner reality and gives subtle and penetrating inlets into the consciousness of her characters. She cares very little for narrating dramatic events.

The World of outer Reality not ignored: - It is to be noted that because her **main purpose as a novelist is to depict inner** life of human beings, she **has not ignored the world of outer reality**, the warm and palpable life of nature. In fact, in her novels we find that the metaphysical interest is embodied in purely human and personal terms that the bounding line of art remains unbroken, that the concrete images which are the very stuff of art are never sacrificed to abstraction, but are indeed more in evidence than in the work of such writers as Bennett and Wells. The essential subject matter of her novels is no doubt the consciousness of one or more characters, but the outer life of tree and stream, of bird and fish, of meadow and seashore crowds in upon her and lends her image after image, a great, sparkling and many-coloured world of sight and scent and sound and touch.

Emergence of an Art Form: - In Virginia Woolf's novels we find a rare artistic integrity and they display a well-developed sense of form. To communicate her experience she had to invent conventions as rigid as or more rigid than the old ones that she discarded. And this she does in her best novels of the middle and the final period—Mrs. Dalloway, To The Lighthouse, The Waves and Between the Acts. In each case a small group of people is selected, and through their closely interrelated experience the reader receives his total impression. We also find that in each case certain images, phrases and symbols bind the whole together. So there are certain resemblances between them in structure or style. Apart from these general resemblances each of these novels is a fresh attempt to solve the problems raised by the departure from traditional conventions. So it is observed that each of her novels grows out of the preceding one and we see the germ of her later works in their predecessors.

Poetisation of the English Novel: - One of the most outstanding achievements of Virginia Woolf is that she represents the poetisation and musicalisation of English novel. Among the English novelists she is foremost in lyrical technique. She sets out on a quest for a mediating form through which she could convey simultaneously picture of life and manners and a corresponding image of minds. She aimed at conveying inner life and this could be best done in a lyrical manner. Hence it is found that in order to enrich her language, she used vivid metaphors and symbols which are peculiar to poetry. Her language is the language of poetry; her prose style has the assonances, the refrains, the rhythms and the accents of poetry itself. Virginia Woolf's lyrical narrative is

design on which various contents of consciousness are juxtaposed. The equilibrium between the lyrical and narrative art shows how Virginia Woolf brilliantly achieves the telescoping of the poet's lyrical self and the novelist's omniscient point of view. It is a case of unified sensibility, that is, a blending of the objective and the subjective, which is considered to be the best form of poetry particularly in modern poetry. Virginia Woolf's "To The Lighthouse" shows her lyricism in a superb manner and Time Passes', the second part of this novel, has been described by the novelist herself as particularly representative of her lyric vein.

The Interior Monologue—Stream of Consciousness Technique: - To the novelists of the new school of human consciousness is a chaotic welter of sensations and impressions; it is fleeting, trivial and evanescent. According to Virginia Woolf, the great task of the novelist should be **'to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit'.** His main business is just to reveal the sensations and impressions to bring us close to the quick of the mind. He should be more concerned with inner reality rather than outer. This is what is known as 'the stream of consciousness technique'. We are introduced into interior life of a character by means of interior monologue. There is very little intervention in the way of explanation or commentary on the part of the novelist. This has been done by Virginia Woolf by a very skilful use of 'the interior monologue' or 'the stream of consciousness' technique. She has very successfully revealed the very spring of action, the hidden motives which impel men and women to act in a particular way. She has been able to take us directly into the minds of her characters and show the flow of ideas, sensations and impressions there. Thus Mrs. Woolf has been able to create a number of memorable, many-sided and rounded figures, such as Mrs. Ramsay or Mrs. Dalloway, which are among the immortals of literature.

The Distinctive Nature of Reality: - Virginia Woolf's novels have a distinctive nature of reality. Jean Guiguet's comments on this are worth noting "Her reality is not a factor to be specified in some question of the universe: it is the Sussex towns, the London streets, the waves breaking on the shore, the woman sitting opposite her in the train, memories flashing into the mind from nowhere, a beloved being's return into nothingness; it is all that is not ourselves and yet is so closely mingled with ourselves that the two enigmas—reality and self—make only one. But the important thing is the nature or quality of this enigma. It does not merely puzzle the mind; it torments the whole being, even while defining it. To exist, for Virginia Woolf, meant experiencing that dizziness on the ridge between two abysses of the unknown, the self and the non- self."

Artistic Sincerity and Integrity: - Virginia Woolf had her own original vision of life and she has ever remained truthful to her vision. And this truthfulness and this artistic integrity is due to her perfect detachment from all personal prejudices and preconceived notions or from any personal end. Literary traditions and conventions, or social and political problems of the day—nothing could deter her from writing according to her vision, according to the ideal which exists in her mind with uncommon artistic sincerity and integrity. And then Mrs. Woolf was a 'naturalist' as well as a contemplative'. In the words of Bernard Blackstone, "She observes new facts, and old facts in a new way; but she also combines them, through the contemplative act, into new and strange

patterns. The outer is not only related to, it is absorbed into the inner life. Mrs. Woolf believed in the power of the mind and so she makes her reader think."

Aestheticism: - We have already discussed in detail Mrs. Woolf's aestheticism. The significant thing about her is that there is nothing languid or academic about her aestheticism. She could find beauty 'as much in a scrap of orange peel lying in the gutter as in the Venus de Milo' She was a great lover of beauty and this love of beauty guides her in her selection and ordering of reality.

Woman's Point of View; Feminisation of English Novel: - It would have to be accepted that Virginia Woolf was a woman and naturally in her novels she gives us the woman's point of view. That is why we find her relying more on intuition than on reason. We also find in her a woman's dislike for the world of societies churches, banks and schools and the political, social and economic movements of the day have hardly any attraction for her. As a sheltered female of her age she had hardly any scope to have any knowledge of the sordid and brutal aspects of life. Thus we find that her picture of life does not include vice, sordidness or the abject brutality of our age. So it may be inferred that Mrs. Woolf thus represents the feminisation of the English novel.

Limitations of her Range: - The limited range of Mrs. Woolf's characterisation is clearly evident in her works. Her characters are definitely convincing in their own way, but they are drawn from a very limited range. They mainly belong to the upper middle class life and to a certain temperament too. She could paint only certain types of characters. They tend to think and feel alike to be the aesthetes of one set of sensations.

Being a woman of her times she avoids the theme of passionate love. She could not write of sex freely and frankly and so has avoided it altogether in her novels. But still she achieved greatness and artistic perfection by a clear recognition of these limitations, and by working within them.

Conclusion: - Virginia Woolf's greatest achievement is that in her novels the stream of consciousness technique finds a balance. She knew that art required a selection and ordering of material. Hence her work has a rare artistic integrity. In fact she wonderfully succeeded in imposing form and order on the chaos inherent in the novel of subjectivity or 'the stream of consciousness' novel. And it was Mrs. Woolf who was also one of the most forceful and original theorists of 'the stream of consciousness' novel, and be her exposition of aesthetics of this kind of novel, she did much to throw light on its technique, and to bring out its superiority to the conventional novel.

Literary Criticism

A Critic is the "One who expresses a reasoned opinion on any matter especially involving a judgment of its value, truth, righteousness, beauty, or technique".

A Literary Critic is "The evaluative or interpretive work written by professional interpreters of texts. It is "criticism" not because it is negative or corrective, but rather because those who write criticism ask hard, analytical, crucial, or "critical" questions about the works they read".

A critic is one who likes or dislikes a book, a movie, a dinner. A critic does evaluate but only on the basis of personal preference. A literary critic is usually a professor of literature. Literary criticism is the act of interpreting literature and must be published in an academic publication such as a journal.

I. Introduction

Literary Criticism is discussion of literature, including description, analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of literary works. Like literature, criticism is hard to define. One of the critic's tasks is to challenge definitions of literature and criticism that seem too general, too narrow, or unworkable for any other reason. Whatever it is, literary criticism deals with different dimensions of literature as a collection of texts through which authors evoke more or less fictitious worlds for the imagination of readers.

We can look at any work of literature by paying special attention to one of several aspects: its language and structure; its intended purpose; the information and worldview it conveys; or its effect on an audience. Most good critics steer clear of exclusive interest in a single element. In studying a text's formal characteristics, for example, critics usually recognize the variability of performances of dramatic works and the variability of readers' mental interpretations of texts. In studying an author's purpose, critics acknowledge that forces beyond a writer's conscious intentions can affect what the writer actually communicates. In studying what a literary work is about, critics often explore the complex relationship between truth and fiction in various types of storytelling. In studying literature's impact on its audience, critics have been increasingly aware of how cultural expectations shape experience.

Because works of literature can be studied long after their first publication, awareness of historical and theoretical context contributes to our understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of them. Historical research relates a work to the life and times of its author. Attention to the nature, functions, and categories of literature provides a theoretical framework joining a past text to the experience of present readers. The tradition of literary criticism surveyed here combines observations by creative writers, philosophers, and, more recently, trained specialists in literary, historical, and cultural studies.

II. Classical Antiquity

The Western tradition's earliest extended instance of literary criticism occurs in The Frogs (405 BC), a comedy by Athenian playwright Aristophar

contrasting styles of Greek dramatists Aeschylus and Euripides. In the play the two dead masters of Greek tragedy compete for supremacy in Hades (the underworld), debating a fundamental dilemma of all subsequent criticism: Is the writer's first commitment to uphold and promote morality or to represent reality? Is the task of drama and other forms of literature primarily to improve or primarily to inform the audience?

Greek philosopher Plato found virtually all creative writers deficient on both counts in his dialogue The Republic (about 380 BC). Plato felt that stories about misbehaving gods and death-fearing heroes were apt to steer immature people toward frivolous and unpatriotic conduct. Besides, he argued, poetry tended to arouse the emotions rather than promote such virtues as temperance and endurance. But even at their moral best, Plato viewed writers—like painters and sculptors—as mere imitators of actual human beings, who are themselves very imperfect "copies" or imitations of the eternal idea of Human Being in the divine mind.

Greek philosopher Aristotle produced a strong philosophical defense against such criticism. His Poetics (about 330 BC) presents artistic representation (mimesis) not as mere copying but as creative re-presentation with universal significance. For example, the epic poet and the playwright evoke human beings in action without having to report actual events. Because the poetic approach to human action is more philosophical in nature than a purely historical approach, literature can show the most probable action of a person of a specific type, rather than what an actual person said or did on a particular occasion. Even the portrayal of great suffering and death may thus give pleasure to an audience—the pleasure of learning something essential about reality.

Aristotle justified the poetic arousal of passions by borrowing the concept of catharsis (purification through purging) from contemporary medicine. He suggested that tragedy cures us of the harmful effects of excessive pity, fear, and similar emotions by first inducing such emotions in us, and then pleasurably purging them in the controlled therapeutic setting of theatrical experience. The precise meaning of Aristotle's concept of catharsis has been debated for many centuries, but most critics of literature and of other arts, such as opera and cinema, find useful his isolation and analysis of six interacting aspects of performed drama: plot, character, thought or theme, diction, music, and spectacle.

Roman poet Horace offered practical advice in Ars Poetica (The Art of Poetry, about 20 BC), a witty letter written in verse to two aspiring authors. His most influential suggestion was to combine the useful (utile) and the sweet (dulce) so as to satisfy a varied audience. Some readers seek benefit, others seek pleasure, he explained, but both kinds of readers will purchase writings that instruct and delight at the same time.

A weightier treatment of poetry appears in a 1st-century AD treatise, On the Sublime, long attributed to a 3rd-century philosopher named Longinus. The unknown author of this Greek text cites passages from Greek poets Homer and Sappho—as well as from orators, historians, philosophers, and the first chapter of Genesis—to prove the superiority of discourse that does not merely persuade or gratify its audience but also transports it into a state of enthusiastic ecstasy. The author analyzes the rhetorical

devices needed to achieve sublime effects but insists that ultimately, "sublimity is the echo of a great soul."

III. Middle Ages and Renaissance

In medieval Europe, where Latin served as the common language of educated people, much scholarly interest focused on Roman authors and their Greek models. To reconcile non-Christian writings with the official doctrine of the Christian church, critics interpreted them allegorically. Greek and Roman divinities, for example, might be viewed as personifications of certain virtues and vices. Scholars applied similar interpretive methods to Hebrew scriptures to show, for instance, how the biblical story of Jonah surviving in the belly of a big fish foreshadowed the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Even the parables and metaphors of the Christian Gospels were felt to require allegorical, moral, and spiritual interpretation to achieve a deeper understanding of their meaning. By the 14th century, Italian writers Dante Alighieri and Giovanni Boccaccio suggested that works of nonreligious literature could likewise reward multiple readings beyond the literal level.

Italian translators and commentators of the late 15th and 16th centuries were in the forefront of the Renaissance rediscovery of Aristotle's Poetics, aided by the commentaries on Aristotle written by Averroës, a 12th-century Arab scholar living in Spain. Ever since the Renaissance, critics influenced by Aristotle focus on artistic representation rather than on an author's rhetorical and persuasive skills. But the view that persuasion is a major goal of literature, based on the writings of Roman statesman Cicero and Roman educator Quintilian about oratory, helped to shape literary studies well into the 18th century. Even today some critics view all poetry, fiction, and drama as more or less concealed forms of rhetoric that are designed to please or move readers and theatergoers, chiefly as a means of teaching or otherwise persuading them.

English poet Sir Philip Sidney defended the poetic imagination against attacks from English Puritans in his Defence of Poesie (written 1583; published 1595). Unlike historians or philosophers, argued Sidney, a poet affirms nothing and therefore never lies, because a poet's works are "not affirmatively but allegorically and figuratively written." Far from imitating imperfect nature, the poet creates an ideal world of the imagination where virtuous heroes invite admiring readers to imitate them. According to Sidney, philosophers outshine poets when it comes to abstract teaching, but the power to move (or, in today's language, to motivate) makes the poet ultimately superior because, for teaching to be effective, we need first "to be moved with desire to know" and then "to be moved to do that which we know."

IV. The 17th and 18th Centuries

The climate of criticism changed with the arrival on the literary scene of such giants as Miguel de Cervantes, Lope de Vega, and Pedro Calderòn in Spain; William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, and John Milton in England; and Pierre Corneille, Jean Baptiste Racine, and Molière in France. Most of these writers specialized or excelled in drama, and consequently the so-called battle of the ancients and moderns—the critical comparison of Greek and Roman authors with more recent ones—was fought

In his Essay of Dramatic Poesy (1668), English poet and playwright John Dryden presented the conflicting claims of the two sides as a debate among four friends, only one of whom favors the ancient over the modern theater. One modernist prefers the dignified "decorum" of French drama to the confusing "tumult" of actions and emotions on the English stage. By contrast, Dryden's spokesman prefers the lifelike drama of English theater to French tragedy, which he considers beautiful but lifeless. All agree, however, that "a play ought to be a just and lively image of human nature, representing its passions and humors, and the changes of fortune to which it is subject, for the delight and instruction of mankind."

An Essay on Criticism (1711), by English poet Alexander Pope, put together in verse both ancient and modern opinions. Pope considered nature, including human nature, to be universal, and he saw no contradiction between the modern writer's task of addressing a contemporary audience and the insistence by traditional critics that certain rules derived from the practice of the ancients be followed: "Those rules of old discovered, not devised, / Are nature still, but nature methodized."

English writer Samuel Johnson, in the preface to his 1765 edition of Shakespeare's plays, observed that "nothing can please many, and please long, but just representations of general nature." Accordingly, he praised Shakespeare for creating universal characters "who act and speak as the reader thinks that he should himself have spoken or acted on the same occasion." Yet Johnson could not help objecting to what he saw as the playwright's "lack of obvious moral purpose" and "gross jests." In an earlier essay, "On Fiction" (1750), Johnson cautioned against the unselective realism of popular novels written chiefly for "the young, the ignorant, and the idle." In his view, such people are easily tempted to imitate the novelist's portrayal of "those parts of nature" which are "discolored by passion, or deformed by wickedness." Mindful of the impact of literature on the minds of all readers, Johnson demanded that vice, if it must be shown, should appear disgusting, and that virtue should not be represented in an extreme form because people would never emulate what they cannot believe—implausibly virtuous heroes or heroines, for example.

In her pioneering work, A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1792), English writer Mary Wollstonecraft addressed the specific situation of women readers. She denounced shallow novelists, who she felt knew little about human nature and wrote "stale tales" in an overly sentimental style. Since most women of her day received little education, Wollstonecraft feared that reading such novels would further hinder women's "neglected minds" in "the right use of reason."

In the third quarter of the 18th century, French philosopher, novelist, and outspoken autobiographer Jean Jacques Rousseau offered an alternative to the faith in universal human reason propounded by Pope, Johnson, and other writers. Opponents of excessive rationalism found in Rousseau an advocate of their own growing interest in the expression of emotion, individual freedom, and personal experience. But most 19th-century concepts of literature and criticism were to owe an even greater debt to a number of Germans who concluded or began their intellectual careers between 1770 and 1800: philosophers Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and writer-critics Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Johan

von Goethe, Friedrich von Schiller, and the brothers August Wilhelm von Schlegel and Friedrich von Schlegel. All of these thinkers influenced an important 19th-century movement known as romanticism, which emphasized feeling, individual experience, and the divinity of nature.

V. The 19th Century

English poets William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge gave memorable expression to the romantic mindset developed by their German predecessors and contemporaries. The romantics believed in the primacy of feeling, love, pleasure, and imagination over reason; in the spiritual superiority of nature's organic forms over mechanical ingenuity; and in the ability of art to restore a lost harmony between the individual and nature, between society and nature, and between the individual and society. In revised versions of the preface to his and Coleridge's Lyrical Ballads (1798), Wordsworth declared that "all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" and that "the poet writes under one restriction only, namely, the necessity of giving immediate pleasure." The pleasure derived from the writing and reading of poetry was to Wordsworth a loving "acknowledgment of the beauty of the universe" and an indication that the human mind was "the mirror of the fairest and most interesting properties of nature." The critical writings of Coleridge in turn stressed the parallel between cosmic creativity and the poet's godlike creative imagination.

In A Defence of Poetry (written 1821; published 1840), English poet Percy Bysshe Shelley elaborated on similar romantic themes. Shelley also suggested that the utilitarian science and technology of his time enhanced the "inequality of mankind" and that poetry should continue to serve as an antidote to "the principle of the self, of which money is the visible incarnation." Throughout the Defence, Shelley speaks of poetry in a very broad sense as visionary discourse.

By contrast, two mid-century American poet-critics addressed what they considered to be unique features of poetry. In his essay "The Poet" (written 1842-1843), Ralph Waldo Emerson argued that the poet uses symbols more appropriately than the religious mystic does, because the poet recognizes the multiple meanings of symbols and the ability of language to reflect a continuously changing world, whereas the mystic "nails" symbols to a specific meaning. In a lecture on "The Poetic Principle" (1848), Edgar Allan Poe expressly distinguished pure intellect from taste and moral sense. In Poe's view, poets need to "tone down in proper subjection to beauty" all "incitements of passion," precepts of duty," and "lessons of truth" so that the resulting work may be sensitively judged by our faculty of taste.

In "A Short Essay on Critics"(1840), American author and editor Margaret Fuller described three kinds of literary criticism: subjective indulgence in the critic's own feelings about a text, apprehensive entry into the author's world, and comprehensive judging of a work both by its own law and according to universal principles. These categories anticipate the distinctions made by English poet-critic Matthew Arnold between three kinds of critical estimations of the value of a literary work: the personal, the historical, and the real. In his essay on "The Study of Poetry" (1880), Arnold assigned great cultural significance to the unbiased critic's "re

an increasingly nonreligious time, "mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us." Yet he believed that critics themselves would have to transcend the narrowness of their own society to perform their role of spiritual guidance. Only by exploring a variety of cultural traditions could they learn and teach "the best" that has been "known and thought in the world," Arnold cautioned in his essay "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time" (1865).

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Arnold's broadly humanistic views found many disciples. Some of Arnold's younger contemporaries, however, demanded that writers become more intensely involved with the particular problems of their society. French writer Émile Zola, for example, advocated writing true-to-life works of so-called naturalistic fiction that would reflect the ills of contemporary society with scientific precision, a view Zola advanced in his essay "Le roman expérimental" (1880; translated as "The Experimental Novel," 1893). At the other extreme, English writer Oscar Wilde favored highly personal literary styles and a critical stance acknowledging that "life imitates art far more than art imitates life," as he wrote in "The Decay of Lying" (1889). The case for subjective art and criticism was presented most succinctly by French novelist Anatole France in the preface to his La vie littéraire(1888-1893; translated as On Life and Letters, 1910-1924): "The good critic tells the adventures of his soul among masterpieces. There is no more an objective criticism than an objective art."

VI. 20th-Century Approaches

The social, cultural, and technological developments of the 20th century have vastly expanded the Western critical tradition. Indeed, many critics question just how "Western" this tradition can or should remain. Modern critics in the established cultural centers of Western Europe must heed not only Central Europe and North America but also areas once considered remote, including Russia, Latin America, and, most recently, the newly independent countries of Asia and Africa. At a growing number of universities, professors of literature and related fields pay increasing attention to long-neglected areas of study—for example, works by women and by non-Western writers. The following sketch of various 20th-century approaches names few living critics because it is impossible to predict who among the tens of thousands of writers publishing criticism today will ultimately outshine the others.

A. Formalism, Structuralism, and New Criticism

A text-based critical method known as formalism was developed by Victor Shklovsky, Vladimir Propp, and other Russian critics early in the 20th century. It involved detailed inquiry into plot structure, narrative perspective, symbolic imagery, and other literary techniques. But after the mid-1930s, leaders of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and its subsequent satellites in Eastern Europe demanded that literature and criticism directly serve their political objectives. Political leaders in those countries suppressed formalist criticism, calling it reactionary. Even such internationally influential opponents of extreme formalism as the Russian Mikhail Bakhtin and the Hungarian Georg Lukács would often find themselves under attack.

The geographical center of formalist orientation started to shift westward in 1926 when scholars of language and literature, most of them Czech, founded the Prague Linguistic Circle, adopting and refining some of the methods of formal analysis developed by their Russian colleagues. Beginning in the late 1940s anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, critic Roland Barthes, and other mid-century thinkers and scholars initiated French structuralism by applying linguistically inspired formal methods to literature and related phenomena. Structuralism attempted to investigate the "structure" of a culture as a whole by "decoding," or interpreting, its interactive systems of signs. These systems included literary texts and genres as well as other cultural formations, such as advertising, fashion, and taboos on certain forms of behaviour.

The text-centered methods of the formalist critics were also welcomed in the United States because they meshed well with the concerns of so-called New Critics, who focused on the overall structure and verbal texture of literary works. By the 1940s, when Russian linguist Roman Jakobson and Czech literary theorist René Wellek settled at Harvard and Yale universities, respectively, the study of literature in North America had been greatly influenced by the work of Cleanth Brooks and other New Critics. Like his British contemporary Sir William Empson, Brooks applied the skill of close reading chiefly to the analysis of ambiguities, paradoxes, and ironies in individual texts.

Many New Critics looked at metaphor, imagery, and other qualities of literary language apart from both a work's historical setting and any detailed biographical information that might be available about the author. Other New Critics, however, were more historically or philosophically inclined. New Criticism as a whole was therefore meaningfully supplemented by the work of German-born literary historian Erich Auerbach and of American philosopher Susanne K. Langer, who sought to place individual texts into larger historical and theoretical contexts. Auerbach emphasized historical development in his 1946 book Mimesis, which chronicled changing styles of the literary representation of reality from Greek poet Homer to English author Virginia Woolf. Langer in turn argued that the significant emotions depicted or aroused by literature and other arts are universal human feelings symbolized by the work rather than personal sentiments expressed by a particular writer or artist.

B. Other Critical Methods

In and after the 1920s American-born British poet T. S. Eliot explored how well individual European writers measured up to his aesthetically liberal but politically conservative view of the Western tradition. Canadian critic Northrop Frye, in contrast, opposed any viewpoint narrowed by regionalism or specific ideologies; he attempted to find common elements in the worldwide multiplicity of literary traditions in his book Anatomy of Criticism (1957). Frye and like-minded critics around the globe saw literature and other art forms as manifestations of universal myths and archetypes (largely unconscious image patterns) that cross cultural boundaries. In advocating this view they took cues from British anthropologist Sir James George Frazer and Swiss psychologist Carl Gustav Jung.

In the 1960s and 1970s German philosopher-critic Hans-Georg Gadamer and French philosopher and historian Michel Foucault offered contrary mod

and cultural traditions in literary criticism. Gadamer sought to engage past texts in fruitful dialogue with the present by examining different interpretations of literature throughout history; so do German critic Wolfgang Iser and other proponents of Aesthetics of Reception, which examines readers' responses to literature in a cultural and historical context. In contrast, Foucault wanted to challenge certain basic notions about the Western tradition that most Westerners take for granted. He hoped to discredit Western heritage and its powerful institutions by exposing, or "demystifying," the repressed origins and oppressive applications of that power. Among literary critics, American Stephen Greenblatt and other so-called New Historicists have similar objectives.

Today's widespread tendency to interpret texts as hiding rather than revealing what is most significant about themselves has three major sources: the writings of German philosophers Karl Marx and Friedrich Nietzsche and of Austrian psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud. Influential studies along Marxist lines of the social and economic underpinnings of culture were undertaken by German critic Walter Benjamin before World War II and by Welsh critic Raymond Williams between the late 1950s and the early 1980s. Marxist and Freudian methods of literary criticism were productively combined from the 1920s on by several American writer-critics, including Edmund Wilson and Kenneth Burke. Viewing humans as symbol-using and symbol-misusing animals, Burke approached literary works as often deceptive or self-deceptive symbolic actions that should be critically reenacted, rather than passively contemplated, by their readers.

In a comparably skeptical spirit, current feminist critics in many countries draw attention to literary evidence of ingrained prejudice against women or stereotypic views of women. Their methods often emulate Marxist critiques of oppressive ideologies or Freudian excavations of repressed desires. Contemporary feminist writings are also influenced by the gender-conscious essays of English novelist Virginia Woolf and by The Second Sex (1949), a book-length plea by French thinker and novelist Simone de Beauvoir against the second-class treatment of women. Feminist criticism explores issues relevant to women as authors, as readers, and as fictional characters, and also raises the controversial question of the possible existence of distinctly female writing—recognizably different in the character of its language from discourse shaped by male patterns of thought.

Like feminist, Marxist, and some Freudian critics, nonwhite Western critics and critics emerging in countries newly freed from colonial rule also have challenged many aspects of European and North American culture as socially and psychologically oppressive. Although these so-called multiculturalist critics are united in their opposition to Western domination, they take many different positions on particular issues of race, class, gender, language, and national or ethnic identity.

The frontal attack, initiated by Nietzsche, on any use of language as an instrument of mystification and domination has its most unwavering advocates today in scholars who practice the interpretive technique known as deconstruction. Following French philosopher Jacques Derrida and Belgian-born American critic Paul de Man, deconstructive critics assume that attributing even the most complex single meaning to a text violates the boundless signifying potential of language in a world wher

no facts but only indeterminate meanings and unresolvable conflicts of interpretation. Proponents of deconstruction elaborate on textual ambiguities and paradoxes that earlier interpreters (including the New Critics) attempted to resolve. For deconstructions and other so-called postmodern critics, special difficulties in the interpretation of complex literary works forcefully suggest the general resistance of all texts to definitive meanings.

Recent non-traditional criticism does not represent a complete break with a critical tradition that has always proven hospitable to challenges to its principles. In fact, so-called Western criticism has already begun absorbing the insights of its best contemporary challengers. Undergoing transformation once again, it prepares to encounter what German writer and critic Johann Wolfgang von Goethe hoped would eventually emerge as Weltliteratur: the diverse but intertwined literatures of the world.

Poetics

Aristotle's Poetics

Plato (427–347 B.C.E.) is notorious for attacking art in Book 10 of his Republic . According to Plato's Theory of Forms, objects in this world are imitations or approximations of ideal Forms that are the true reality. A chair in this world is just an imitation or instantiation of the Form of Chair. That being the case, art is twice removed from reality, as it is just an imitation of an imitation: a painting of a chair is an imitation of a chair which is in turn an imitation of the Form of Chair. Further, Plato argues that art serves to excite the emotions, which can detract from the balanced reasoning that is essential to virtue.

Aristotle's Poetics can be read as a response to Plato's attack on art. Aristotle (384–322 B.C.E.) was a student at Plato's Academy from the time he was seventeen until Plato's death some twenty years later. He spent the next twelve years engaging in scientific research and serving as tutor to the then teenaged Alexander the Great. He returned to Athens in 335 B.C.E., and founded his own school on the steps of the Lyceum. He remained there until 323 B.C.E., when he was forced to leave as a result of his associations with Alexander. He died a year later of natural causes. The Lyceum remained open until 525 C.E., when it was closed by the emperor Justinian.

None of the works of Aristotle that we have today were actually published by Aristotle. He wrote a number of treatises and dialogues, but these have all been lost. What survives are collections of notes, possibly from lecture courses Aristotle gave at the Lyceum, which are often unclear or incomplete. The Poetics, in true form, was likely a much longer work than the one we have today. Aristotle supposedly wrote a second book on comedy, which is now lost.

The main focus of the Poetics is on Greek tragedy. Though there were thousands of tragedies and scores of playwrights, we only have thirty-three extant tragedies, written by the three great tragedians: Aeschylus (525–456 B.C.E.), Sophocles(496–405 B.C.E.), and Euripides (485–406 B.C.E.). Tragedies were performed in Athens twice annually at festivals in honour of Dionysus, the god of wine and excess. Though the tragedies likely evolved out of religious ceremonies celebrating the cycle of the seasons, they became increasingly secular. The dramatic festivals were immensely important events, and the winning playwrights achieved great fame.

The Poetics also discusses epic poetry, using the example of Homer (eighth century B.C.E.) almost exclusively. Homer wrote two great epics, the Iliad and the Odyssey , which deal with the fall of Troy and Odysseus's subsequent wanderings respectively. These epics are the source of a great number of Greek tragedies and are considered among the earliest great works of world literature.

Though the Poetics is not one of Aristotle's major works, it has exercised a great deal of influence on subsequent literary theory, particularly in the Renaissance. Later interpreters unfortunately turned many of Aristotle's suggestions into strict laws, restricting the flexibility of drama in ways that Aristotle would not have anticipated. The tragedies of Racine and Corneille in particular are formed according to these demands. Even though such great playwrights as Shakespeare often went against these laws, they were held as the model for writing tragedy well into the nineteenth century.

Important Terms used in Poetics

Mimesis: - Mimesis is the act of creating in someone's mind, through artistic representation, an idea or ideas that the person will associate with past experience. Roughly translatable as "imitation," mimesis in poetry is the act of telling stories that are set in the real world. The events in the story need not have taken place, but the telling of the story will help the listener or viewer to imagine the events taking place in the real world.

Hamartia: - This word translates almost directly as "error," though it is often rendered more elaborately as "tragic flaw." Tragedy, according to Aristotle, involves the downfall of a hero, and this downfall is effected by some error on the part of the hero. This error need not be an overarching moral failing: it could be a simple matter of not knowing something or forgetting something.

Anagnorisis: - This word translates as "recognition" or "discovery." In tragedy, it describes the moment where the hero, or some other character, passes from ignorance to knowledge. This could be a recognition of a long lost friend or family member, or it could be a sudden recognition of some fact about oneself, as is the case with Oedipus. Anagnorisis often occurs at the climax of a tragedy in tandem with peripetia.

Mythos: - When dealing with tragedy, this word is usually translated as "plot," but unlike "plot," mythos can be applied to all works of art. Not so much a matter of what happens and in what order, mythos deals with how the elements of a tragedy (or a painting, sculpture, etc.) come together to form a coherent and unified whole. The overall message or impression that we come away with is what is conveyed to us by the mythos of a piece.

Catharsis: - This word was normally used in ancient Greece by doctors to mean "purgation" or by priests to mean "purification." In the context of tragedy, Aristotle uses it to talk about a purgation or purification of emotions. Presumably, this means that catharsis is a release of built up emotional energy, much like a good cry. After catharsis, we reach a more stable and neutral emotional state.

Peripetia: - A reversal, either from good to bad or bad to good. Peripetia often occurs at the climax of a story, often prompted by anagnorisis. Indeed, we might say that the peripetia is the climax of a story: it is the turning point in the action, where things begin to move toward a conclusion.

Lusis: - Literally "untying," the lusis is all the action in a tragedy from the climax onward. All the plot threads that have been woven together in the desis are slowly unraveled until we reach the conclusion of the play.

Desis: - Literally "tying," the desis is all the action in a tragedy leading up to the climax. Plot threads are craftily woven together to form a more and more complex mess. At the peripetia, or turning point, these plot threads begin to unravel in what is called the lusis, or denouement.

Analytical Overview

Aristotle approaches poetry with the same scientific method with which he treats physics and biology. He begins by collecting and categorizing all the data available to him and then he draws certain conclusions and advances certain theses in accordance with his analysis. In the case of tragedy, this means he divides it into six parts, identifies plot as the most important part, and examines the different elements of plot and character that seem to characterize successful tragedies. He tentatively suggests that tragedy ultimately aims at the arousal of pity and fear and at the catharsis of these emotions. Then he begins to lay out certain theories as to what makes a good tragedy: it must focus on a certain type of hero who must follow a certain trajectory within a plot that is tightly unified, etc. Aristotle's conclusions, then, are based less on personal taste and more on an observation of what tends to produce the most powerful effects.

Aristotle's method raises the fundamental question of whether poetry can be studied in the same way as the natural sciences. Though there are some benefits to Aristotle's method, the ultimate answer seems to be "no." The scientific method relies on the assumption that there are certain regularities or laws that govern the behavior of the phenomena being investigated. This method has been particularly successful in the physical sciences: Isaac Newton, for example, managed to reduce all mechanical behavior to three simple laws. However, art does not seem to be governed by unchanging, unquestionable laws in the same way that nature is. Art often thrives and progresses by questioning the assumptions or laws that a previous generation has accepted. While Aristotle insisted on the primacy and unity of plot, Samuel Beckett has achieved fame as one of this century's greatest playwrights by constructing plays that arguably have no plot at all. Closer to Aristotle's time, Euripides often violated the Aristotelian principles of structure and balance in a conscious effort to depict a universe that is neither structured nor balanced. Not surprisingly, Aristotle seems to have preferred Sophocles to Euripides.

These remarks on Sophocles and Euripides bring us to another problem of interpreting Aristotle: we have a very limited stock of Greek tragedies against which to test Aristotle's theories. Aristotle could have been familiar with hundreds, or even thousands, of tragedies. All we have today are thirty-three plays by three tragedians. As a result, it is difficult to say to what extent most tragedies fit Aristotle's observations. Those that we have, however, often grossly violate Aristotle's requirement. The best example we have of an Aristotelian tragedy is Oedipus Rex, so it is no wonder that Aristotle makes such frequent reference to it in his examples.

Three points stand out as probably the most important in the Poetics: (1) the interpretation of poetry as mimesis, (2) the insistence on the primacy and unity of mythos, or plot, and (3) the view that tragedy serves to arouse the emotions of pity and fear and then to effect a catharsis of these emotions. (1) is discussed in the commentary on Chapters 1–3, (2)is discussed in the commentary on Chapter 6 and Chapters 7–9, and (3) is discussed in the commentary on Chapter 6 as well.

Summary of Poetics

Chapters 1–3

Aristotle proposes to approach poetry from a scientific viewpoint, examining the constituent parts of poetry and drawing conclusions from those observations. First, he lists the different kinds of poetry: epic poetry, tragedy, comedy, dithyrambic poetry, and most flute-playing and lyre-playing. Next, he remarks that all of these kinds of poetry are mimetic, or imitative, but that there are significant differences between them.

The first kind of distinction is the means they employ. Just as a painter employs paint and a sculptor employs stone, the poet employs language, rhythm, and harmony, either singly or in combinations. For instance, flute-playing and lyre-playing employ rhythm and harmony, while dance employs only rhythm. He also addresses the question of non-poetic language, arguing that poetry is essentially mimetic, whether it is in verse or in prose. Thus, Homer is a poet, while Empedocles, a philosopher who wrote in verse, is not. While Empedocles writes in verse, his writing is not mimetic, and so it is not poetry. In tragedy, comedy, and other kinds of poetry, rhythm, language, and harmony are all used. In some cases, as in lyric poetry, all three are used together, while in other cases, as in comedy or tragedy, the different parts come in to play at different times.

The second distinction is the objects that are imitated. All poetry represents actions with agents who are either better than us, worse than us, or quite like us. For instance, tragedy and epic poetry deal with characters who are better than us, while comedy and parody deal with characters who are worse than us.

The final distinction is with the manner of representation: the poet either speaks directly in narrative or assumes the characters of people in the narrative and speaks through them. For instance, many poets tell straight narratives while Homer alternates between narrative and accounts of speeches given by characters in his narrative. In tragedy and comedy, the poet speaks exclusively through assumed characters.

Chapters 4–5

Aristotle suggests that it is human nature to write and appreciate poetry. We are by nature imitative creatures that learn and excel by imitating others, and we naturally take delight in works of imitation. As evidence of the claim that we delight in imitation, he points out that we are fascinated by representations of dead bodies or disgusting animals even though the things themselves would repel us. Aristotle suggests that we can also learn by examining representations and imitations of things and that learning is

one of the greatest pleasures there is. Rhythm and harmony also come naturally to us, so that poetry gradually evolved out of our improvisations with these media.

As poetry evolved, a sharp division developed between serious writers who would write about noble characters in lofty hymns and panegyrics, and meaner writers who would write about ignoble characters in demeaning invectives. Tragedy and comedy are later developments that are the grandest representation of their respective traditions: tragedy of the lofty tradition and comedy of the mean tradition.

Aristotle stops short of saying that tragedy has achieved its complete and finished form. He lists four innovations in the development from improvised dithyrambs toward the tragedies of his day. Dithyrambs were sung in honour of Dionysus, god of wine, by a chorus of around fifty men and boys, often accompanied by a narrator. Aeschylus is responsible for the first innovation, reducing the number of the chorus and introducing a second actor on stage, which made dialogue the central focus of the poem. Second, Sophocles added a third actor and also introduced background scenery. Third, tragedy developed an air of seriousness, and the meter changed from a trochaic rhythm, which is more suitable for dancing, to an iambic rhythm, which is closer to the natural rhythms of conversational speech. Fourth, tragedy developed a plurality of episodes, or acts.

Next, Aristotle elaborates on what he means when he says that comedy deals with people worse than us ourselves, saying that comedy deals with the ridiculous. He defines the ridiculous as a kind of ugliness that does no harm to anybody else. Aristotle is able only to give a very sketchy account of the origins of comedy, because it was not generally treated with the same respect as tragedy and so there are fewer records of the innovations that led to its present form.

While both tragedy and epic poetry deal with lofty subjects in a grand style of verse, Aristotle notes three significant differences between the two genres. First, tragedy is told in a dramatic, rather than narrative, form, and employs several different kinds of verse while epic poetry employs only one. Second, the action of a tragedy is usually confined to a single day, and so the tragedy itself is usually much shorter than an epic poem. Third, while tragedy has all the elements that are characteristic of epic poetry, it also has some additional elements that are unique to it alone.

Chapter 6

Aristotle now narrows his focus to examine tragedy exclusively. In order to do so, he provides a definition of tragedy that we can break up into seven parts: (1) it involves mimesis; (2) it is serious; (3) the action is complete and with magnitude; (4) it is made up of language with the "pleasurable accessories" of rhythm and harmony; (5) these "pleasurable accessories" are not used uniformly throughout, but are introduced in separate parts of the work, so that, for instance, some bits are spoken in verse and other bits are sung; (6) it is performed rather than narrated; and (7) it arouses the emotions of pity and fear and accomplishes a catharsis (purification or purgation) of these emotions.

Next, Aristotle asserts that any tragedy can be divided into six component parts, and that every tragedy is made up of these six parts with nothing else besides. There is (a) the spectacle, which is the overall visual appearance of the stage and the actors. The means of imitation (language, rhythm, and harmony) can be divided into (b) melody, and (c) diction, which has to do with the composition of the verses. The agents of the action can be understood in terms of (d) character and (e) thought. Thought seems to denote the intellectual qualities of an agent while character seems to denote the moral qualities of an agent. Finally, there is (f) the plot, or mythos, which is the combination of incidents and actions in the story.

Aristotle argues that, among these six, the plot is the most important. The characters serve to advance the action of the story, not vice versa. The ends we pursue in life, our happiness and our misery, all take the form of action. That is, according to Aristotle, happiness consists in a certain kind of activity rather than in a certain quality of character. Diction and thought are also less significant than plot: a series of well-written speeches have nothing like the force of a well-structured tragedy. Further, Aristotle suggests, the most powerful elements in a tragedy, the peripetia and the anagnorisis, are elements of the plot. Lastly, Aristotle notes that forming a solid plot is far more difficult than creating good characters or diction.

Having asserted that the plot is the most important of the six parts of tragedy, he ranks the remainder as follows, from most important to least: character, thought, diction, melody, and spectacle. Character reveals the individual motivations of the characters in the play, what they want or don't want, and how they react to certain situations, and this is more important to Aristotle than thought, which deals on a more universal level with reasoning and general truths. Melody and spectacle are simply pleasurable accessories, but melody is more important to the tragedy than spectacle: a pretty spectacle can be arranged without a play, and usually matters of set and costume aren't the occupation of the poet anyway.

Chapters 7–9

Aristotle elaborates on what he means when he says that the action of a tragedy is complete in itself and with magnitude. For a plot to be a complete whole, it must have a beginning, middle, and end. The beginning is a point that does not necessarily follow from anything else, which naturally has consequences following from it. The end is a point that naturally follows from preceding events but does not have any necessary consequences following it. The middle is a point that is naturally connected both to events before and after it.

The magnitude of a story is important, as it is in any art. Paintings are neither infinitesimally small nor monstrously big because they must be of such a size as to be taken in by the eye. Similarly, a tragedy must be of a moderate length so as to be taken in by the memory. Usually, time limits are set by the audience or other outside factors, but Aristotle suggests that the longer the play the greater the magnitude, provided the poet can hold the tragedy together as one coherent statement. As a general rule of thumb, he suggests the action should be long enough to allow the main character to

pass through a number of necessary or probable steps that take him from fortune to misfortune or vice versa.

In insisting upon the unity of plot, Aristotle makes it clear that he does not mean that it is enough to focus the plot on the life of one individual. Our lives consist of all sorts of disconnected episodes, and the story of a man's life would rarely have the completeness necessary for a unified plot. Rather, the poet must select some series of events from a character's life—as Homer does in the Odyssey —and craft them into a coherent whole. Any part of a story that could be added or removed without any great effect on the rest of the story is superfluous and takes away from the unity of the piece.

Aristotle distinguishes between poetry and history, saying that while history deals with what has been, poetry deals with what might be: it presents the possible as probable or necessary. Poetry is superior to history because history always deals with particular cases while poetry can express universal and general truths. Tragedy gives a feeling of necessity—or at least probability—to the way certain characters behave in certain situations and thus gives us insight into general principles regarding fate, choice, and so on. The worst kind of plot is the episodic plot, where there is no seeming necessity or probability whatsoever between events.

As a medium that arouses pity and fear, tragedy is most effective when events occur unexpectedly and yet in a logical order. The ideal is to have the audience see the final outcome of a tragedy as the necessary consequence of all the action that preceded it, and yet have that outcome be totally unexpected.

Chapters 10–12

Aristotle introduces the concepts of peripetia (reversal of fortune) and anagnorisis (discovery or recognition) in his discussion of simple and complex plots. All plots lead from beginning to end in a probable or necessary sequence of events, but a simple plot does so without peripetia or anagnorisis while a complex plot may have one or both of these elements. The peripetia or anagnorisis of a complex plot should themselves be necessary or probable consequences of what came before so that they are a part of the plot and not unnecessary add-ons.

Peripetia is the reversal from one state of affairs to its opposite. Some element in the plot effects a reversal, so that the hero who thought he was in good shape suddenly finds that all is lost, or vice versa.

Anagnorisis is a change from ignorance to knowledge. This discovery will bring love and happiness to characters that learn of good fortune, and hatred and misery to those who discover unhappy truths. The best kind of anagnorisis accompanies peripetia. That is, a reversal of fortune effects a discovery or vice versa. For instance, Oedipus' discovery of who his mother is effects a reversal of fortune from proud king to horrible disgrace. Aristotle suggests that anagnorisis is possible by a number of other means as well, but it is most intimately connected to the plot when it accompanies peripetia. The two together will help to arouse pity and fear and will also help to draw the play to its conclusion.

In addition to peripetia and anagnorisis, Aristotle defines a third part of the plot—suffering—as actions of destructive or painful nature, such as murders, torture, and woundings.

In Chapter 12, Aristotle discusses the quantitative elements of tragedy—the different parts of the performance. These are the Prologue, Episode, Exode, and a choral portion consisting of Parode and Stasimon. In addition, some tragedies have songs from the stage and a Commos, a lamentation sung by both actor and chorus. The Parode is the first full statement of the chorus; everything that precedes it is Prologue. The Stasimon is a choral song in a certain meter, while action that takes place between choral songs is Episode. Everything that follows the last choral song is Exode.

Chapters 13–14

Aristotle suggests that the best kinds of plot are complex plots that arouse fear and pity. He thus concludes that three kinds of plot should be avoided. First, we should avoid plots that show a good man going from happiness to misery, since such events seem more odious than fearful or pitiable. Second, we should avoid plots that show a bad man going from misery to happiness, since this arouses neither pity nor fear and appeals to none of our emotions. Third, we should avoid plots that show a bad man going from happiness to misery, since it will also not arouse the feelings of pity or fear. We feel pity for undeserved misfortune (and a bad man deserves his misfortune), and we feel fear if the person we pity is something like ourselves.

Aristotle concludes that the best kind of plot involves the misfortune of someone who is neither particularly good nor particularly bad and whose downfall does not result from some unpleasantness or vice, but rather from hamartia—an error in judgment. A good plot, then, consists of the following four elements: (1) It must focus around one single issue; (2) the hero must go from fortune to misfortune, rather than vice versa; (3) the misfortune must result from hamartia; and (4) the hero should be at least of intermediate worth, and if not, he must be better—never worse—than the average person. This explains why tragedies tend to focus around a few families (there are many tragedies about the families of Oedipus and Orestes among others): they must be upstanding families that suffer great misfortune from an error in judgment rather than a vice. Only second-rate plots that pander too much to public taste focus on a double issue where the good fare well and the bad fare poorly.

Pity and fear—which Aristotle calls the "pleasures" of tragedy—are better if they result from the plot itself rather than the spectacle. A story like that of Oedipus should be able to arouse pity and fear even if it is told without any acting at all. The poet who relies on spectacle is relying on outside help, whereas the poet who relies only on his own plot is fully responsible for his creation.

We feel pity most when friends or family harm one another, rather than when unpleasantness takes place between enemies or those who are indifferent to one another. The deed may be done knowingly—as when Medea kills her children—or unknowingly—as when Oedipus kills his father. A third alternative is that one character

plans to kill another, but then discovers the family connection between them in time to refrain from the killing.

Thus, the deed can either be done or not done, and it can take place in either ignorance or knowledge. Aristotle suggests that the best kind of plot is of the third alternative, where anagnorisis allows a harmful deed to be avoided. The second best case is where the deed is done in ignorance. And the third best is the case where the deed is done with full knowledge. Worst is the case where there is full knowledge throughout, and the premeditated deed is only refrained from at the moment of action. This scenario is not tragic because of the absence of suffering, and it is odious besides. Still, Aristotle acknowledges that it has been used to good effect, as with the case of Haemon and Creon in Antigone .

Chapter 15

Aristotle turns his attention toward the character of the tragic hero and lays out four requirements. First, the hero must be good. The character of the hero denotes the hero's moral purpose in the play, and a good character will have a good moral purpose. Second, the good qualities of the hero must be appropriate to the character. For instance, warlike qualities can be good, but they would be inappropriate in a woman. Third, the hero must be realistic. In other words, if he is drawn from myth, he should be a reasonable semblance of the character portrayed in myths. Fourth, the hero must be consistent (by which Aristotle means the hero must be written consistently, not that the hero must behave consistently). He accepts that some characters are inconsistent but that they should be written so as to be consistent in their inconsistency. Like the plot itself, the behavior of the characters should be seen as necessary or probable, in accordance with the internal logic of their personality. Thus, a character may behave inconsistently so long as we can perceive this inconsistency as stemming from a personality that is internally consistent.

From these requirements, Aristotle thinks it clear that the lusis, or denouement, should arise out of the plot and not depend upon stage artifice. Both the characters and the plot ought to follow a probable or necessary sequence, so that the lusis should be a part of this sequence. Improbable events, or the intervention of the gods, should be reserved for events outside the action of the play or events beyond human knowledge. The actual incidents themselves should not rely on miracles but on probability and necessity.

In order to reconcile the first requirement—that the hero be good—with the third requirement—that the hero be realistic—Aristotle recommends that the poet should keep all the distinctive characteristics of the person being portrayed but touch them up a little to make the hero appear better than he is. For instance, in the Iliad , Homer repeatedly describes Achilles' hot temper and yet makes him seem exceedingly good and heroic nonetheless.

Chapters 16–18

Aristotle distinguishes between six different kinds of anagnorisis. First, there is recognition by means of signs or marks, such as when Odysseus's nurse rec

by virtue of a characteristic scar. Aristotle considers this the least artistic kind of anagnorisis, usually reflecting a lack of imagination on the part of the poet. Second, also distasteful to Aristotle, is a recognition contrived by the author. In such a case, the poet is unable to fit the anagnorisis into the logical sequence of the plot, and so it seems extraneous. Third is recognition prompted by memory. A disguised character may be prompted to weep or otherwise betray himself when presented with some memory from the past. Fourth, the second best kind of anagnorisis, is recognition through deductive reasoning, where the anagnorisis is the only reasonable conclusion of an agent's thought. Fifth, there is recognition through faulty reasoning on the part of a disguised character. The disguised character might unmask himself by exhibiting knowledge that only he could know. Sixth, the best kind of anagnorisis, is the kind of recognition that is naturally a part of the logical sequence of events in the play, such as we find in Oedipus Rex .

Aristotle makes seven final remarks about how a poet should go about constructing a plot: (1) The poet should be sure to visualize the action of his drama as vividly as possible. This will help him spot and avoid inconsistencies.

(2) The poet should even try acting out the events as he writes them. If he can himself experience the emotions he is writing about, he will be able to express them more vividly.

(3) The poet should first outline the overall plot of the play and only afterward flesh it out with episodes. These episodes are generally quite brief in tragedy but can be very long in epic poetry. As an example, Aristotle reduces the entire plot of the Odyssey to three sentences, suggesting that everything else in the poem is episode.

(4) Every play consists of desis, or complication, and lusis, or denouement. Desis is everything leading up to the moment of peripetia, and lusis is everything from the peripetia onward.

(5) There are four distinct kinds of tragedy, and the poet should aim at bringing out all the important parts of the kind he chooses. First, there is the complex tragedy, made up of peripetia and anagnorisis; second, the tragedy of suffering; third, the tragedy of character; and fourth, the tragedy of spectacle.

(6) The poet should write about focused incidents, and not about a whole epic story. For instance, a tragedy could not possibly tell the entire story of the Iliad in any kind of satisfying detail, but it can pick out and elaborate upon individual episodes within the Iliad.

(7) The chorus should be treated like an actor, and the choral songs should be an integral part of the story. Too often, Aristotle laments, the choral songs have little to do with the action at all.

Chapters 19–22

Having discussed plot and character, Aristotle turns his attention toward thought and then diction (he never specifically addresses melody or spectacle). Aristotle defines thought as everything that is effected by means of language. Thus, when agents try to prove or disprove a point, to arouse emotion, or to inflate or deflate a matter, they are exhibiting thought. Thought is closely linked to rhetoric, and Aristotle points to the more thorough discussion to be found in his writings on that latter subject.

Aristotle divides the subject of diction into eight parts: letter, syllable, conjunction, article, noun, verb, case, and speech. Though many of these terms are identical to our modern uses of them, we should note that Aristotle is concerned less with written language and more with spoken language. As a result, Aristotle treats the letter—the fundamental building block of language—as a unit of sound rather than as a single written character. The concept of case, unfamiliar to English speakers, deals with the different uses of a word. For instance, "with the dog" and "for the dogs" are different cases of "dog," and "walked?" and "walk!" are different cases of "walk." Speech is more like what we would call a clause than a sentence. It does not have to contain a verb, but it must be made up of significant parts.

Chapter 21 is concerned with the structure and uses of the noun, though it is concerned primarily with the uses of metaphor. Aristotle distinguishes four ways metaphor can be used. (1) The genus to species relationship, where a more general term is used instead of a specific term. Aristotle uses the example of "Here stands my ship," where "stand" is a more general way of saying "is anchored." (2) The species to genus relationship, where a more specific term is used in place of a general term. Aristotle's example is "Truly ten thousand good deeds has Ulysses wrought," where "ten thousand" is a specific term representing the more general "a large number." (3) The species to species relationship, where one specific term replaces another. (4) Metaphor from analogy, which consists of substitutions between "x is to y"-type relationships. For instance, old age is to life as evening is to day, so we can speak metaphorically about the "old age of the day" or the "evening of life."

Aristotle concludes his discussion of diction with a few remarks on style. A poet should aim for a middle ground, expressing himself with clarity but without meanness. Aristotle suggests that the use of ordinary words and ordinary language is mean and prosaic. Poetry can be spiced up by the use of foreign or strange terms, metaphor, or compounded words. However, an overenthusiastic use of such devices will render poetry unintelligible. Too many foreign words will make the poetry barbaric and too much metaphor will turn it into a big riddle. The key is to apply these devices in moderation. Of these different devices, Aristotle most values the metaphor, as it cannot be taught but only grasped intuitively. There is a certain level of genius in being able to identify similarities between dissimilar things.

Chapters 23–24

Aristotle turns his attention to epic poetry. While the mimesis of tragedy is in actions told in a dramatic form, the mimesis of epic poetry is in verse told in a narrative form. Aristotle notes that there are a number of similarities between tragedy and epic poetry.

First, epic poetry must maintain the unity of plot. In this it is allied with tragedy against history. History tells us all that happened during a certain time period or to certain people, and as such it is often somewhat disconnected. Epic poetry should focus on one particular story that remains an organic whole. Homer is an excellent example of such an epic poet, as he tells a particular, connected story in the Iliad rather than trying to narrate everything that happened during the Trojan War.

Second, epic poetry must share many of the elements of tragedy. Like tragedy, it should be either simple or complex, and it should deal primarily either with a character or with suffering. Aside from spectacle and melody, the six parts of tragedy are all present in epic poetry, and epic poetry can also feature peripetia and anagnorisis.

There are also two notable dissimilarities between epic poetry and tragedy. The first is the length: an epic poem can reasonably last as long as a whole series of tragedies, provided it can be presented in one hearing. The plot of an epic poem can be far more expansive because it is not limited by the stage. Epic poetry can jump back and forth between events happening at the same time in different places in a way that would be impossible on stage. Second, epic poetry should be narrated in heroic meter, while tragedy is normally spoken in iambic meter.

Aristotle is clearly an admirer of Homer's, as almost all his examples of good epic poetry are drawn from Homer. He praises Homer for reducing his own voice in the narrative and letting the actions and the characters tell the story themselves. He uses Homer to show how epic poetry can recount exaggerated events in a believable manner. A tragedy could never get away with such marvels, since they are less credible when we see them performed. Having said this, he remarks that no plot should ever hinge on improbable events but praises Homer for managing through his art to make this flaw in the Odyssey seem insignificant. He also praises Homer as a master of using paralogisms (conclusions resulting from faulty or illogical arguments) to make lies seem believable.

Aristotle cautions against an overenthusiastic use of elaborate diction. While it is pleasing when there is no action to recount, and no character or thought to reveal, ornate diction can often obscure these more important elements when they are found together.

Chapters 25–26

Aristotle addresses a number of the criticisms that can be levelled against poetry. First among these is the accusation that the events depicted are impossible. This criticism can fall under two categories. Less grave describes the event if the impossibility arises from a lack of technical knowledge on the part of the poet. For instance, he may describe a horse galloping with both front legs thrown forward, not realizing that horses do not move like this. More grave describes the situation if the impossibility arises from the poet's inability to give an accurate description of something he knows quite well.

Aristotle answers that, often, impossible events—such as Homer's description of Achilles' pursuit of Hector in the Iliad —serve to heighten the astonishment and excitement of the story. When the poet can achieve similar effects while sta

possibility, however, this route should be preferred. Aristotle lays out the general principle that a poet should always aim for a convincing impossibility in favour of an unconvincing possibility.

Further, not all poetry is meant to describe things as they are. Some poets describe things as they ought to be, and others write to accord themselves with popular opinion rather than realism. For instance, Sophocles claimed that while Euripides portrayed people as they are, he portrayed them as they ought to be. Other poets stay true to popular myths rather than realism when depicting the gods.

As for events that are not impossible but merely improbable, the poet must show either that they accord with opinion or that the events are not as improbable as they may seem.

Aristotle also discusses contradictions the poet might make in language, but this discussion is very difficult to follow without knowledge of ancient Greek. Basically, Aristotle suggests that what may at first seem to be a contradiction in language may result from a metaphorical usage or some other poetic device.

While many errors are excusable or explainable, Aristotle asserts that the only excuse for an improbable plot or unattractive characterization is if they are necessary or are put to good use. Otherwise, they should be avoided at all costs.

In Chapter 26, Aristotle addresses the question of which is the higher form, tragedy or epic poetry. The argument in favour of epic poetry is based on the principle that the higher art form is less vulgar and addressed toward a refined audience. Tragedy is performed before large audiences, which results in melodramatic performances or overacting to please the crowds. Epic poetry is more cultivated than tragedy because it does not rely on gesture at all to convey its message.

Aristotle answers this argument by noting that the melodrama and overacting are faults of the performance and not of the tragic poet himself. The recital of epic poetry could similarly be overdone without reflecting poorly on the poet. Further, not all movement is bad—take dance, for instance—but only poorly executed movement. Also, tragedy does not need to be performed; it can be read, just like epic poetry, and all its merits will still be evident.

Further, he advances several reasons for considering tragedy superior. First, it has all the elements of an epic poem and has also music and spectacle, which the epic lacks. Second, simply reading the play without performing it is already very potent. Third, tragedy is shorter, suggesting that it is more compact and will have a more concentrated effect. Fourth, there is more unity in tragedy, as evidenced by the fact that a number of tragedies can be extracted from one epic poem.

Aristotle's Theory of Imitation

Aristotle did not invent the term "imitation". Plato was the first to use the word in relation with poetry, but Aristotle breathed into it a new definite meaning

imitation is no longer considered mimicry, but is regarded as an act of imaginative creation by which the poet, drawing his material from the phenomenal world, makes something new out of it.

In Aristotle's view, principle of imitation unites poetry with other fine arts and is the common basis of all the fine arts. It thus differentiates the fine arts from the other category of arts. While Plato equated poetry with painting, Aristotle equates it with music. It is no longer a servile depiction of the appearance of things, but it becomes a representation of the passions and emotions of men which are also imitated by music. Thus Aristotle by his theory enlarged the scope of imitation. The poet imitates not the surface of things but the reality embedded within. In the very first chapter of the Poetic, Aristotle says:

“Epic poetry and Tragedy, Comedy also and Dithyrambic poetry, as also the music of the flute and the lyre in most of their forms, are in their general conception modes of imitation. They differ however, from one another in three respects – their medium, the objects and the manner or mode of imitation, being in each case distinct.”

The medium of the poet and the painter are different. One imitates through form and colour, and the other through language, rhythm and harmony. The musician imitates through rhythm and harmony. Thus, poetry is more akin to music. Further, the manner of a poet may be purely narrative, as in the Epic, or depiction through action, as in drama. Even dramatic poetry is differentiated into tragedy and comedy accordingly as it imitates man as better or worse.

Aristotle says that the objects of poetic imitation are “men in action”. The poet represents men as worse than they are. He can represent men better than in real life based on material supplied by history and legend rather than by any living figure. The poet selects and orders his material and recreates reality. He brings order out of Chaos. The irrational or accidental is removed and attention is focused on the lasting and the significant. Thus he gives a truth of an ideal kind. His mind is not tied to reality:

“It is not the function of the poet to relate what has happened but what may happen – according to the laws of probability or necessity.”

History tells us what actually happened; poetry what may happen. Poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular. In this way, he exhibits the superiority of poetry over history. The poet freed from the tyranny of facts, takes a larger or general view of things, represents the universal in the particular and so shares the philosopher’s quest for ultimate truth. He thus equates poetry with philosophy and shows that both are means to a higher truth. By the word ‘universal’ Aristotle signifies:

“How a person of a certain nature or type will, on a particular occasion, speak or act, according to the law of probability or necessity.”

The poet constantly rises from the particular to the general. He studies the particular and devises principles of general application. He exceeds the limits of life without violating the essential laws of human nature.

Elsewhere Aristotle says, "Art imitates Nature". By 'Nature' he does not mean the outer world of created things but "the creative force, the productive principle of the universe." Art reproduce mainly an inward process, a physical energy working outwards, deeds, incidents, situation, being included under it so far as these spring from an inward, act of will, or draw some activity of thought or feeling. He renders men, "as they ought to be".

The poet imitates the creative process of nature, but the objects are "men in action". Now the 'action' may be 'external' or 'internal'. It may be the action within the soul caused by all that befalls a man. Thus, he brings human experiences, emotions and passions within the scope of poetic imitation. According to Aristotle's theory, moral qualities, characteristics, the permanent temper of the mind, the temporary emotions and feelings, are all action and so objects of poetic imitation.

Poetry may imitate men as better or worse than they are in real life or imitate as they really are. Tragedy and epic represent men on a heroic scale, better than they are, and comedy represents men of a lower type, worse than they are. Aristotle does not discuss the third possibility. It means that poetry does not aim at photographic realism. In this connection R. A. Scott-James points out that:

"Aristotle knew nothing of the "realistic" or "fleshy" school of fiction – the school of Zola or of Gissing."

Abercrombie, in contrast, defends Aristotle for not discussing the third variant. He says:

"It is just possible to imagine life exactly as it is, but the exciting thing is to imagine life as it might be, and it is then that imagination becomes an impulse capable of inspiring poetry."

Aristotle by his theory of imitation answers the charge of Plato that poetry is an imitation of "shadow of shadows", thrice removed from truth, and that the poet beguiles us with lies. Plato condemned poetry that in the very nature of things poets have no idea of truth. The phenomenal world is not the reality but a copy of the reality in the mind of the Supreme. The poet imitates the objects and phenomena of the world, which are shadowy and unreal. Poetry is, therefore, "the mother of lies".

Aristotle, on the contrary, tells us that art imitates not the mere shows of things, but the 'ideal reality' embodied in very object of the world. The process of nature is a 'creative process'; everywhere in 'nature there is a ceaseless and upward progress' in everything, and the poet imitates this upward movement of nature. Art reproduces the original not as it is, but as it appears to the senses. Art moves in a world of images, and reproduces the external, according to the idea or image in his mind. Thus the poet does not copy the external world, but creates according to his 'idea' of it. Thus even an ugly object well-imitated becomes a source of pleasure. We are told in "The Poetics":

"Objects which in themselves we view with pain, we delight to contemplate when reproduced with minute fidelity; such as the forms of the most ignoble animals and dead bodies."

The real and the ideal from Aristotle's point of view are not opposites; the ideal is the real, shorn of chance and accident, a purified form of reality. And it is this higher 'reality' which is the object of poetic imitation. Idealization is achieved by divesting the real of all that is accidental, transient and particular. Poetry thus imitates the ideal and the universal; it is an "idealized representation of character, emotion, action – under forms manifest in sense." Poetic truth, therefore, is higher than historical truth. Poetry is more philosophical, more conducive to understanding than Philosophy itself.

Thus Aristotle successfully and finally refuted the charge of Plato and provided a defence of poetry which has ever since been used by lovers of poetry in justification of their Muse. He breathed new life and soul into the concept of poetic imitation and showed that it is, in reality, a creative process.

Aristotle's Theory of Tragedy

Definition of Tragedy: *"Tragedy, then, is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; with incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish its catharsis of such emotions. . . . Every Tragedy, therefore, must have six parts, which parts determine its quality—namely, Plot, Characters, Diction, Thought, Spectacle, and Melody."*

The treatise we call the *Poetics* was composed at least 50 years after the death of Sophocles. Aristotle was a great admirer of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, considering it the perfect tragedy, and not surprisingly, his analysis fits that play most perfectly. I shall therefore use this play to illustrate the following major parts of Aristotle's analysis of tragedy as a literary genre.

Tragedy is the "imitation of an action" (mimesis) according to "the law of probability or necessity." Aristotle indicates that the medium of tragedy is drama, not narrative; tragedy "shows" rather than "tells." According to Aristotle, tragedy is higher and more philosophical than history because history simply relates what *has* happened while tragedy dramatizes what *may* happen, "what is possible according to the law of probability or necessity." History thus deals with the particular, and tragedy with the universal. Events that have happened may be due to accident or coincidence; they may be particular to a specific situation and not be part of a clear cause-and-effect chain. Therefore they have little relevance for others. Tragedy, however, is rooted in the fundamental order of the universe; it creates a cause-and-effect chain that clearly reveals what *may* happen at any time or place because that is the way the world operates. Tragedy therefore arouses not only pity but also fear, because the audience can envision themselves within this cause-and-effect chain.

Plot is the "first principle," the most important feature of tragedy. Aristotle defines plot as "the arrangement of the incidents": i.e., not the story itself but the way the incidents are presented to the audience, the structure of the play. According to Aristotle, tragedies where the outcome depends on a tightly constructed cause-and-effect chain of actions are superior to those that depend primarily on the character and personality of the protagonist. Plots that meet this criterion will have the following qualities (

The plot must be "a whole," with a beginning, middle, and end. The beginning, called by modern critics the **incentive moment**, must start the cause-and-effect chain but not be dependent on anything outside the compass of the play (i.e., its causes are downplayed but its effects are stressed). The middle, or **climax**, must be caused by earlier incidents and itself cause the incidents that follow it (i.e., its causes and effects are stressed). The end, or **resolution**, must be caused by the preceding events but not lead to other incidents outside the compass of the play (i.e., its causes are stressed but its effects downplayed); the end should therefore solve or resolve the problem created during the incentive moment. Aristotle calls the cause-and-effect chain leading from the incentive moment to the climax the "tying up" (*desis*), in modern terminology the **complication**. He therefore terms the more rapid cause-and-effect chain from the climax to the resolution the "unravelling" (*lusis*), in modern terminology the **dénouement**.

Firstly, the plot must be "complete," having "unity of action." By this Aristotle means that the plot must be structurally self-contained, with the incidents bound together by internal necessity, each action leading inevitably to the next with no outside intervention, no *deus ex machina*. According to Aristotle, the worst kinds of plots are "'episodic,' in which the episodes or acts succeed one another without probable or necessary sequence"; the only thing that ties together the events in such a plot is the fact that they happen to the same person. Playwrights should exclude coincidences from their plots; if some coincidence is required, it should "have an air of design," i.e., seem to have a fated connection to the events of the play. Similarly, the poet should exclude the irrational or at least keep it "outside the scope of the tragedy," i.e., reported rather than dramatized. While the poet cannot change the myths that are the basis of his plots, he "ought to show invention of his own and skilfully handle the traditional materials" to create unity of action in his plot.

Secondly, the plot must be "of a certain magnitude," both quantitatively (length, complexity) and qualitatively ("seriousness" and universal significance). Aristotle argues that plots should not be too brief; the more incidents and themes that the playwright can bring together in an organic unity, the greater the artistic value and richness of the play. Also, the more universal and significant the meaning of the play, the more the playwright can catch and hold the emotions of the audience, the better the play will be.

Thirdly, the plot may be either simple or complex, although complex is better. Simple plots have only a "change of fortune" (catastrophe). Complex plots have both "reversal of intention" (*peripetia*) and "recognition" (*anagnorisis*) connected with the catastrophe. Both *peripetia* and *anagnorisis* turn upon surprise. Aristotle explains that a *peripetia* occurs when a character produces an effect opposite to th

intended to produce, while an *anagnorisis* "is a change from ignorance to knowledge, producing love or hate between the persons destined for good or bad fortune." He argues that the best plots combine these two as part of their cause-and-effect chain (i.e., the *peripetia* leads directly to the *anagnorisis*); this in turns creates the *catastrophe*, leading to the final "scene of suffering".

Character has the second place in importance. In a perfect tragedy, character will support plot, i.e., personal motivations will be intricately connected parts of the cause-and-effect chain of actions producing pity and fear in the audience. The protagonist should be renowned and prosperous, so his change of fortune can be from good to bad. This change "should come about as the result, not of vice, but of some great error or frailty in a character." Such a plot is most likely to generate pity and fear in the audience, for "pity is aroused by unmerited misfortune, fear by the misfortune of a man like ourselves." The term Aristotle uses here, *hamartia*, often translated "tragic flaw," has been the subject of much debate. The meaning of the Greek word is closer to "mistake" than to "flaw," and I believe it is best interpreted in the context of what Aristotle has to say about plot and "the law or probability or necessity." In the ideal tragedy, claims Aristotle, the protagonist will mistakenly bring about his own downfall—not because he is sinful or morally weak, but because he does not know enough. The role of the *hamartia* in tragedy comes not from its moral status but from the inevitability of its consequences. Hence the *peripetia* is really one or more self-destructive actions taken in blindness, leading to results diametrically opposed to those that were intended (often termed **tragic irony**), and the *anagnorisis* is the gaining of the essential knowledge that was previously lacking . Characters in tragedy should have the following qualities:

First Quality: - "Good or fine." Aristotle relates this quality to moral purpose and says it is relative to class: "Even a woman may be good, and also a slave, though the woman may be said to be an inferior being, and the slave quite worthless."

Second Quality: - "Fitness of character" (true to type); e.g. valour is appropriate for a warrior but not for a woman.

Third Quality: -"True to life" (realistic)

Fourth Quality: -"Consistency" (true to themselves). Once a character's personality and motivations are established, these should continue throughout the play.

Fifth Quality: - "Necessary or probable." Characters must be logically constructed according to "the law of probability or necessity" that governs the actions of the play.

Sixth Quality: - "True to life and yet more beautiful" (idealized, ennobled).

Thought is third in importance, and is found "where something is proved to be or not to be, or a general maxim is enunciated." Aristotle says little about thought, and most of what he has to say is associated with how speeches should reveal character. However, we may assume that this category would also include what we call the **themes** of a play.

Diction is fourth, and is "the expression of the meaning in words" which are proper and appropriate to the plot, characters, and end of the tragedy. In this category, Aristotle discusses the stylistic elements of tragedy; he is particularly interested in metaphors: "But the greatest thing by far is to have a command of metaphor; . . . it is the mark of genius, for to make good metaphors implies an eye for resemblances".

Song, or melody, is fifth, and is the musical element of the chorus. Aristotle argues that the Chorus should be fully integrated into the play like an actor; choral odes should not be "mere interludes," but should contribute to the unity of the plot.

Spectacle is last, for it is least connected with literature; "the production of spectacular effects depends more on the art of the stage machinist than on that of the poet." Although Aristotle recognizes the emotional attraction of spectacle, he argues that superior poets rely on the inner structure of the play rather than spectacle to arouse pity and fear; those who rely heavily on spectacle "create a sense, not of the terrible, but only of the monstrous" .

The end of the tragedy is a catharsis (purgation, cleansing) of the tragic emotions of pity and fear. *Catharsis* is another Aristotelian term that has generated considerable debate. The word means "purging," and Aristotle seems to be employing a medical metaphor—tragedy arouses the emotions of pity and fear in order to purge away their excess, to reduce these passions to a healthy, balanced proportion. Aristotle also talks of the "pleasure" that is proper to tragedy, apparently meaning the aesthetic pleasure one gets from contemplating the pity and fear that are aroused through an intricately constructed work of art .

Aristotle`s Concept of Plot

Introduction: - Aristotle's Poetics has often been accused of being 'lopsided' in its treatment of the subject of poetry, of devoting a major portion of the discussion to 'Tragedy' rather than any other form of poetry. This accusation, however, is met by the answer that the work is of a fragmentary nature, and a lost portion might have dealt with other forms. However, within the treatment of tragedy, there is a slight imbalance. Of all the constituent elements of tragedy, plot is given the most attentive and extensive coverage. This is not surprising, considering that Aristotle thought the plot to be the very 'soul of tragedy'. It should be remembered that Aristotle's conception of tragedy is 'biological' i.e. he compares tragedy to a living organism. Just as the living organism takes on a definite shape because of its skeleton, plot gives to tragedy an important design. Plot is as important to tragedy as the skeleton is to the living organism.

Development of Thought: - According to Aristotle tragedy is "the imitation of an action, that is serious, complete and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions".

So the tragedy is the representation of action and action consists of incidents and events. Plot is the arrangement of these incidents and events. It is better for the poet to choose a traditional story and then proceed to make out of it his own plot. Stories taken from history, mythology or legend are to be preferred, for they are familiar and easy to understand and they serve as guide-lines for characterization. Having chosen his story or having invented it, the artist must subject it to a process of artistic selection and ordering. Only relevant incidents and situation are to be selected and they are to be arranged that they seem to follow each other necessarily and inevitably. Moreover, the incidents chosen must be serious that is to say weighty of some importance, and not trivial, because tragedy is an imitation of a serious action having certain magnitude.

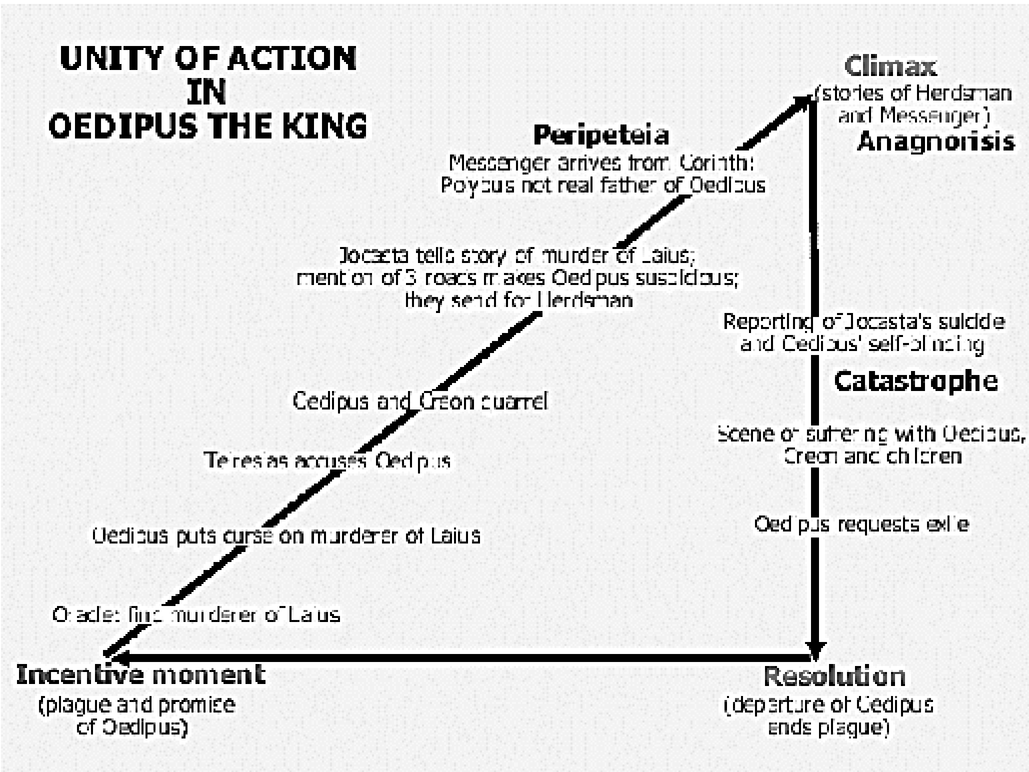
The making of story into plot involves what Humphry House calls "episodizing", or making into episodes. It is implied that there should be a logical connection between the events, the whole being governed by the law of probability and necessity. So the tragic plot must be a whole, complete in itself; it should have a beginning, a middle and an end. There might be earlier parts of the story the antecedents and that may be communicated by the dramatist in due course. But the beginning must be clear and intelligible even without them. It must not provoke us to ask why and how. A middle is something that is consequent upon a situation that has gone before and which is followed by the catastrophe. The middle is everything between the first incident and the last. The middle is followed by the end. An end is that which is consequent upon a given situation but which is not followed by any further incident or situation. The middle must follow naturally and inevitably upon the beginning and must logically lead to the end or the catastrophe. Thus artistic wholeness implies logical link-up of the various incidents, events and situation that form the plot.

As regards 'magnitude' the plot must have a certain length or size. It should be neither too small nor too large. The plot should be long enough to allow the process of change from happiness to misery initiated by the beginning to be properly and completely developed, but not too long for memory to encounter it as a whole. If it is too small, its different parts will not be clearly distinguishable from each other as in the case of living organism. Within these limits, the plot should be as large as possible. O.B. Hardison remarks "The precise rule is that the magnitude should be whatever is required for a change to occur from bad fortune to good, or from good fortune to bad through a series of incidents that are in accordance with probability or necessity". In other words, magnitude implies that the plot must have order, logic, symmetry and perspicuity.

The plot may have variety but it should have a unity. This unity arises from the fact that every event has a logical connection with the rest of the action and none of them is irrelevant. There might be episodes but the same must be properly integrated with the main action. Otherwise the episodic plots are the worst of all. The unity of plot does not consist in the unity of the hero; it consists in the unity of action. The plot should be an organic whole so that if one of its parts is displaced or removed the whole should be disjointed and disturbed.

A defective plot is that in which the rules of probability or necessity are not observed. The best tragic effect of pity and fear can be produced only if the plot contains elements of surprise and accident. But there should be a sort of 'inevitabi

The above discussion makes it clear that Aristotle emphasises the Unity of Action but has little to say about the Unity of Time and the Unity of Place. About the Unity of Time he merely says that tragedy should confine itself as far as possible to single revolution of the sun. No law is implied here about the Unity of Place. Aristotle only mentioned once when comparing the epic and the tragedy that epic can narrate a number of action going on simultaneously in different parts while in a drama such simultaneous action cannot be represented for the stage is one part (place) and not several parts or places. In this respect too Aristotle was very much misunderstood by the Renaissance and the French critics who deduced from his statement the rigid unity of place.



Aristotle classifies plots into three kinds: - Simple Plot, Complex Plot and Plots based on scenes of suffering.

The word Simple and Complex, here have technical terms. A simple plot is one which does not have any Peripety and Anagnorisis, but the action moves forward uniformly without any violent or sudden change. A complex plot implies reversal of intention or situation and recognition. Reversal of situation is change by which the action veers round to its opposite. Recognition is a change from ignorance to knowledge. Both these parts of the plot turn upon surprise. Aristotle, however, prefers the complex plot. The ideal tragedy is one which results from human error, error on the part of friends and relatives, error on the part of the hero himself. The ideal tragedy is a story in which the calamity is due to a false move blindly made by a friend or kinsman or by the hero himself. Atkins says "It is a tragedy brought about, not by the deliberate purpose of some evil agent, nor yet by mere chance, but by human error". F.R. Lucas agrees with Atkins and remarks "there is nothing more brilliant in 'the Poetics' than this recognition by Aristotle of the Tragedy of Error, of the Peripetia, as the deepest of all".

In Aristotle's conception, "Hamartia, Perepetia and Anagnorisis all hang together in the ideal schematisation of the tragic plot". Hamartia is the tragic error and it is related to the character of the hero but in a successful plot it is so closely worked into the plot as to be inseparable from it. The miscalculation of the hero causes a chain of incidents which result in the change from good fortune to bad which the tragic plot depicts. Both Peripetia and Anagnorisis are incidents, and parts of the plot.

The Peripetia is the fatal working of the plot to result the opposite of that intended .For example events do not turn up according to the intentions of expectation of the hero. They move in an opposite direction to his intention.

The Anagnorisis is the recognition of truth; it is the change from ignorance to knowledge. For example, Oedipus's knowledge of his parents that motivates him to some action and determines the direction of the action in the story Recognition and reversal can be caused by separate them.

Besides the complex and simple plots there are also spectacular plots. This type of plot depends on incidents of suffering, Aristotle rates it very low. It is the plot which drives its effect from the depiction of torture, murder, maiming, violence, death etc. According to Aristotle, the tragic effect must be created naturally and not with artificial and theatrical aids. Such spectacular plots indicate a deficiency in the plot.

The unravelling of the plot should be done naturally and logically and not by the use of arbitrary devices like chance, supernatural intervention etc. Atkin is of the view that "Gods should intervene only where it becomes necessary to explain the past, or announce future events external to the action". Aristotle does not consider poetic justice as necessary for tragedy. Similarly there is happiness for some of the characters and misery for others. Such a double ending weakens the tragic effect and must be avoided. It is more proper to comedy. Thus, Aristotle is against the mixture of the tragic and the comic of Tragicomedy.

Conclusion: - Aristotle's concept of plot is in keeping with what we have come to call 'classical'. There is an insistence on order, pattern, and design. The chaotic material of life should be brought under systematic discipline, so that events seem to happen in a logical sequence with no irrelevancies. There has to be a single action consisting of episodes, which are logically connected and causally related. Aristotle considers the 'fatal' plot as being more tragic. He prefers that plot which shows a change form good to bad fortune as being more fit for tragedy. Further, the complex plot involving Peripety or Discovery, or both, is preferable to simple plot. It is true that the modern concept of tragedy has changed a great deal—any living literature naturally involves change and modifications. Yet we find that in some aspects Aristotle's theory of Plot is still very much valid, for they are universal principles.

Aristotle's Concept of Ideal Tragic Hero: Hamartia

No passage in "The Poetics" with the exception of the Catharsis phrase has attracted so much critical attention as his ideal of the tragic hero.

The function of a tragedy is to arouse the emotions of pity and fear and Aristotle deduces the qualities of his hero from this function. He should be good, but not perfect, for the fall of a perfect man from happiness into misery, would be unfair and repellent and will not arouse pity. Similarly, an utterly wicked person passing from happiness to misery may satisfy our moral sense, but will lack proper tragic qualities. His fall will be well-deserved and according to 'justice'. It excites neither pity nor fear. Thus entirely good and utterly wicked persons are not suitable to be tragic heroes.

Similarly, according to Aristotelian law, a saint would be unsuitable as a tragic hero. He is on the side of the moral order and hence his fall shocks and repels. Besides, his martyrdom is a spiritual victory which drowns the feeling of pity. Drama, on the other hand, requires for its effectiveness a militant and combative hero. It would be important to remember that Aristotle's conclusions are based on the Greek drama and he is lying down the qualifications of an ideal tragic hero. He is here discussing what is the very best and not what is good. Overall, his views are justified, for it requires the genius of a Shakespeare to arouse sympathy for an utter villain, and saints as successful tragic heroes have been extremely rare.

Having rejected perfection as well as utter depravity and villainy, Aristotle points out that: **"The ideal tragic hero … must be an intermediate kind of person, a man not pre-eminently virtuous and just, whose misfortune, however, is brought upon him not by vice or depravity but by some error of judgment."**

The ideal tragic hero is a man who stands midway between the two extremes. He is not eminently good or just, though he inclines to the side of goodness. He is like us, but raised above the ordinary level by a deeper vein of feeling or heightened powers of intellect or will. He is idealized, but still he has so much of common humanity as to enlist our interest and sympathy.

The tragic hero is not evil or vicious, but he is also not perfect and his disaster is brought upon him by his own fault. The Greek word used here is "Hamartia" meaning "missing the mark". He falls not because of the act of outside agency or evil but because of Hamartia or "miscalculation" on his part. Hamartia is not a moral failing and it is unfortunate that it was translated as "tragic flaw" by Bradley. Aristotle himself distinguishes Hamartia from moral failing. He means by it some error or judgment. He writes that the cause of the hero's fall must lie "not in depravity, but in some error or Hamartia on his part". He does not assert or deny anything about the connection of Hamartia with hero's moral failings. **"It may be accompanied by moral imperfection, but it is not itself a moral imperfection, and in the purest tragic situation the suffering hero is not morally to blame."**

Thus Hamartia is an error or miscalculation, but the error may arise from any of the three ways: It may arise from "ignorance of some fact or circumstance", or secondly, it may arise from hasty or careless view of the special case, or thirdly, it may be an error voluntary, but not deliberate, as acts committed in anger. Else and Martian Ostwald interpret Hamartia and say that the hero has a tendency to err created by lack of knowledge and he may commit a series of errors. This tendency to err characterizes the

hero from the beginning and at the crisis of the play it is complemented by the recognition scene, which is a sudden change "from ignorance to knowledge".

In fact, Hamartia is a word with various shades of meaning and has been interpreted by different critics. Still, all serious modern Aristotelian scholarship agreed that Hamartia is not moral imperfection. It is an error of judgment, whether arising from ignorance of some material circumstance or from rashness of temper or from some passion. It may even be a character, for the hero may have a tendency to commit errors of judgment and may commit series of errors. This last conclusion is borne out by the play Oedipus Tyrannus to which Aristotle refers time and again and which may be taken to be his ideal. In this play, hero's life is a chain or errors, the most fatal of all being his marriage with his mother. If King Oedipus is Aristotle's ideal hero, we can say with Butcher that: **"His conception of Hamartia includes all the three meanings mentioned above, which in English cannot be covered by a single term."**

Hamartia is an error, or a series of errors, "whether morally culpable or not," committed by an otherwise noble person, and these errors derive him to his doom. The tragic irony lies in the fact that hero may err mistakenly without any evil intention, yet he is doomed no less than immorals who sin consciously. He has Hamartia and as a result his very virtues hurry him to his ruin. Says Butcher: **"Othello in the modern drama, Oedipus in the ancient, are the two most conspicuous examples of ruin wrought by character, noble indeed, but not without defects, acting in the dark and, as it seemed, for the best."**

Aristotle lays down another qualification for the tragic hero. He must be, "of the number of those in the enjoyment of great reputation and prosperity." He must be a well-reputed individual occupying a position of lofty eminence in society. This is so because Greed tragedy, with which alone Aristotle was familiar, was written about a few distinguished royal families. Aristotle considers eminence as essential for the tragic hero. But Modern drama demonstrates that the meanest individual can also serve as a tragic hero, and that tragedies of Sophoclean grandeur can be enacted even in remote country solitudes.

However, Aristotle's dictum is quite justified on the principle that, "higher the state, the greater the fall that follows," or because heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes, while the death of a beggar passes unnoticed. But it should be remembered that Aristotle nowhere says that the hero should be a king or at least royally descended. They were the Renaissance critics who distorted Aristotle and made the qualification more rigid and narrow.

Aristotle's Concept of Catharsis

Aristotle writes that the function of tragedy is to arouse the emotions of pity and fear, and to affect the Catharsis of these emotions. Aristotle has used the term Catharsis only once, but no phrase has been handled so frequently by critics, and poets. Aristotle has not explained what exactly he meant by the word, nor do we get any help from the Poetics. For this reason, help and guidance has to be taken from his other works. Further, Catharsis has three meaning. It means 'purgation', 'purification', and 'clarification', and each critic has used the word in one or the ot

Tragedy arouses fear and pity, but there are sharp differences as to the process, the way by which the rousing of these emotions gives pleasure.

Catharsis has been taken as a medical metaphor, 'purgation', denoting a pathological effect on the soul similar to the effect of medicine on the body. This view is borne out by a passage in the Politics where Aristotle refers to religious frenzy being cured by certain tunes which excite religious frenzy. In Tragedy: **"...pity and fear, artificially stirred the latent pity and fear which we bring with us from real life."**

In the Neo-Classical era, Catharsis was taken to be an allopathic treatment with the unlike curing unlike. The arousing of pity and fear was supposed to bring about the purgation or 'evacuation' of other emotions, like anger, pride etc. As Thomas Taylor holds: **"We learn from the terrible fates of evil men to avoid the vices they manifest.**" F. L. Lucas rejects the idea that Catharsis is a medical metaphor, and says that: **"The theatre is not a hospital."**

Both Lucas and Herbert Reed regard it as a kind of safety valve. Pity and fear are aroused; we give free play to these emotions which is followed by emotional relief. I. A. Richards' approach to the process is also psychological. Fear is the impulse to withdraw and pity is the impulse to approach. Both these impulses are harmonized and blended in tragedy and this balance brings relief and repose.

The ethical interpretation is that the tragic process is a kind of lustration of the soul, an inner illumination resulting in a more balanced attitude to life and its suffering. Thus John Gassner says that a clear understanding of what was involved in the struggle, of cause and effect, a judgment on what we have witnessed, can result in a state of mental equilibrium and rest, and can ensure complete aesthetic pleasure. Tragedy makes us realize that divine law operates in the universe, shaping everything for the best.

During the Renaissance, another set of critics suggested that Tragedy helped to harden or 'temper' the emotions. Spectators are hardened to the pitiable and fearful events of life by witnessing them in tragedies.

Humphrey House rejects the idea of 'purgation' and forcefully advocates the 'purification' theory which involves moral instruction and learning. It is a kind of 'moral conditioning'. He points out that, 'purgation means cleansing'.

According to 'the purification' theory, Catharsis implies that our emotions are purified of excess and defect, are reduced to intermediate state, trained and directed towards the right objects at the right time. The spectator learns the proper use of pity, fear and similar emotions by witnessing tragedy. Butcher writes: **"The tragic Catharsis involves not only the idea of emotional relief, but the further idea of purifying the emotions so relieved."**

The basic defect of 'purgation' theory and 'purification' theory is that they are too much occupied with the psychology of the audience. Aristotle was writing a treatise not on psychology but on the art of poetry. He relates 'Catharsis' not to the emotions of the

spectators but to the incidents which form the plot of the tragedy. And the result is the "clarification" theory.

The paradox of pleasure being aroused by the ugly and the repellent is also the paradox involved in tragedy. Tragic incidents are pitiable and fearful.

They include horrible events as a man blinding himself, a wife murdering her husband or a mother slaying her children and instead of repelling us produce pleasure. Aristotle clearly tells us that we should not seek for every pleasure from tragedy, "but only the pleasure proper to it". 'Catharsis' refers to the tragic variety of pleasure. The Catharsis clause is thus a definition of the function of tragedy, and not of its emotional effects on the audience.

Imitation does not produce pleasure in general, but only the pleasure that comes from learning, and so also the peculiar pleasure of tragedy. Learning comes from discovering the relation between the action and the universal elements embodied in it. The poet might take his material from history or tradition, but he selects and orders it in terms of probability and necessity, and represents what, "might be". He rises from the particular to the general and so is more universal and more philosophical. The events are presented free of chance and accidents which obscure their real meaning. Tragedy enhances understanding and leaves the spectator 'face to face with the universal law'.

Thus according to this interpretation, 'Catharsis' means clarification of the essential and universal significance of the incidents depicted, leading to an enhanced understanding of the universal law which governs human life and destiny, and such an understating leads to pleasure of tragedy. In this view, Catharsis is neither a medical, nor a religious or moral term, but an intellectual term. The term refers to the incidents depicted in the tragedy and the way in which the poet reveals their universal significance.

The clarification theory has many merits. Firstly, it is a technique of the tragedy and not to the psychology of the audience. Secondly, the theory is based on what Aristotle says in the Poetics, and needs no help and support of what Aristotle has said in Politics and Ethics. Thirdly, it relates Catharsis both to the theory of imitation and to the discussion of probability and necessity. Fourthly, the theory is perfectly in accord with current aesthetic theories.

According to Aristotle the basic tragic emotions are pity and fear and are painful. If tragedy is to give pleasure, the pity and fear must somehow be eliminated. Fear is aroused when we see someone suffering and think that similar fate might befall us. Pity is a feeling of pain caused by the sight of underserved suffering of others. The spectator sees that it is the tragic error or Hamartia of the hero which results in suffering and so he learns something about the universal relation between character and destiny.

To conclude, Aristotle's conception of Catharsis is mainly intellectual. It is neither didactic nor theoretical, though it may have a residual theological element. Aristotle's Catharsis is not a moral doctrine requiring the tragic poet to show that bad men come to bad ends, nor a kind of theological relief arising from discovery that God's laws operate invisibly to make all things work out for the best.

Aristotle’s Comparison of Epic and Tragedy

According to Aristotle, epic and tragedy have the same forms. Epic can be full of complexity. Epic of recognition can emphasize character or suffering. Because epic is in the other manner of imitation. Epic lack one form found in the tragedy- the tragedy of spectacle. Although thought and diction don not produce forms of tragedy or epic, both are important to epic as they are tragedy. Aristotle gives the example of one of the greatest poet of Greek Epic, Homer. He has cited the prime example of Epic artistry. If we talk about Iliad, we find Iliad to be simple and full of suffering. The plot of Iliad is very simple and doesn’t need much explanation. Its argument is 'The wrater of Achilles'. Having bed aroused by the death of his friend Patroclus, Achilles sets out consciously to ruin hector. He succeeds in destroying hector by the end of the poem. Although some of the episodes are just added for the variation, which are 'Outside the Plot'. Aristotle describes Iliad as an 'Epic' of suffering. From the starting point, the emphasis is on the 'tragic deed' that is the end of the plot- the murdering of hector- and this deed is a episode of suffering. 'The Odyssey', on the other hand, is an epic of recognition and of character. But it can be said that odyssey is not both these forms simultaneously, one can see that the plot of odyssey is complex one. It evolved several recognition of Ulysses by Telemachuns, the neat herd, the nurse, and eventually the suitors. In this sense there is, as Aristotle remarks, "Recognition Throughout the parts of odyssey emphasizing character, however, are 'outside the plot! The most important such 'part' is tale of is wanderings. This tale has an episode plot that is simple in form and furthermore in its movement the type of plot that Aristotle seems to have in mind for the 'tragedy of character'". Having classified that Homer outstrips all other in diction and thought.

Difference between Epic and Tragedy: - The first and foremost difference between epic and tragedy arise from means and manner s of imitation. Epic uses ' Words alone' and a single meter throughout one, the other hand tragedy and harmony and employs a variety of meters in the choral sections. Again if we see, we can know that epic also uses the 'mixed' narrative manner of Homer, whereas tragedy uses the 'Dramatic' manner.

Another difference is more related to the size and contents of epic and tragedy. Though both imitation the same object is noble action. It is fact that they do so using different means and manners affect the way in ethic they present their material. Tragedy is intended for stage presentation is manner and has parts which cannot be found in epic i.e. means.

Aristotle's comment on the length of tragedy gave rise during the neo-classic period to the doctrine of unity of time. According to this doctrine, which became literally a critical dogma in seventeenth century France and in the restoration England, when Aristotle asserts that 'tragedy attempts, as far as possible, to remain, within one circuit of sun here, he refers to the time covered by the dramatic action of the play. This interpretation accords with the rationalist bias of neo-classic critics. Spectators, they argued would not believe in the reality of an action that compressed several days or, in the case of Shakespearean plays for several years into a three hour drama. One has to agree that if the spectators did not believe in the reality of an action, the tragedy would not have its

proper effect. This same idea was carried to absurd extremes in England Shakespeare and his other Elizabethan contemporaries.

On the other side the twentieth century critic has rejected the idea that Aristotle formally advocated unit of time in his work 'Poetics'. In this matter, we would better probe into the Greek tragedies. Greek tragedies confine their action to a 'Single circuit of the sun' in this sense. The 'Agamemnon' and 'Eumenddes' are well-known examples of plays that cover several days. In the second place, neo-classic verisimilitude is a demonstrably false doctrine and one that is not consistent with Aristotle's explicit rejection of the theory that poetic imitation is an imitation or copying of history.

The above concept can be seen with Aristotle's view-he lived before hundreds of years. In those days, he became and even today he is known as father of criticism. He might have written the criticism as the need of his society and demand of his time. Even Greek tragedies or epics not follow him perfectly.

Else, says that both manner and means affect the ways the epic and tragedy present action. The most obvious influence is manner. Here, our great Sanskrit plays can be kept in mind while considering the Greek. The epic is recited in the mixed manner whereas tragedy is presented by many agents i.e. performed on stage. If we consider Ramayana and Mahabharata they have no time range. They cover generations. In practice, dramas especially Greek dramas were much shorter taking an average of perhaps two hours. Epic on the other hand, has no theoretical limit. In this respect the epic is line novel. Homer's 'Iliad', Virgil's Aeneid and Milton's Paradise Lost cannot be completed in one sitting while plays can be watched in one sitting or they can be read in one sitting.

Aristotle observes that at first the poets proceeded in tragedy in the same way as they did in epic. Aristotle does not mention any writers before Aeschylus. He felt that Aeschylus led the way in incorporating Homeric techniques into tragedy. The only unified trilogy that has survived is the Oresteia of Aeschylus. It is probably important as it continuous the Iliad by telling of the murder of Agamemnon by Clytemnestra, the slaying of Clytemnestra, the spying of Clytemnestra by her son orates and the cleansing of orates by the Athenian tribunal. The Oresteia is Homeric in size and content. As tragic poets assimilated the Homeric influence more fully, the trilogy lost popularity.

The last contrast between the epic and the tragedy is that there are six 'Parts' or constituent elements in tragedy. Three derived from object of imitation, two from means and one from manner Epic has only four 'parts'. Tragedy uses song also. Tragedy reader can judge all the parts but for an epic reader it's just impossible to judge all the essential parts of an epic. So he considers tragedy before an epic inspire of the fact that epic preceded tragedy in history. Tragedy includes epic. Most of the important concepts related to epic can be brought up on connection with tragedy. Epic is longer but may give less benefit as Aristotle says.

Aristotle's Preference for Tragedy: - After considering various differences between epic and tragedy question arises of superiority. Is 'Epic' better or 'Tragedy'? In 'Poetics' Aristotle discussed this question at length. He see it his own words,' if the more refined art is higher and the more refined in every case is that which

of audiences. The art which imitates anything and everything is manifestly most unrefined. Tragic art stands to epic in the same relation as the younger to the older actors. So we are told the epic poetry is addressed to a cultivated audience, who do not need gesture; tragedy to an inferior public, being then unrefined, it is evidently lower of the two. Tragedy like epic poetry produced its effect even without Acton; it reveals its power by me reading. Then in all other respects tragedy is superior if this fault is not inherent in it.

According to Aristotle tragedy is superior to epic because besides having all the elements of epic, it also has same additional elements. Tragedy has better unit whole where as many incidences are scattered in epic. There are many stories in stories in epic. Tragedy ends more perfectly then epic and so it is better than epic. Tragedy keeps your concentration as it is of fewer hours while epic gives freedom to your imagination to render while reading.

Probability and Necessity: - The poet brings out the probable and necessary link up of various events both in the development of plot and also in the internal working of the character. Butcher brightly emphasis that the rule of probability and necessity refers to the cohesion of the parts. Tragic heroes like Othello, Hamlet and Oedipus Rex process a grandeur a magnificent of thought will and action which is much above the level of the average humanity. Indian actions they are true to their nature, their actions are probable and necessary outcome of their respective character and after their environment in which they are placed. Aristotle examines in detail the Plato’s charge that poetry is all lies. He faces the fundamental objection that poetry present not facts but fiction. It criticizes as an untruth and unreal. Aristotle's reply is that poetry is not reality but a higher reality. Poetry transcend facts and the idea of reality is in the poets mind. It gives us the ideal reality in the poets mind.

Aristotle points out the sources of tragic pleasure :

(i) Pleasure is derived from air, natural sense of harmony and rhythm.

(ii) It is also derived from the instinct of imitation. A successful tragedy gives pleasure because it satisfies our basic instinct of imitation.

(iii) Poetry is imitation of an imitation of something which we are not familiar increases our knowledge and gives us pleasure.

(iv) The pleasure of tragedy is caused by the purgation.

(v) Tragedy imitates action and life, its pain and misery. There is emotional identification of the spectator with the person or persons who suffer on the stage. Perpetuity and Anagnorisis helped to create and heighten interest as well as emotions. All are sense, emotions and thoughts are involved. In this way we smile through our tears.

(vi) Tragedy gives aesthetic pleasure because it increases our understanding of life and its problems. The spectator gets a kind of inner illumination.

(vii) The unity of the plot diction. Spectator etc. also contributes to the sources of the pleasure in tragedy.

These are the main features of Aristotle's theory of tragedy, it must be remembered that Aristotle was writing his theory based on green drama. It is not meant for universal application. He does provide a foundation for all discussion about tragedy and his contribution is valuable.

Conclusion: - Aristotle solved most of the problems raised by Plato his mentor and also beautifies the beauty of tragedy and epic efficiently. He emphasizes the shaping part of the imagination which empowers the poet to go beyond philosophy and history.

The Nature of Poetic Truth in Aristotle's Poetics

Introduction: - Several critics are of the view that Aristotle's Poetics was primarily written as an answer to Plato's charge against poetry. Whether this is acceptable or not, Aristotle's concept of poetry certainly involves a 'defence' of poetry against the charge that poetry is a pack of lies, a copy of a copy, a shadow of shadows and twice removed from reality. We see how Aristotle takes the very concept of 'imitation' from Plato but modifies it to hold greater dimensions.

The Concept of 'Imitation': - Plato considered poetry as imitation. But to him, the imitation was of a lower order. Poets, according to him, imitated the world of appearances, which was a shadow or image of the ideal conception. Thus poetry imitated a shadow; it copied' a copy of reality, and hence, was twice removed from reality.

Aristotle took the term 'imitation' from Plato. He gave to it a much wider significance and greater dimensions. He turns the table on Plato by saying that poetry is an imitation, but imitation of a special type. The imitation in poetry is not a slavish 'copying* of the external appearances of things. It is a recreative imitation. It is a creative reproduction of objects; it involves the effort of the imagination and the intellect. It thus presents a higher truth, the truth of imagination. It universalises the particular. The poet sifts1 his material, selects the most relevant portions, imposes order and design on the chaotic material of life and universalises the particular. Thus Aristotle contends2, the truth involve in poetry is higher than that embodied in history.

Poetry and History : Universal versus Particular: - The poet does not deal with things as they had happened in the past. To do so would be the work of the historian. The function of the poet is to relate what may happen—what is possible according to the laws of probability and necessity:

The poet and historian differ not by writing in prose or in verse. The true difference is that one relates what has happened, the other what may happen.

The poet could take for his material, things as they are, as they are said or thought to be, or things as they ought to be. He uses creative vision to make something 'new' out of the material of life. But what are these materials of life? Are they the external happenings and events which took place historically? No. Poetr

the basic elements in human nature, and the permanent possibilities of human nature. History, on the other hand, deals with the concrete particulars of existence. The historian is restricted to the particular happenings, or the existent facts. The poet's view is larger, deeper, more generalised. He presents the universal through the particular.

Poetry has this in common with philosophy: there is a search for Truth—universal truth. The historical facts appear in a chronological order. I, them, there is not a logical sequence or causal chain. But in poetry, there is the governing appearance of design imposed on the confused material taken from We.

The Government of Probability and Necessity: - The poet, as has been already remarked, imposes order on the confused tangle of life. The poet eliminates the irrelevant matter, the nonessential, or the merely incidental. The law of probability and necessity refers to the internal structure of the poem. It brings about the close cohesion of the parts. There has got to be a 'necessity' about the events following one another. There has to be a 'necessary' relationship between the events, and between the characters and events. There is a probably causal relationship between the incidents.

One might argue that this kind of order and design is far removed from real life, in which things often happen without apparent cause. Things often happen in a haphazard manner, with no proper causal relationship in life. Why, then, should we say that poetry's truth depends upon the law of probability and necessity, or order and the establishment of proper relationship between cause and effect? The very fact that the poet selects his material and imposes order on it, and produces an effect of 'inevitability' about the sequence of events, embodies the essence of poetic truth. It is through this process of ordering the material into a cohesive1 whole that a poet achieves the idealisation of appearances. The poet takes the haphazard material of the life as we see it. He imagines a cohesive while composed out of this material. He creates this cohesive whole out of the chaotic material. Thus the truth embodied in poetry is of a higher order than that of history.

Imaginative Truth: - The men and women we meet in poetry are not 'real' in the usual sense of term. They are always slightly different, either better or lower than average. Their thoughts and words are not thoughts and words of ordinary men and women. The probable laws of their behaviour cannot be measured against the standards of average humanity. The rules of ordinary experience do not govern the higher creations of- poetry. Poetry imitates the 'essence' and not the appearances. It reveals the ideal possibilities inherent in human life. All that the truth of poetry demands is that the actions of the character in the poem be logical. The events presented by the poet should have a relationship not only with one another, but also with the character placed in the midst of these events. Aristotle agrees that poetry presents not facts, but fiction. But this does not make poetry 'unreal' or 'untrue'. The truth of poetry is a "higher reality*, because poetry rises above facts. In this it becomes 'ideal'; it presents something as it might have been, or ought to be, according to the idea of the poet. It is the imaginative power which makes poetic truth different from historical truth. And it is this that makes poetry 'universal' and permanent in its truth.

Likely Impossibility is Preferable to Unlikely Possibility: - Aristotle makes a valid statement in connection with poetic truth. He remarks that in poetry the 'likely impossibility is preferable to the 'unlikely possibility'. The poet, Aristotle is quite willing to admit, tells lies; the poet is not concerned with actualities. But what matters, tells lies; the poet is not concerned with actualities. But what matters, is the way of telling these lies. It is of the utmost importance that these 'lies' be convincing, credible, probable. The most impossible occurrence, incident, or character becomes credible through the poet's vivid handling. Indeed, we find that we are quite willing to believe the 'fantastic' in actual life even if it seems quite unlikely. But the same thing would appear incredible in art, if it is not presented in a 'realistic' manner. Poetic illusion has to be created with a master-touch, otherwise the required 'suspension of disbelief will not be produced. It is' the poet's artistic capabilities which can create this poetic illusion, by ordering the events in a causal sequence. It would then appear as if the events could have happened under a particular set of circumstances. Through the poet's art, "the impossible not only becomes possible, but natural and even inevitable."

Kinds of Improbabilities and Irrationalities: - The probable is that which appears rational, and hence gains our credibility. Anything improbable is irrational. The impossible is that which is not possible physically. But the impossible can be made to look 'probable' if it is given a logical inevitability through art. The improbable does not really have a place in art. But there are some types of improbabilities which can be overcome in their presentation.

Material improbability, with regards to material facts, can be overcome. It can be made to look logically inevitable by artistic skill. Improbabilities are admitted in poetry as they are conducive to the heightening of the poetic effects of wonder and admiration. Homer, says Aristotle, could handle 'lies' very well.

The 'irrational' is much more difficult to handle if it is the introduction of the marvellous. But the supernatural elements are easily believed, if it is in accordance with the general beliefs and received opinion. The supernatural elements are easily admittable in epic poetry, but less so in tragedy which is presented on stage. On stage, irrationalities appear less credible.

In dramatic poetry, the events presented must be the logical and natural outcome of the preceding events. Each event has to lead naturally to the next. There is a complex interrelationship between character and event in drama. Cause and effect have to be logically presented. Hence, the place for the irrational, the supernatural, and the marvellous is highly restricted in drama. Nor is there much place for 'chance' or 'accident'. Chance events do not have rationality while drama requires its events to be governed by the law of probability and necessity. Chance is allowed only if the poet's great skill can overcome its apparent irrationality.

Moral Improbability: - The one kind of improbability which cannot be overcome through the skill of any poet is 'moral improbability'. This is the improbability arising out of the violation of the basic laws of human behaviour. These violate the very principles of human nature, and do not have a place in poetry at all. They cannot be glossed1 over by any skilful technique, for they are absolutely untrue, concep

truth depends on the basic truths of human nature—the eternal emotions, thoughts, feeling, and actions of human beings. If it violates these very objects of imitation, it cannot have any credibility. Logical and moral necessities are at all times to be adhered to.

Conclusion: - Poetry then, is 'imitation', but not a photographic presentation of the world of appearances and all its mundane trivialities. Poetry's truth is based on the basic elements of human nature, the everlasting, universal aspects of human life. Poetry ignores the nonessentials, removes irrelevances, and concentrates on the essentials. It presents the 'universal', while history deals with particular events. Poetry takes the particular and makes it into the universal. But the process of imitation is in keeping with the law of logicality, probability and necessity. Poetic truth is higher than that of history. The particular object taken by the poet is transfigured, "so that the higher truth, the idea of the universal, shines thought it". Aristotle defends poetry against the charge that it is full of lies.

Aristotle enunciates a doctrine which holds good for all ages—-the presence of a universal element in all great .poetry, accounting for its permanent appeal, while at the same time he showed how a reconciliation might be effected between poetry and philosophy. "Plato had indeed shown that an element of intuition was common to the processes of philosopher and poet alike; but it remained for Aristotle to complete the vindication of poetry, and to recommend the claims of philosophy and poetry by showing that both were avenues to the higher truth."

Aristotle on Characterization

According to Aristotle, "Tragedy idealises—imitates men as better (or higher)—and Comedy caricatures, i.e. shows men as worse (lower) than they actually are." The characters in a tragedy should be life-like, convincing, acceptable, consistent, reasonable, and impressive. They should be people of better sort.

The four essentials of characterization as mentioned by Aristotle in Chapter XV of the Poetics are as follows:—

1. **The Characters must be good.**
2. **The Characters must be appropriate.**
3. **They must be true to life.**
4. **The characters must be consistent.**

A character is good, if his words and actions reveal that his purpose is good. Entirely wicked characters, even when assigned minor roles, are unfit for tragedy. Wickedness may be introduced only when required by the necessities of the plot. Wanton or wilful introduction of wickedness must be avoided; and when introduced even wicked characters must be made good in some respects. Wickedness must be mixed up with some good as in actual life.

The characters must be appropriate, that is, must be true to type or status. For example, a woman must be shown as womanly and not manly, a slave must be given a character appropriate to his status, and the king to his kingly status. Manliness would not be appropriate in a woman, and vice versa. If the characters are taken from some known myth or story, they must be true to tradition.

The characters must be true to life. They must have the virtues and weaknesses, joys and sorrows, loves and hatreds, likes and dislikes, of average humanity. It is essential to arouse to feeling of pity and fear in the spectators. If they are not true to life, they would not be able to arouse fear and pity. The characters must be of an intermediate sort, mixtures of good and evil, virtues and weaknesses, like us.

Fourthly, the characters must be consistent. They must be true to their own natures, and their actions must be rational, not rash. There should be no sudden changes in character. If the dramatist has to represent an inconsistent person, then he must be, 'consistently inconsistent.'

And lastly, "The ideal there must be an intermediate kind of person, a man not primarily virtuous or just, whose misfortune, however, is brought upon him not by vice or depravity, but by an error of judgement." Furthermore, he must be a man of' reputation and prosperity'.

Relative Importance of Plot and Character in Poetics

Aristotle's Controversial Statement on Plot: - Aristotle lists six formative1 elements of tragedy. Of these he gives the primary place of importance to the plot. Indeed, he devotes a major portion of his discussion of tragedy to Plot. Plot he says is the very soul of tragedy; it is the principle of tragedy. He then makes the famous statement which led to such a great deal of controversy. He declares: "A tragedy is impossible without plot, but there may be one without character." The statement has led to plenty of hostile criticism, especially from the modern critics, who consider that Aristotle is depressing the value of character to that of plot. Some critics have misread Aristotle's statement, and have accused him of being absurd. How, they ask, can there be tragedy without 'character' as used by Aristotle, before we go into the relative importance of plot and character in a tragedy.

The Necessity of Plot: - Aristotle defines tragedy as in imitation of an action. What is action? It is a process of change, and in tragedy, a process of change from happiness to misery. The action is made up of a number of logically connected incidents. One can say that the plot is the arrangement of the incidents. However, it is important to note that Aristotle did not consider the term 'action' as clearly and wholly external. It involves inward activity also. To him, plot did not mean an abstract pattern of action largely independent of the specific character, or agent.

In drama characters are not described; they act. They reveal themselves through their speech and action. Without action in this sense, there can be no drama at all. The plot contains the kernel1 of the action. It is through the plot that the change from happiness to misery is shown. Aristotle defines tragedy thus : Tragedy is

but of an action of life, and life consists in action, and its end is a mode of action, not a quality. Now Character determines men's qualities, but it is by their action that they are happy or the reverse. Dramatic action, therefore, is not with a view to the representation of character; character comes in as subsidiary to the actions. Hence the incidents and plot are the end of tragedy, and the end is the chief thing of all. Again, without action there cannot be a tragedy; there may be without character.

We see that the two elements of plot and character seem to be set against one another in sharp and impossible opposition. It is also obvious that one cannot take the last sentence of the above quotation in a literal sense. The confusion in the discussion of this question arises from the ambiguity2 in the use of the words 'plot' and 'character'. In the popular sense, the antithesis3, between the two terms is based on the fact that the term 'character' is not seen in its full dramatic value. It is made to stand for the abstract impression of character, rather than signifying "characters producing action," as it should in the dramatic sense.

The 'plot' in the full sense of term is the 'action', and includes not only the circumstances and incidents which form the main part of 'plot' as popularly thought, but also 'character' in the full dramatic sense of 'characters producing action'. Thus we find that an antithesis between 'plot' and 'character' is not possible. .

Ethos and Dionoia- Two Aspects of 'Character': - In one sense, 'character' can be taken to mean the dramatic personages. If used in this sense, the antithesis between plot and character at once becomes absurd, for how can there be a plot without the agent ? It is apparent that Aristotle did not use the term to mean dramatic personage.

In the second sense, 'character' is that bent or tendency or habit of mind, which is revealed only through the speech and action of a dramatic personage. It is in this sense that Aristotle uses the term 'character', when he says that tragedy is possible without character. He means that tragedy is passible even if character delineation4 is not too strong, i.e., even if the characters are mere types, or marked only by class characteristics, or lacking in those distinctive qualities out of which dramatic action grows.

Aristotle uses two words for the elements in the character of a person—ethos and dionoia. Both these elements determine the cause of action, as well as the quality of action. Ethos is the moral element, while dionoia .is the intellectual element. It is through character, consisting of both these elements that the moral self of a person finds "outward expression." Both these elements reveal themselves in the speech and action of the personage. If a person has a tendency to do good, he is called virtuous. As Humphry House says, this tendency to do good or bad is not realised if it is merely inherent1; it is realised only through actions, and it is only through the past actions that one forms an idea1 of the character's 'character'.

Character is Formed Through Action: - We have certain qualities or abilities inherent in us, such as the ability to see, hear, etc. Our moral self is acquired by our actions in the past. We learn to become good or bad by acting well or ill, just as a builder learns to build building by building. "By repeated acts of a certain kind, w

habit or a certain bent of character. In this way, qualities of characters are legacies of past acts," says Humphry House.

Character is formal through action, and is revealed through actions. When Aristotle talks of tragedy without character, he means that the dramatic personages do not reveal their character, their moral bent which makes them act in a particular manner. This moral bent is revealed in the purpose of an action, as well as in the means adopted to bring about that end. In some plays the moral bent need not be revealed because there is no situation which demands the person to make a choice. There may not be a situation in which the person has to decide on a course of action. As such, in the absence of the need to make a choice, a moral choice involving .intellectual reasoning, the 'character' of the person is not required to be revealed. In such a tragedy all that matters, is the plot. Thus tragedy is possible without 'character', but it is not possible without plot.

It will be noted that the necessity of making a choice, which requires deliberation2 and thought about the means, is conducive3 to the 'individualised' characters. Aristotle's theory thus allows for 'individualised' characters. Each situation would demand a choice from such characters; each choice would require, deliberation and thought, which would be expressed in their speech. Such speeches would be in the nature of presentation of an action, for they reflect an inward mental activity; an inward activity which would soon be manifested externally. They would reflect the inward 'movement towards the choice' ultimately made by the dramatic character.

In Prometheus, there is no outward movement: the main situation at the end is what it was at the beginning. There is a conflict of two surperhuman wills, neither of which can surrender to the other. Yet the dialogue is not mere conversation. Each of Prometheus' speech is a step forward in the action. His words are equivalent to deeds. This is action, though not consisting of outward doing. Thus we find that some of the Greek plays were not only devoid of intricate plots, but presented an unchanging situation.- Similarly, in Milton's Samson Agonistes, the speeches of Samson form an integral part of the action.

Character is Realised through Action and thus Subordinate to Plot: - It has to be realised that dramatic characters exist through what they say or do. The character is 'actualised' through the action. It is the action of the person that leads to either happiness or misery. The plot is the ground work, or the design through the medium of which ethos derives its meaning _and dramatic value. "The most beautiful colours", says Aristotle, "laid on confusedly, will not give as much pleasure as the chalk outline of a portrait" Ethos, divorced from plot is like a daub of colour, beautiful in itself, but, which apart from form gives little pleasure. A play is like a living organism. Its animating principle is the plot, according to Aristotle. Without it the play could not exist. It is the plot which gives to the play its .inner meaning and reality, as the soul does to the body. The true significance of the tragedy lies in the plot. It is through the plot that the end, or the intention, of tragedy is realised. It is the sequence of events which produce, the emotional effect special to tragedy. In the plot there are the reversal of situations and Discoveries, which most powerfully evoke the tragic feeling. Thus plot is supreme and character is subordinate to it, says Aristotle.

Aristotle's Doctrine: Disputed by Modern Critics: - Modern critics have assailed the doctrine of the primary, importance of plot as propounded by Aristotle. They argue that plot is a mere external framework, a - piece of mechanism devised to illustrate the working of character. The 'Character' of a person lies in thought prior to action, and is implied in it. Events have no meaning or interest, except in so far as they are supposed to proceed from will. A man's character defines, expresses and interprets action. But the issue has been confused by such questions. The actual question is not whether one element can be shown ultimately to contain the other. The question is, which of the two is the more fundamental as regards the artistic conception and dramatic structure of a play.'

Action is the first necessity to a play. But mere action is not enough. Action, to be dramatic, must stand in relation to certain mental states. We like to see the feelings out of which it grows, the motivating force of will which carries it out to the end. Drama is will or emotion in action. But in real life all mental activity does not manifest itself in outward activity. However, the action of drama cannot consist in an inward activity that does not go beyond the sphere of thought and emotion. Even where the main interest is centred in the internal conflict, this conflict must manifest itself in individual acts, and in concrete relations with the world outside. The action and reaction within the mind itself become dramatic, only when they are brought out into a plot which gives them significance. In this connection Butcher observes that only certain characters are capable of dramatic treatment. Passive characters are not fit for drama. Plot is not, as some critics say, a mere external, or an accident of inner life. In the action of drama, character is revealed and defined. Plot does not overpower characters, it is the very medium through which character is discerned.

The Trend in Modern Drama: - Modern drama shows a marked tendency to lay greater stress on the delineation of individual character. Greek dramatists of the ancient age were, to some extent, impeded2 in the development of character, because of the ready material they had to work with. They were more or less confined to a group of legends whose main outlines were already fixed. The freedom of the Greek poet in delineating character was restricted by the choice of subject-matter. . `.

Modern drama brings us to another world. A richer and more varied inner life is opened up. The sense of personality is developed. Characters become more complex. Actions tend more and more to take place within the human mind itself. The frontier between action and passion threatens to fade away.

In Shakespeare, character assumes infinite variety; contradictory elements are brought together—contradictions which do not yield to psychological analysis. Loves, honour, ambition, jealously are the prevailing motives of modern tragedy. But Shakespeare, while deepening the subjective personality of man, does not lose sight of the "objective ends of life and corresponding phases of character." He maintains a balance between these two sides of human experience. He does not permit the dramatic action to become subservient to the portrayal of individual character.

Hamlet, as F.L. Lucas says, could be said to be the first modern man, who realised that, "Action is transitory--a step, a blow, The motion of a muscle-this way or tha

and in-the after vacancy We wonder at ourselves like men betrayed : „ Suffering is permanent, obscure, and dark, and shares the nature of infinity."

In Hamlet, it is true that character becomes 'dramatic by an intellectual and masterly inactivity which offers resistance to the 1. recognized; made out clearly that prompt ordinary men to action. Events seem to be brought about by acts of arrested volition2, and not by the energy of free will. We find that the inaction is indeed an active force making Hamlet desist from doing anything. Just as some men are compelled to act. Hamlet has this energetic resisting force which stops him from acting. Thus the non-acting itself becomes a form of action.

There is the increased tendency to exhibit character in growth, in successive stages of its development. A Greek tragedy takes a few significant scenes out of a hero's life; these are bound together by a causal relationship, and made to constitute a single concentrated action. The modern would not have such a concentrated action. They would include much more than the Greek dramatists. In modern drama, the dramatic theme often encompasses the whole process, beginning at the moment when a deed is dormant3 in the mind until it has developed into action and brought about its consequences. The period encompassed by the action is enlarged. It is only natural that the characters should also expand in new and complex directions. The ancient stage gives us no such example of character development as we have, for instance, in Macbeth.

The mystery of the human personality becomes of supreme interest in modern drama starting with Ibsen. He fastens on the contrast between what man dreams of and what he really is, .and works towards the culminating moment of disillusionment. Strindberg dramatizes obsessive egotism. And Chekov celebrates the frustrated and inarticulate4 hero. There is an impulse towards self-discovery, which splits up the human psyche into abstractions (the theatre of the soul). Modern drama has indeed brought the delineation of character into new and stronger relief.

Character and Plot should be harmoniously blended in an Ideal Tragedy: - Modern dramatists have explored the deep recesses6 of human mind. They have represented the abnormal and strange impulses of man. But too much of this can hamper dramatic art. Too much of subjectivism and psychological interest can lead to dramatic lyrics but not to successful drama. Goethe, for example, with all his poetic genius did not surmount this pitfall. His reflective, emotional characters, who view life through the medium of individual feeling, seldom have the requisite energy to carry out a tragic action, as S.H. Butcher comments. Drama demands a balance between plot and character. Drama is a representation of a complete and typical action, whose lines converge on a determined end, which evolves out of human will in such a manner that action and character are each in turn the outcome of the other. Drama requires a fusion of the two elements, plot and character.

Conclusion: - When Aristotle says that a tragedy can be possible without character, but not without plot, it is to be noted that he is not saying that a tragedy without character is the ideal type. Indeed, he says that a poet should utilise all the formative elements of tragedy to produce an ideal tragedy.

possibility of drama with, or without, one or the other element. The characters cannot act without reference to the situation in which they are placed. Thus the situation influences their very feelings, the very motives that spring them to action. In this sense plot becomes fundamental to drama. A passive character will produce no action and as such, has no place in drama.

It is unfortunate that Aristotle has not discussed an essential aspect of drama—namely conflict. The tragic action is in essence the outcome of conflict. And to be tragic, the conflict must be both inside and outside man. It is out of this conflict that plot and character both develop. Ultimately, however, plot is the first necessity of drama, artistically speaking.

Apology for Poetry

Sir Philip Sidney

Sir Philip Sidney, for three centuries the type of the English gentleman, was the son of Sir Henry Sidney, lord deputy of Ireland under Queen Elizabeth, and Lady Mary Dudley, daughter of the Duke of Northumberland. He was born at Penshurst, Kent, November 30, 1554, and was named after his godfather, Philip II of Spain, then consort of Queen Mary. He was sent to Oxford at fourteen, where he was noted as a good student; and on leaving the university he obtained the Queen's leave to travel on the Continent. He went to Paris in the train of the ambassador to France, saw much of court society there, and was in the city at the time of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Proceeding to Germany he met, at Frankfort, the Protestant scholar Hubert Languet, with whom, though Languet was thrice his age, he formed an intimate and profitable friendship. He went on to Vienna, Hungary, Italy, and back by the Low Countries, returning to England at the age of twenty, an accomplished and courtly gentleman, with some experience of practical diplomacy, and a first-hand knowledge of the politics of the Continent.

Sidney's introduction to the court of Elizabeth took place in 1575, and within two years he was sent back to the Continent on a number of diplomatic commissions, when he used every opportunity for the furthering of the interests of Protestantism. He seems everywhere to have made the most favorable impression by both his character and his abilities. During the years between 1578 and 1585 he was chiefly at court and in Parliament, and to this period belong most of his writings. In 1585 he left England to assume the office of Governor of Flushing, and in the next year he was mortally wounded at the battle of Zutphen, dying on October 17, 1586. All England went into mourning, and the impression left by his brilliant and fascinating personality has never passed away.

Sidney's literary work was all published after his death, some of it against his express desire. The "Arcadia," an elaborate pastoral romance written in a highly ornate prose mingled with verse, was composed for the entertainment of his sister, the Countess of Pembroke. The collection of sonnets, "Astrophel and Stella," was called forth by Sidney's relation to Penelope Devereux, daughter of the Earl of Essex. While they were both little more than children, there had been some talk of a marriage between them; but evidence of any warmth of feeling appears chiefly after Penelope's unhappy marriage to Lord Rich. There has been much controversy over the question of the sincerity of these remarkable poems, and over the precise nature of Sidney's sentiments toward the lady who inspired them, some regarding them as undisguised outpourings of a genuine passion, others as mere conventional literary exercises. The more recent opinion is that they express a platonic devotion such as was common in the courtly society of the day, and which was allowed by contemporary opinion to be compatible with the marriage of both parties.

In 1579 Stephen Gosson published a violent attack on the arts, called "The School of Abuse," and dedicated it without permission to Sidney. It w

Sidney composed his "Defense of Poesy," an eloquent apology for imaginative literature, not unmingled with humor. The esthetic theories it contains are largely borrowed from Italian sources, but it is thoroughly infused with Sidney's own personality; and it may be regarded as the beginning of literary criticism in England.

Sir Philip Sidney's Apology for Poetry

Philip Sidney in his "Apology for Poetry" reacts against the attacks made on poetry by the puritan, Stephen Gosson. To, Sidney, poetry is an art of imitation for specific purpose, it is imitated to teach and delight. According to him, poetry is simply a superior means of communication and its value depends on what is communicated. So, even history when it is described in a lively and passionate expression becomes poetic. He prefers imaginative literature that teaches better than history and philosophy. Literature has the power to reproduce an ideal golden world not just the brazen world.

Charges of Stephen Gossen

(a) Poetry is the waste of time.

(b) Poetry is mother of lies.

(c) It is nurse of abuse.

(d) Plato had rightly banished the poets from his ideal world.

Sidney's Reply to the Charges

Poetry is the source of knowledge and a civilizing force, for Sidney. Gossoon attacks on poetry saying that it corrupts the people and it is the waste of time, but Sidney says that no learning is so good as that which teaches and moves to virtue and that nothing can both teach and amuse so much as poetry does. In essay societies, poetry was the main source of education. He remembers ancient Greek society that respected poets. The poets are always to be looked up. So, poetry is not wasted of time.

To the second charge, Sidney answers that poet does not lie because he never affirms that his fiction is true and can never lie. The poetic truths are ideal and universal. Therefore, poetry cannot be a mother of lies.

Sidney rejects that poetry is the source of abuses. To him, it is people who abuses poetry, not the vice- versa. Abuses are more nursed by philosophy and history than by poetry, by describing battles, bloodshed, violence etc. On the contrary, poetry helps to maintain morality and peace by avoiding such violence and bloodsheds. Moreover it brings light to knowledge.

Sidney views that Plato in his Republic wanted to banish the abuse of poetry not the poets. He himself was not free from poeticality, which we can find in his dialogues. Plato

never says that all poets should be banished. He called for banishing only those poets who are inferior and unable to instruct the children.

For Sidney, art is the imitation of nature but it is not slavish imitation as Plato views. Rather it is creative imitation. Nature is dull, incomplete and ugly. It is artists who turn dull nature in to golden colour. He employs his creative faculty, imagination and style of presentation to decorate the raw materials of nature. For Sidney, art is a speaking picture having spatiotemporal dimension. For Aristotle human action is more important but for Sidney nature is important.

Artists are to create arts considering the level of readers. The only purpose of art is to teach and delight like the whole tendency of Renaissance. Sidney favours poetic justice that is possible in poet's world where good are rewarded and wicked people are punished.

Plato's philosophy on ' virtue' is worthless at the battlefield but poet teaches men how to behave under all circumstances. Moral philosophy teaches virtues through abstract examples and history teaches virtues through concrete examples but both are defective. Poetry teaches virtue by example as well as by percept (blend of abstract + concrete). The poet creates his own world where he gives only the inspiring things and thus poetry holds its superior position to that of philosophy and history.

In the poet's golden world, heroes are ideally presented and evils are corrupt. Didactic effect of a poem depends up on the poet's power to move. It depends up on the affective quality of poetry. Among the different forms of poetry like lyric, elegy, satire, comedy etc. epic is the best form as it portrays heroic deeds and inspires heroic deeds and inspires people to become courageous and patriotic.

In this way, Sidney defines all the charges against poetry and stands for the sake of universal and timeless quality of poetry making us know why the poets are universal genius.

Main Ideas in 'An Apology for Poetry' and its Significance

An Apologie for Poetrie may for purposes of convenience be divided into sixteen sections.

1. The Prologue

Before launching a defence of poetry, Sidney justified his stand by referring in a half-humorous manner to a treatise on horseman-ship by Pietro Pugliano. If the art of horsemanship can deserve such an eloquent eulogy and vindication, surely poetry has better claims for eulogy and vindication. There is a just cause to plead a case for poetry since it has fallen from the highest estimation of learning to be 'the laughing stock of children.'

2. Some Special Arguments in Favour of Poetry

Poetry has been held in high esteem since the earliest times. It has been 'the first light-giver to ignorance.' The earlier Greek philosophers and historians were, in fact, poets. Even among the uncivilized nations, in Turkey, among the American Indians, and m Wales, poetry enjoys an undiminishing popularity. To attack poetry is, therefore, to cut at the roots of culture and intelligence.

3. The Prophetic Character of Poetry

The ancient Romans paid high reverence to the poet by calling him Vates, which means a Diviner, a Prophet, or a Foreseer. The etymological origin of Greek word 'poet' is Poiein, and this means 'to make'. Hence the Greeks honour the poet as a maker or creator. This suggests the divine nature of poetry.

4. The Nature and Function of Poetry

Poetry is an art of 'imitation' and its chief function is to teach and delight. Imitation does not mean mere copying or a reproduction of facts. It means a representing or transmuting of the real and actual, and sometimes creating something entirely new. The poet, so Sidney declares***, "lifted up with the vigour of his own invention, doth grow in effect another nature, in making things either better than Nature bringeth forth, or, quite a new, forms such as never were in Nature, as the Heroes, Demigods, Cyclops, Chimeras, Furies, and such like."***

Commenting on the creative powers of the poet, Sidney further states: ***"Nature never set forth the earth in so rich tapestry as divers poets have done, neither with pleasant rivers, fruitful trees, sweet smelling flowers, nor whatsoever else may make the too much loved earth more lovely. Her world is brazen, the poets only deliver a golden."***

5. The Three Kinds of Poetry

The three kinds of poetry, according to Sidney, are : (a) Religious poetry, (b) Philosophical poetry, and (c) Poetry as an imaginative treatment of life and nature. He calls special attention to the third class of poets, for 'these be they that, as the first and most noble sort may justly be termed vates.' They 'most properly do imitate to teach and delight, and to imitate borrow nothing of what is, has been, or shall be, but range, only with learned discretion, into the divine consideration of what may be, and should be.'

6. Various Sub-divisions of the Third Kind of Poetry

Poetry proper may further be divided into various species—the heroic, lyric, tragic, comic, satiric, iambic, elegiac, pastoral and others. Poets generally make use of verse to apparel their poetical inventions. But verse is 'an ornament and no cause to poetry since there have been many most excellent poets that never versified, and now swarm many versifiers that need never answer to the name of poets.'

7. Superiority of Poetry to Philosophy and History

In the promotion of virtue, both philosophy and history play their parts. Philosophy deals with its theoretical aspects and teaches virtue by precept. History teaches practical virtue by drawing concrete examples from life. But poetry gives both precepts and practical examples. Philosophy, being based on abstractions, is 'hard of utterance and mystery to be conceived.' It cannot be a proper guide for youth. On the other hand, the historian is tied to empirical facts that his example drags no necessary consequence. Poetry gives perfect pictures of virtue which are far more effective than the mere definitions of philosophy. It also gives imaginary examples which are more instructive than the real examples of history. The reward of virtue and the punishment of vice is more clearly shown in Poetry than in History. Poetry is superior to Philosophy in the sense that it has the power to move and to give incentive for virtuous action. It presents moral lessons in a very attractive form. Things which in themselves are horrible as cruel battles, unnatural monsters, are made delightful in poetic imitation. Poet is, therefore, the monarch of all sciences. 'For he doth not only show the way but giveth so sweet a prospect into the way, as will entice any man to enter into it.' The poet does not begin with obscure definitions which load the memory with doubtfulness, 'but he cometh to you with words set in delightful proportion, either accompanied with, or prepared for, the well enchanting skill of music; and with a tale forsooth he cometh unto you, with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney corner. And pretending no more, doth intend the winning of the mind from wickedness to virtue.

8. Various Species of Poetry

The pastoral poetry treats of the beauty of the simple life, and sometimes, of the miseries of the people under hard Lords. Why should it be disliked? Elegiac poetry deals with the weakness of mankind and wretchedness of the world. It should evoke pity rather than blame. Satiric poetry laughs at folly, and iambic poetry tries to unmask villainy. These also do not deserve to be condemned.

Nobody should blame the right use of comedy. Comedy is an imitation of the common errors of our life presented in a ridiculous manner. It helps men keeping away from such errors. Tragedy, which opens the greatest wounds in our hearts, teaches the uncertainty of this world. Nobody can resist the 'sweet violence' of a tragedy.

The lyric which gives moral precepts and soars to the heavens in singing the praises of the Almighty, cannot be displeasing. Nor can the epic or heroic poetry be disliked because it inculcates virtue to the highest degree by portraying heroic and moral goodness in the most effective manner. Sidney asserts that the heroical is 'not only a kind, but the best and most accomplished kind of poetry.'

9. Main Objections Brought Against Poetry by its Enemies

A common complaint against poetry is that it is bound up with 'rhyming and versing'. But verse is not essential for poetry. 'One may be a poet without versing, and a versifier without poetry' Verse is used for convenience. It produces verbal harmony and lends itself easily to memorizing. It is the only fit speech for music. It adds to words a sensuous and emotional quality.

10. Four Chief Objections to Poetry

There are some more serious objections to poetry, namely:

(a) That there being many other more fruitful knowledges, a man might better spend his time in them than in this;

(b) That it is the mother of lies :

(c) That it is the nurse of abuse, infecting us with many pestilent desires; and,

(d) That Plato had banished poets from his ideal republic.

11. Replies to These Objections

Sidney dismisses the first charge by saying that he has already established that 'no learning is so good as that which reacheth and moveth to virtue, and that none can both teach and move thereto so much as poetry.'

His answer to the second objection that poets are liars is that of all writers under the sun the poet is the least liar. The Astronomer, the Geometrician, the historian, and others, all make false statements. But the poet 'nothing affirms, and therefore never lieth,' his aim being 'to tell not what is or is not, but what should or should not be.' So what he presents is not fact but fiction embodying truth of an ideal kind.

The third charge against poetry is that its entire species are infected with love themes and amorous conceits, which have a demoralising effect on readers. To this charge Sidney replies that poetry does not abuse man's wit, it is man's wit that abuseth poetry. All arts and sciences misused bad evil effects, but that did not mean that they were less valuable when rightly employed. Shall the abuse of a thing make the right use odious? Certainly not.

Sidney is rather perplexed at the last charge, namely Plato's rejection of poetry. He wonders why Plato found fault with poetry. In fact, Plato warned men not against poetry but against its abuse by his contemporary poets who filled the world with wrong opinions about the gods. So Plato's objection was directed against the theological concepts. In Ion, Plato gives high and rightly divine commendation to poetry. His description of the poet as 'a light winged and sacred thing' in that dialogue reveals his attitude to poetry. In fact by attributing unto poetry a very inspiring of a divine force, Plato was making a claim for poetry which he for his part could not endorse. Not only Plato but, Sidney tells us, all great men have honoured poetry.

12. Why is Poetry not honoured in England as it is elsewhere?

Why has England grown so hard a step-mother to Poets? Asks Sidney. He thinks that it is so because poetry has come to be represented by 'base men with servile wits' or to men who, however studious, are not born poets. He says that 'a poet no industry can make, if his own genius be not carried unto it'. Another cause is the want of serious

cultivation of the Poetic Art. Three things necessary for producing good poetry are Art, Imitation, and Exercise which are lacking in the present generation of poets.

13. A Brief Review of the State of Poetry in England from Chaucer to Sidney's own Time

Sidney says that few good poems have been produced in England since Chaucer. Chaucer did marvellously well in Troilus and Cresseida. The Mirrour of Magistrates also contains some beautiful passages. Earl of Surrey's Lyrics also deserve praise. Spenser's The Shepherds Calender is worth reading. English lyric poetry is scanty and poor. Love lyrics and sonnets lack genuine fire and passion. They make use of artificial diction and swelling phrases.

14. Condition of Drama

The state of drama is also degraded. The only redeeming tragedy is Gorboduc which itself is a faulty work. A tragedy should be tied to the laws of poetry and not of history. A dramatist should have liberty to frame the history to his own tragical convenience. Again many things should be told which cannot be shown on the stage. The dramatists should know the difference between reporting and representing. They should straightway plunge into the principal point of action which they want to represent in their play. There should be no mingling of tragedies and comedies; English comedy is based on a false hypothesis. It aims at laughter, not delight. The proper aim of comedy is to afford delightful teaching, not mere coarse amusement. Comedy should not only amuse but morally instruct.

15. Advantages of the English Language

The English language has some definite advantages. It is appreciable for its adaptability to ancient and modern systems of versification. It admits both the unrhymed quantitative system of the ancient poetry and the rhyme peculiar to modern language.

16. Summary

Poetry is full of virtue-breeding delightfulness. It is void of no gift that ought to be in the noble name of learning. All the charges laid against it are false and baseless. The poets were the ancient treasurers of the Grecian divinity; they were the first bringers of all civility. There are many mysteries contained poetry. A poet can immortalize people in his verses.

Significance of "An Apology for Poetry"

An Apology for Poetry is the most important contribution to Renaissance literary theory. Sidney advocates a place for poetry within the framework of an aristocratic state, while showing concern for both literary and national identity (Griffiths). Sidney responds in Apology to an emerging antipathy to poetry as expressed in Stephen Gosson's The Schoole of Abuse (1579). Gosson offers what is in essence a puritan attack on imaginative literature (Griffiths). What is at stake in Sidney's

poetry's nobility. The significance of the nobility of poetry is its power to move readers to virtuous action (Robertson). True poets must teach and delight – a view that dates back to Horace.

In an era of antipathy to poetry and puritanical belief in the corruption engendered by literature, Sidney's defense was a significant contribution to the genre of literary criticism. It was England's first philosophical defense in which he describes poetry's ancient and indispensable place in society, its mimetic nature, and its ethical function (Harvey). Among Sidney's gifts to his contemporaries were his respect for tradition and willingness to experiment (Robertson). An example of the latter is his approach to Plato. He reconfigures Plato's argument against poets by saying poets are "the least liar" (Leitch). Poets never claim to know the truth, nor "make circles around your imagination," nor rely on authority (Letich). As an expression of a cultural attitude descending from Aristotle, Sidney, when stating that the poet "never affirmeth," makes the claim that all statements in literature are hypothetical or pseudo-statements (Frye). Sidney, as a traditionalist, however, gives attention to drama in contradistinction to poetry. Drama, writes Sidney, is "observing neither rules of honest civility nor of skillful poetry" and thus cannot do justice to this genre (Leitch).

In Sidney's day anti-theatricality, an aesthetic and ideological concern, flourished among Sidney's circle at court (Acheson). Theatre became a contentious issue in part because of the culmination of a growing contempt for the values of the emergent consumer culture. An expanding money economy encouraged social mobility. Europe, at this time, had its first encounter with inflation (Davies). London's theatres at that time grew in popularity so much that by 1605, despite the introduction of charges, London commercial theatres could accommodate up to eight thousand men and women (Hale). Sidney had his own views on drama. In Apology, he shows opposition to the current of his day that pays little attention to unity of place in drama (Bear), but more specifically, his concern is with the "manner" that the "matter" is conveyed (Leitch Sidney). He explains that tragedy is not bound to history or the narrative but to "laws of poesy," having "liberty, either to feign a quite new matter, or to frame the history to the most tragical conveniency".

Sidney employs a number of strategies to assert the proper place of poetry. For instance, he argues against the way in which poetry was misaligned with youth, the effeminate and the timorous. He does so by introducing the idea that "poetry is the companion of camps" and by invoking the heroes of ages past (Leitch). Sidney's reverence for the poet as soldier is significant because he himself was a soldier at one time. Poetry, in Apology, becomes an art that requires the noble stirring of courage (Pask).

Sidney writes An Apology for Poetry in the form of a judicial oration for the defense, and thus it is like a trial in structure. Crucial to his defense is the descriptive discourse and the idea that poetry creates a separate reality (Harvey). Sidney employs forensic rhetoric as a tool to make the argument that poetry not only conveys a separate reality, but that it has a long and venerable history, and it does not lie. It is defensible in its own right as a means to move readers to virtuous action.

Sydney's Definition of Poetry and its superiority over Philosophy & History

Philip Sidney defends poetry in his essay "Apology for Poetry" from the accusations made by Stephen Gosson in his "School of Abuse" dedicated to him. There, Gosson makes some objections against poetry. Sidney replies to the objections made by Gosson very emphatically, defending poetry in his essay. Sidney does this in a very logical and scholarly way.

The major objections against poetry are:

(a) "that there being many other more fruitful knowledges, a man might better spend his time in them then in this";

(b) that it is the mother of lies;

(c) that it is the nurse of abuse; infecting us with many pestilent desires; and

(d) that Plato had rightly banised poets from his ideal republic.

Sidney's replies to these objections:

(a) Defending poetry against the first charge, he says that man can't employ his time more usefully than in poetry. He says that "no learning is so good as that teacheth and moveth to virtue, and that none can both teach virtue, and thereto as much as poetry".

(b) His answer to the second objection that poets are liers is that of all writers under the sun the poet is the least lier. The poet creates something by emotion or imagination against which no charge of lying can be brought. The astronomer, the geometrician, the historian and others, all make false statements. But poet "nothing affirms, and therefore never lieth", his end being "to tell not what is or what is not, but what should or should not be". The question of truth or falsehood would arise only when a person insists on telling a fact. The poet does not present fact but fiction embodying truth of an ideal kind.

(c) The third objection against poetry that it is the nurse of abuse, "infecting us with many pestilent desires or wits" may be partly justified, but for this a particular poet may be blamed but not poetry. To this charge, Sidney replies that poetry does not abuse man's wit but it is man's wit that abuses poetry. All arts and sciences misused had evil effects, but that did not mean that they were less valuable when rightly employed. Abuse of poetry, according to Sidney, is not the problem of poetry but of the poet.

(d) The fourth objection that Plato had rightly banished the poets from his ideal republic is also not tenable because Plato sought to banish the amoral poets of his time, and not poetry itself. Plato himself believed that poetry is divinely inspired. In "Ion", Plato gives high and rightly divine commendation to poetry. His description of the poet as "a light-winged and sacred thing" reveals his attitude to poetry. Sidney concludes, "So as Plato banishing the abuse, not the 'Thing', not banishing it, but giving due honour unto it, shall be our patron and not adversary".

In this way, Sidney very strongly defends poetry against the accusations made by Stephen Gosson on poetry.

Superiority of poetry over history and philosophy:

In the promotion of virtue, both philosophy and history play their parts. Philosophy deals with its theoretical aspects and teaches virtue by precepts. History teaches practical virtue by drawing concrete examples from life. But poetry gives both practical and precepts examples. Philosophy, being based on abstractions, is "heard of utterance and mystery to be conceived." It cannot be a proper guide for youth. On the other hand, the historian is tied to empirical facts that his example drags no necessary consequence. Poetry gives perfect pictures of virtue which are far more effective than the mere definitions of philosophy. It also gives imaginary examples which are more instructive than the real examples of history. The reward of virtue and the punishment of vice is more clearly shown in poetry than in history. Poetry is superior to philosophy in the sense that it has the power to move and to give incentive for virtuous action. It presents moral lessons in a very attractive manner. Things which in themselves are horrible as cruel battles, monsters are made delightful in poetic imitation. Poet is therefore the monarch of all knowledge. "For he doth(does) not only show the way but giveth(gives) so sweet a prospect into the way as will entice any man to enter into it."

The poet does not begin with obscure definitions which load the memory with doubtfulness, "but he cometh(comes) to you with words set in delightful proportion, either accompanied with or prepared for the well-enchanting skill of music and with a tale for suit he cometh unto you, with a tale which holdeth(holds) children from play and old man from the chimney corner. And pretending no more, doth intend the winning of the mind from wickedness to virtue."

An Apology for Poetry : An epitome of Renaissance Criticism

Sidney's Apologie for Poetrie (1580-81) was intended as a reply to Stephen Gosson's School of Abus (1579) Gosson had inducted poetry on four counts: that a man coaid employ his time more usefully than in poetry that it is the mother of lies, that it is the nurse of abuseramt that, Plato had rightly banished poets from his ideal state. Sidney in his Apology replies to each of these charges, drawing copiously, in the absence of critical authorities in England, on the ancient classics and the Italian writers of the Renaissance: in particular, on Homer, Plato, Aristotle, and Plutarch, among the Greeks, Virgil, Horace and Ovid, among the Romans; and Minturno, Scaliger, and Castelvetro, among the Italians. Yet it is an original document.

Sidney's Apology is not only a reply to Gosson but much more. It is a spirited defence of poetry against all the charges that had been laid at its door since Plato. He says that poetry is the oldest of all branches of learning; it is superior to philosophy by its charm, to history by its universality, to science by its moral end, to law by its encouragement of human rather than civic goodness. Among its various species the pastoral pleases by its helpful comments on contemporary events and life in general, the elegy by its kindly pity for the weakness of mankind and the wretchedness of the world, the satire by its pleasant ridicule of folly, the comedy by its ridiculous imitation of the comm

life, the tragedy by its moving demonstration of 'the uncertainty of this world, and upon how weak foundations guilden roofs are builded,' the lyric by its sweep praise of all that is praiseworthy, and the epic by its representation of the loftiest truths in the loftiest manner. Neither in whole nor in parts, thus, does poetry deserve the abuse hurled on it by its detractors.

Hence Sidney says that a man might better spend his time in poetry. The poet is not a liar; the poet uses veracity or falsehood to arrive at a higher truth. It is not poetry that abuses man's wit but man's wit that abuses poetry. Plato found fault not with poetry, which he considered divinely inspired, but with the poets of his time who abused it to misrepresent the gods.

Sidney's Apology is a veritable epitome of the literary criticism of Italian Renaissance; and so thoroughly it is imbued with this spirit, that no other work, Italian, French, or English can be said to give so complete and so noble a conception of the temper and the principles of Renaissance criticism. Sidney is the herald of Neo-classicism in England. He is essentially a theorist of the exuberant imagination. He fuses the romantic and the classical tendencies. His Defence of Poetry is the earliest attempt to deal with the poetic art, practically and not theoretically. His judgements are based on contemporary literature and show ample good sense and sound scholarship. It is not merely empty, abstract theorising: apart from the unities, his judgements are not governed to and great extent by rules and theories. His ultimate test is of a practical kind, i.e., the power of poetry to move to virtuous action. He has thus contributed to the appreciation of literature in the concrete.

Sidney's work is comprehensive enough to incorporate all the existing forms of poetry in his age. He gives his views on the nature and function of poetry, on the three unities, on tragedy and comedy, and on diction and metre. It is the pioneer in dramatic criticism. As a French critic has observed. Sidney's Defence of Poetry "gives us an almost complete theory of neo-classical tragedy, a hundred years before the 'Art Poetique' of Boileau.'"

Sidney's Apologie for Poetrie has rightly been valued as "one of the outstanding performances in English criticism and one which inaugurated a new phase in critical history. " Outmoded though some of the critical opinions contained in it now are, yet it provides a singularly lofty and noble introduction to the long line of English treatises on the art of poetry. Its significance lies in the fact that it comes at a time when most of the gentlemen shunned the name of being called a 'poet.' Sidney's vindication of poetry and his serious treatment of the poetic art enthused a new confidence in them and poetry came to be looked upon as a noble and worthy pursuit, no more a 'laughing stock of children.' Sidney boldly faced the traditional objections to poetry and he tried to dispel the mists of prejudice that had gathered around it. His approach was not only negative but he positively tried to bring out the value of poetry in the social and intellectual life of society. He presented his arguments in the lost lucid and persuasive manner. He was treating poetry as a poet with 'illuminating insight' and 'inspiring enthusiasm.' Professor Atkins says:

"Nowhere else do we find the same happy mingling of the ideal and the practical, the same blend of dignity and humour; of

controlled enthusiasm and racy colloquialism; or again, that unstudied simplicity and grace which everywhere pervade the work. "

What was precisely the influence of this treatise on Sidney's contemporaries is only a matter of conjecture. It was circulated in manuscript among his friends and other literary circles during his life and ' was soon quoted in the best critical places—in Puttenham's Arte of 1589, in Harington's Apologie of 1598.' Its influence on Ben Jonson, Shakespeare and other dramatists is quite obvious. It gives incentive to creative writing. When this treatise was written, English literature stood at the lowest ebb. In less than twenty-five years after its publication, it became one of the glories of the world. Apart from its influence on the creative writers of the Elizabethan age. Sidney's treatise showed the direction of later criticism, the neo-classical as well as the romantic. The neo-classical critics made a fetish of his views on the observance of the unities, and the romantic critics like Shelley drew inspiration from its fountain for supporting their theory of creative imagination Even to the modern readers it continues to charm 'with its idealism, its sanity, its humour, and its grace. '(Atkins).

The Apologie is a kind of formal beginning of literary theorizing in England, and a brilliant enough one. The essay reflects and telescopes not only the continental criticism of the century but a certain amount of classical Greek and Roman as well. Sidney was well-acquainted with the classical Greek and Roman critics. "But it all matters little. Sidney wrote, not a pedant's encyclopaedia, but a gentleman's essay.

Points to Remember

1. Written in 1680-81 as a reply to Gosson's School of Abuse, Sidney's Apology is an epitome of Renaissance criticism, the foundation on which the castle of the future criticism of Sidney's age rests.

2. A spirited defence of poetry on the whole; poetry's oldest branch of knowledge, superior to philosophy, history and science.

3. Shows Sidney's good sense and sound scholarship; a great contribution towards the appreciation of literature; gives an almost complete theory of neo-classical tragedy.

4. A blend of the ideal and the practical, of dignity and humour; of sincerity and irony, of controlled enthusiasm and racy colloquialism. (Atkins)

5. Its deep influence and circulation. Influence on Ben Jonson and Shakespeare and Shelley quite apparent.

6. "The essay reflects and telescopes not only the continental criticism of the country but a certain amount of classical Greek and Roman as well."

Sidney Contributions to English Criticism

Sidney's Apology is an important Renaissance document. It is a synthesis of the critical doctrines of Plato, Aristotle, Horace, Scaliger, Minturno, and a host of other

critics. It brings together romanticism and classicism. It is the first attempt in English to deal with the poetic art, practically and not theoretically.

On the nature and function of poetry, on the three unities, on tragedy and comedy, and on diction and metre, Sidney represents contemporary trends. Everywhere his work reflects the influence of Aristotle and Plato and other classical writers. But his originality lies in the skill with which he has draws upon, selected, arranged and adapted earlier ideas and then has put forth his own ideas, independently arrived at. He makes use of 1. Italian critics, 2. Classical critics, Plato and Aristotle 3. Roman critics, Horace and Plutarch. 4. He also shows the influence of the medieval concept of tragedy, and 5. His didactic approach to poetry is typically Renaissance approach. However, his manner of presentation, his freshness and vigour, and his logical faculty are characteristically his own. His style has dignity, simplicity, concreteness, and a racy humour and irony. It is an illuminating piece of literary criticism as well as a fine piece of creative literature.

Sidney approached poetry not as a pedantic critic, but as a responsive reader. While most of his contemporaries were busy framing rules of rhetoric and prosody, he was paving the way for creative literature. He was preparing an audience who could 'feel' the emotional impact of literature and appreciate it. Sidney felt that literature was a great dynamic force and it had the power 'to move', 'to uplift' and to satisfy emotionally and aesthetically. J. W.H. Atkins has pointed out that "to him poetry was a natural human activity enabling men to sing to beauty and truth, and to satisfy their longings for a world transformed, thus nurturing in them what was good and noble. Moreover, so far from being merely an instrument of moral teaching, it was a concrete and inspiring revelation of human deals, and thus, in a sense, a criticism of life. This, then with its element of permanent truth, was the substance of Sidney's message to an age perplexed and even hostile."

No doubt Sidney has freely drawn on earlier critics, yet he has tried to arrive at his own conception of poetry. The basic question he meets is: why is poetry valuable. The second section of his essay deals with the nature and value of poetry. This is followed by an examination of the objection to poetry. The fourth section presents a critique of the contemporary literary poetry and of morality.

His definitions of poetry, two in number, speak of his greatness as a critic. The first is :"Poesy, therefore, is an art of imitation, a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth; to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture, with this end,—to teach and delight." The second is :"it is not rhyming and versing that maketh a poet. ...but it is that feigning notable images of virtue or vice, or -what else, with that delightful teaching; which must be the right describing note to know a poet by. "

His defence of poetry is unique. It logically refutes the contemporary charges of the puritans against poetry. Poetry is universal; the first light-giver to ignorance and the first nurse. The earliest recorded or preserved utterance of any nation is a form of poetic expression alone. The ancients delivered wisdom only through poetry. The first philosophers and scientists came before the people in the garb of poets. The poet is a creator, like God. The world created by the poet is a better world than ours. Only in the poetic world do we come across true lovers, constant friends, \

and excellent men. These characters are perfect. The bad men in this world have unmixed badness, and such villains are not allowed to go unpunished. Poetry is superior to history and philosophy. The poet has both the general and the particular example. But the philosopher is only theoretical, for he has examples. The historian has examples, but no precepts. The historian speaks of what has been, not of what ought to be. The philosopher is vague and speaks of what should be.

The poet speaks of both what is and what should be of what is universal and what is particular. Poetry has liveliness and passion which are lacking in history and philosophy.

Sidney's remarks on tragedy, tragi-comedy and comedy speak of his knowledge of the contemporary trends of literature and his wide readings. In the field of drama his observations were true not only in his age but are also true and valid even today. His observations on satire and various forms of poetry are of great significance so are his views on diction, metre and verse. Surprisingly enough Sidney offers the best defence of metre. Praising English, he says that only in English can rhyme be observed "very precisely."

The essay reflects and telescopes not only the continental criticism of the century but a certain amount pf classical Greek and Roman as well. Further, Dramatic criticism in England began with Sir Philip Sidney. Sidney was 'the president of chivalry and nobleness.' He was, as Hakluyt called him the finest flower of the garden of wit and art. He saw that Poetry in his own days had fallen from high estimation to be the laughing stock of children. Gosson in his 'School of Abuse' has condemned poetry and had called it the mother of lies and the nurse of abuse. He had pointed out that there were better professions and vocations than that of a poet and that the suggestion of Plato should be followed in turning out the poets from the state. Sidney who was himself a poet could not relish the idea and sharply and violently reacted against the views of Gosson and the Puritans. He wrote a pitiful defence of Poetry and based the claims for poetry on its divine origin, its prophetic nature, its cultural value, its universal appeal, its elevating power and its alluring methods. He said that poetry was the most ancient and 'full of virtue breeding delightfulness.' He replied to all the charges made by the critics of his days and put back poetry to its own pedestal. He made it popular and freed it from the bondage and slavery of the Puritans. He revitalised it and gave it new life and vigour. It was to his attempts that Poetry was again read with interest and poets like Shakespeare and Spenser md others made England 'nest of singing birds.'

Points to Remember

1. Apologie—an important Renaissance document—a synthesis of the critical doctrines of Plato, Aristotle, Horace, Scaliger, Mintumo and a few other Italian critics—a union of romanticism and classicism, first important English document in criticism.

2. Sidney represents contemporary trends on the nature and function of poetry, on the three dramatic unities, on tragedy and comedy.

3. His originality lies in the selection, arrangement and adaptation of earlier ideas. Also original in his style, presentation, etc.

4. Approached poetry not as a pedantic critic but as a responsive reader. He has his own conception of poetry. His defence of poetry is sound, logical and convincing. His view that "it is not riming and versing that maketh a poet" has proved to be a universal utterance.

5. He has rightly upheld the superiority of poetry over history, philosophy and science.

6. He regards the poet as God, the creator.

7. Sidney's remarks on tragedy, tragi-comedy and comedy speak of the contemporary trends of literature and his wide ranging interests.

8. "Dramatic criticism in England began with Sir Philip Sidney." (Spingarn).

9. Sidney, "the president of chivalry and nobleness," "the finest flower of the garden of wit and art."

10. Sidney revitalised poetry and gave it new life.

Literature and Virtue in Sidney's "Apology for Poetry"

In "An Apology for Poetry" Sir Philip Sidney attempts to reassert the fundamental importance of literature to society in general as well as to other creative and intellectual endeavours. Though Sidney's work does provide a synthesis (and in some cases an aberration) of much Greek and Roman literary theory, his argument aspires to go beyond an esoteric academic debate. Literature can "teach and delight" in a manner which other methods of communication do not possess (138). The moral/ethical impact any literary text has upon a reader is of paramount importance to Sidney. The argument Sidney presents and develops is built around the assumption that literature has the capacity to teach most effectively and to demonstrate virtue. Perhaps in better understanding how Sidney specifically supports this claim, we can better assess its strength or validity

Sidney places literature in a hierarchical relationship with all other forms of learning; literature inhabits the highest and most influential tier. Literature is "the first light-giver to ignorance", and from it all other sources of knowledge have been nurtured (135). As the first use of language beyond the completely utilitarian, literature stretches and expands language to accommodate broader and more conceptual inquiries. Though an ardent admirer of Platonic philosophy, Sydney, in order to serve his intellectual exercise, rewrites or rehabilitates Plato's harsh stance on the worthlessness of literature. Unlike Plato's poet who perpetuates images far removed from the Truth, Sidney's poet can dip into the world of Forms, the Ideal, and provide us with knowledge of virtue. While the tangible world of appearances "is brazen, the poets only deliver a golden" (137).

Against the established disciplines of history and philosophy, Sidney also uses a revision of Aristotle's Poetics to help demonstrate how literature mediates the interests of both forms of knowledge in order to teach virtue. Where philoso

universal, history is consumed with the particular. Literature is able to deal with the same abstract moral/ethical (universal) concepts with which philosophy grapples by providing examples rooted in concrete, albeit fictionalized, details. History is too concerned with the accurate recording of facts to make any conjectures on such broad, less substantiated concepts. Literature exists between and above history and philosophy because the knowledge it conveys (knowledge of the good) is the best and most useful knowledge that exists. As Sidney states, "no learning is so good as that which teacheth and moveth to virtue, and that none can both teach and move thereto so much as poetry" (149).

Sidney attempts to provide an utterly rational foundation for his claims, however. He develops a systematic analysis of the mechanisms employed by literature to teach virtue. He sorts literature according to its works and its parts. The works of a literary text can be seen in four specific ethical effects which it should seek to elicit in a reader. Sidney defines these four as: the purifying of wit, enriching of memory, enabling of judgement, and enlarging of conceit (139).

In order to purify the wit, literature must engage the intellect in new and different ways. By allowing the reader to view a particular idea, character, or situation from a new or novel vantage point, literature is able to provide a vicarious, condensed education available through no other medium. Memories gathered from these fictional experiences provide a common frame of reference between otherwise disparate individuals. Fictional examples become touchstones which can be understood and experienced more easily by others. Literary memories point toward a more universal experience and invite the reader to find new and possibly profound meaning(s) in personal experiences as well. Sidney implies that a life without such memories would surely be impoverished. Building upon the first two works, literature also provides a reader with ample and necessary practise in making moral/ethical judgments. A literary text provides a safe outlet for such judgments to be made, discussed, and re-examined. Personal and societal codes of behaviour are shaped, both strengthened and challenged, by this practise. Literature engages the reader actively with virtue as a part of this decision making process. To enlarge the conceit, literature also expands a reader's knowledge and understanding of language (in terms of style, structure, form) as well. This, in turn, opens new modes of expression, new metaphors, to a reader. The ability to create new and different texts is stamped into the very nature of literature. The ability to articulate and teach virtue effectively is constantly in flux from generation to generation. Literature is constantly in demand of new metaphors in order to remain resilient and relevant. Each narrative, housing the potential to fundamentally redefine and re-evaluate itself, represents a metaphor for the world. Thus it is vital that literature possess this self-perpetuating but continually evolving quality.

To discuss literature in its various parts, Sidney develops a series of stylistic, structural, and thematic categories: pastoral, elegiac, iambic, satiric, comic, tragic, lyric, and heroic. Each category (part) of literature also attempts to elicit a specific ethical response from the reader. The parts themselves are arranged hierarchically as well, with the heroic being placed at the top. Though an interesting (if historically outdated) method of division, Sidney's categories seem to elaborate more than advance his general

argument, however. He places more emphasis on the ethical questions posed by the works of a literary text, rather than its parts.

Sidney concludes his comprehensive defense of literature by attempting to answer various challenges to its merit and continued support. The most serious of these allegations, that literature is "the nurse of abuse, infecting us with pestilent desires", Sidney is forced to acknowledge as true to a greater or lesser extent. This might seem, at first glance, to refute or undermine the argument he has laboured so long to create. Sidney, however, has qualified his praise of literature from the onset. Literature can contribute to learning virtue but does not ensure virtuous action. Because he is aware of the fact that literature can and is abused by some, Sidney describes literature as a tool with the greatest potential for good, but not an inherently virtuous invention in and of itself. The destructive qualities evoked by literature are products of the fallible fragile human beings who created it, rather than an indictment of the evil nature of all literature in general. Do not, as Sidney states, "say that poetry abuseth man's wit, but that man's wit abuseth poetry" (150).

Sidney's responses have become the mainstay of the supporters of a liberal arts education. Unfortunately, literature has become sanctified to the extent that knowledge of literature has become practically synonymous with virtuous action. Such modern interpretations of Sidney's defense of literature seem to strike against the very heart of his argument. Sidney seems to understand all too well that human beings house both virtuous and vicious impulses; it is within our power to infuse our creations with both the sinister and the sublime. Because this is true of any human invention, Sidney counsels that the potential of literature for good or ill should not be easily discounted or dismissed.

Sir Philip Sidney: The Saviour of Poetry

"Who's your Parent?" asked God. "Poets are my parent" replied Sidney. We cannot thank Sidney enough for his hard work to save dignity of poetry. Back in Sidney's time a lot of people began to question poetry and its value. Puritans were distasteful towards poetry and Stephen Gosson took the lead and stained fabric of poetry with variety of accusations. He wrote School of Abuse and aimed at Sir Philip Sidney. In response to the School of abuse Sidney invoked his muse and wrote An Apology for Poetry. This document An Apology for poetry is like the flowing river which surfaces poetry's Antiquity, Universality, its long journey from the evolution of human learning till date. Also, poetry's nature and purpose is highlighted which states its nucleus purpose that is to "teach and delight". Penetrating into poetry Sidney has also described its kinds, which includes religious, philosophical and poetic. However, defense wouldn't have been a good defense until the attack is refuted. Stephens's charges on poetry are taken up one by one, dismantled and refuted. Charges such as poets, piper and jesters are the caterpillar of commonwealth, corrupter and plague-spots of society and so he goes on. Throughout Sidney in his case has been referring to big bang names like Aristotle, David, Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Plato and many others. This helps in making his defense not only strong but much more authentic.

Sidney begins to ennoble poetry by discussing its nature and usefulness. Poetry is the mother of all learning and the first light giver to ignorance. Prestigious names have been given to poets in all parts of the world such as, vales – the prophet by Romans, maker by Greeks. Further Sidney says that all imagination literature comes from the poet and in saying this he brings Plato into the fold of poets and his dialogues in poetry. Poetry is not all rhyming and versifying. Poetry from Plato's divine madness has become divine gift. Descending from Plato we hear Aristotle saying that poetry is an art of imitation and its end has to teach and delight. A poet beautifies nature, and poetry adds colours to life. Great genuine role models are created by poets that of a bravery, heroism and worthy man. Many characters larger than life characters were created. And to do all this poets are certainly not dependent on nature. Poets don't have this limitation to which rest of the arts are chained. Astronomer, historian and physician have to rely on the nature for their work and research unlike poets who create their own new or better world.

Poetry has numerous kinds and Sidney presenting the case on poetry has talked about its kinds. The three major kinds are religious poetry, philosophical poetry and poetic. Religious poetry included biblical poets such as David, Solomon, Moses and other. The Holy Books are written in rhyme and verses. In the Holy Scriptures in which there is no evil Jesus himself uses poetical language. Hence, we can believe that when these Holy men were the messengers of God so God gave us His words in poetry. The second kind is philosophical poetry includes Tyrtaeus, Lucan and others. Philosophy if stands on its own cannot teach because it is a poor guidance for youth and appeals only to those who are already learned. And the last but real form of poetry is the imaginative and creative one. It inspires in men the desire of well-being thus, it is no less than history or philosophy. This poetic is even superior to science for the reason that it not only show the right way but makes the entrance attractive enough for the man to enter. Even the repulsive things of life seems comforting if comes from the mouth of a poet. Irresistible aesthetic charm lies in the poetic.

The last form is then further divided into variety of poetry type. Pastoral, displays the beauty of nature and misery of a man. Through pastoral poetry the question of right and wrong is raised. Elegiac, stimulate our pity on the weaknesses of mankind and wretchedness of the world. Satiric, ridicules man's follies and he feels ashamed to laugh at him. Morality is the key which is through and through achieved with the help of these various kinds of poetry. The Lyric, out of all the other types majorly lyric is mishandled and was not being used at Sidney's time in its true essence. Comic serves as warning men of their common errors and kind heartedly correcting them without even letting them know it. Tragedy opens bitter wounds and endow with catharsis. Despite horrifying audience it teaches the uncertainties of life. Last but not the least, Heroic type has given us character larger than life. The goodness at its peak both instructs and delights. Achilles was born of this mother.

Without testing Stephen's patience, the charges on poetry shall be listed first and later answered. The charges were, poetry is useless and waste of time. It is the mother of lies and collection of falsehood. Invoked evil fancies thus having degrading and enfeebling influence. Importantly Stephen took the liberty of using Plato's dialogue Republic to say that Plato who is most looked upon had banished poets from his ideal state. How now can we allow poets to breath in ours?

Straight-forward defense method is used by Sidney. The first allegation that poetry is useless is refuted by Sidney in the first portion of his document in which he say, no learning is a good learning until it teach and delight and no art can do it but poetry. Also, there cannot be any profitable use of ink and paper, which at the time of Sidney was quite expensive. The second charge is that poetry is mere a lie and the answer of Sidney is simple and amusing. Poetry never made an attempt to say that it is the truth rather other arts like history, physiology and astronomy does claim to be truthful and most of the times they fell on their face. Poetry is all fiction. And to find truth in fiction is lack of common sense. Poetry's job is not to teach or tell what to do or what not to do rather it tells what should be and what should not be. Poetry arouses evil desires is not wholly correct. There is kind of poetry which is little contaminated with love. If we see deep within even the love isn't so evil and bad it is natural and innate in us. To praise a beauty and go mad behind it is one form of passion. Stephen seems to have a problem with love but then he should restrict his charge to only one part of poetry not blames poetry as a whole. All art are misused and if poetry fell on corrupt hands doesn't mean the genre is corrupt. Plato is used by Stephen to prove his stance against poetry. Plato in Sidney's opinion is poetic himself. He says his dialogues flow like flowers in a stream. Plato was only against poets who portray gods in false manner and he asked to banish the abuse of poetry not poetry wholly. Plato in Sidney's eyes is a patron of Poetry not an enemy.

Lastly, if Plato was against poets and all kinds of poetry, does it matter when his successor Aristotle was in favour of poets and thought of them as an essential part of society. Plato or no Plato poetry survives even now. Since the evolution of this world the poetry exists and it continues to move zillions of hearts every second.

Euphemisms in "An Apology for Poetry"

Euphemisms are agreeable terms substituted for offensive ones; a garbage collector becomes a sanitation engineer. Sir Philip Sidney, in his "An Apology for Poetry," also known as "A Defense of Poesy," not only had to make his subject matter agreeable to a skeptical aristocracy, but also had to defend it against a growing Puritan movement that saw poetry as evil. He uses three euphemisms to do so: horses, Scripture and war.

Poetry as Horsemanship

At the time of the essay's writing, 1579, poetry had fallen into the realm of disrepute predicted by Shakespeare in "A Midsummer Night's Dream" when king Theseus compares poets to madmen, their subject matter "airy nothing." Sidney euphemizes poetry as comparable to the royal sport of horsemanship; he parallels the truth behind poetic phrases with that of the natural compliments that good horses evoke. A horse may "have a good seat"; a lady may "be fair of face." Sidney insists that both the utilitarian horseman's phrase and that of the poet ring true as compliments to beauty, answering the Puritan charge that poetry is "the mother of lies."

Poetry as Scripture

Sidney moves from the euphemism of poetry as sport to a second euphemism addressed to the Puritan members of his audience, who regarded poetry as ungodly. In his most daring passage, Sidney points out that Holy Scripture is poetry by noting that the "psalms of David are a divine poem . . . fully written in metre"; he ends by labelling the Psalms a "heavenly poesy." Poetry takes on the name of prophecy itself, as Sidney brazenly comments that it should not be "scourged out of the church of God." By destroying poetry, one destroys Scripture, he asserts.

Poetry as Warrior

Having addressed both aristocrats and zealots, he devotes the remainder of the essay to euphemizing poetry both for the wise and the working man. He aligns poetry with ancient Greek philosophers and attests that "of all sciences . . . poetry is the Monarch." He also scorns its sordid reputation as the plaything of theatrical mummers by saying that "poetry is the companion of the camps." In personifying poetry as a warrior rather than a mere player, he brings it into the fellowship of English commoners embarked on wars.

Poetry Defended Thrice

In a masterstroke, Sidney uses personification, metaphor and analogy as defenses to poetry's critics. He insists that the art "imitate[s] to teach and delight," thus personifying it as a true actor of good repute; it is "reined with good discretion," metaphorically comparing a poet to an admirable horseman; it borrows "nothing of what it is, hath been or ever shall be," a daring rewrite of Ecclesiastes 1:9 that puts poetry squarely back into the realm of Scripture. Thus he apologizes for, and defends, the poetic muse by cloaking her in figurative language, poetically rendered euphemisms.

Apology for Poetry : A General Estimate

An "Apology for Poetry" is a compelling essay refuting the attack on poetry by Puritan and fundamentalist Stephen Gosson. This complex article written by Sir Phillip Sidney represents the decisive rebuttal defending poetry. His strong emotive passages defend the uncongenial comments of poetry from Gosson. Although, his justification for the rebuttal is alluded to Gosson's durable attacks on poetry; it is known Gosson's remarks prompt Sidney's attitude to defend not only against Gosson but as well as Plato. Stephen Gosson's Puritan credentials, disregards him as the primary source for submitting the essay.

Sidney addresses the poetic contributions and principles demonstrated by Aristotle, Plato, and other European scholars. Plato's Republic implements most of the poetic knowledge Sidney reinforces in his defense. The abundance of sciences portrays significant purposes in life; Sidney concedes poetry as a superior subject. Sidney conveys several rational ideologies to sustain the defense of poetic theory. Poetics is subjected through the emphasis of imitation, generates purposes of learning, objects history and philosophy, and educates observers on knowledge, virtue and practical conceptions of poetry.

The influence of Plato and Aristotle on Sir Philip Sidney's concise essay reinforces a substantial argument defending poetry. His advocacy on poetry is primarily constituted on the theories of Aristotle's poetics, as well as the acceptance on Plato's poetic contribution. The function and form of poetry according to the theories of Platonism is defended and reconciled by Sidney. Further words and sanctions from Aristotle provide ammunition in support of the defense. Plato's considerable concern had been with the education of men achieving moral excellence; however, Socrates un-deniable favor of poetry banished the poetics from the Republic because of Plato's questioning moral effects (Samuel 383). Sidney agrees with Plato's doctrine that educational instruction is moral excellence and a capacity of universal knowledge which equips a mature virtuous man. To further the protection of poetry, he interprets Aristotle's quote concerning the form of poetry as, "all virtues, vices and passions so in their own natural state laid out to the view that we seem not to hear of them but clearly to see through them (An Apology for Poetry 140). Nature provides its own natural resources for man to achieve universal knowledge; if man allows the aesthetics of nature to implement his mind, all virtues are achieved. Sidney acknowledges and makes frequent references of the essence to Plato's "the beauty of virtue" (Samuel 387). Throughout the essay, Sidney validates Plato's conception, "Like the painter who portrays not Lucretia, whom he never saw, but the outward beauty of such a virtue, the form of goodness—which seen, they cannot but love" (Samuel 387). Plato's profound theory on aesthetics is a significant pathway to poetry, because poetry is beautiful and man cannot help but to love moral excellence.

Sidney upholds the truth and defense against the Socratic charges opposing poetry, ***"the poet, nothing affirmth, he therefore never lieth"***. He delivers the expression that poetry is the truer ideal then other earthly being***. "The defense of poetry as a mimetic art has already been made in the assertion that poetry imitates universal ideas, and clothes them in human form, yet does not mar their superhuman beauty"***. Plato apprehended high standards for men to attain knowledge and wit, so they no longer continue foolish thoughts. Sidney gravitates to the Platonism theory on ones worth, ***"It is a good reason, that whatsoever, being abused, doth must harm, being rightly used—and upon the right use each thing receiveth his title –doth most good".*** Sidney recognizes Plato as a poetic writer, "And truly even Plato whosoever well considereth , shall find that in the body of his work, though the inside and strength were philosophy, the skin as it were and beauty depended most of the poetry". Aesthetics is the primary inspiration for Plato's poetry; he defines literature is that which is inspired. Poetic material can only evolve through inspiration, an inspiration that distinguishes art from gift, and poetry is a gift. Sidney's constant focal point within the Defense reflects the Platonism analogy of inspiration. The beauty proposition Plato theorized is the secret to the poet's power in elevating men to virtue.

An Apology for Poetry indicates the conception of defense against poetry, and also the supports Platonism theories. Although it is uncertain of Plato's true emotive intentions regarding poetry, Sidney appears to have an understanding of depicting the bases of Plato's poetic contraction. The decisive attitude Plato portrays on poetry speaks volumes from the influence Socrates input about poetry.

In the essay, Sidney administers two dissimilar definitions of poetry. The first most persistently used definition, " Poesy therefore is an art of i

termeth it in his word Mimesis, that is to say, a representing, counterfetting, or figure forth: to speake metaphorically, a speaking picture: with this end, to teach and delight" (Dowlin 573). Sidney utilizes this definition as the primary focal point of defending what he perceives as durable and probable knowledge. This particular statement generates a broader perception and division of various types of poetry:

Religious, which imitates "the inconceviable [but nonetheless real] excellencies of God"; philosophical, which deals with moral, natural, astronomical, and historical matter, and which merely copies rather than invents or feigns; and the work of the "right poets", who "to imitate borrow nothing of what is, hath been, or shall be: but range with only learned discretion, into the divine consideration of what may be, and should be" (Dowlin 574).

The second definition is more complex and definite, "But it [poetry] is that faying notable images of virtues, vices, or what else, with that delightful teaching, which must be the right describing note to know a Poet by" (Dowlin 574). Both definitions are of great importance, but the second defines the ideals of forming images or patterns of perfection, that reject verse or any other accessory that distinguishes characters of poetry. All these contributions numerously appear as important techniques constituting poetry.

Sidney's second definition provides a considerable association with the Republic's tenth book; he sought after certain passages from Plato, transpiring the words into memorable phrases, discussing images, and explaining the virtues and vices poetry instructs. Even though Sidney acknowledges Plato within his writings, he opposes several analogies Plato insists. In Sidney's Two Definitions of Poetry, the author suggests Sidney purposely neglects Plato's "images of virtues and vices" but adds, "or what else", a probable notion that Sidney's phrase "or what else" was replaced by Plato's "all things divine". The expression "or what else", is perceived as a remark that accepts or opposes divine inspiration. These minor replacements add a perplexing point of purpose to Sidney's true intentions in defending poetry.

The reading of An Apology of Poetry is detailed with Sidney's anti-historical and anti-philosophic dispositions. He constitutes an argument defend poetry as the superior option over history and philosophy. Prior to Sidney's revelation of poetry, he read and was instructed on the concepts of history. Sidney is no stranger to history and philosophy, but his overachieving knowledge of learning, gravitates his thoughts on the conceptual framework of poetry. According to History in Sidney's Apology, the author Elizabeth Donno suggests, "Sidney had a theoretical distrust of any over-insistence on the value of history". There is a falsehood of Sidney's anti-historical or anti-philosophic dispositions; there was no rejection of the subjects, but he sought after profound ways to express history and philosophic ideologies by using poetry. "the Historian proper makes himself a discourser exhibiting the capacity for reflection and reason for profit and an Orator, yea a Poet sometimes for ornament" (Donne 284). Sidney shows himself as an orator "making excellent orations"; he considers himself to be a poet, in painting forth what has already been created, "the effects, the motions, the whisperings of the people". The historian often reflects a divine inspirer, or allocation opinions:

"in telling his opinion and reasons in religion, sometimes the lawyer in shrewing the cases and benefits of laws, sometime a natural philosopher in setting down the cases of strange thing which the history compels him to speak of, but most commonly a moral philosopher either in the thick part when he sets forth virtues or vices and the natures of passion or in the politic (as he often does) with matters of the estate" (Donne 286).

Historians do not profess one specific art, they deal with all arts according to which ever art instructs their lives.

Sidney acknowledges the pleasure from reading ancient, medieval and modern historians. In regards to Sidney's essay, establishes poetry as the chief and most efficient of several arts. Sidney insists that philosophy, law, history and divinity, are considered the only devices that deal with a man's internal manners. Other subjects such as astronomy, music, mathematics, and supernatural philosophy are only practical matters dealing with the external self. In Sidney's view, philosophy and history are merely rejected as strategic ploy. Historians instruct on facts and not the possible. Philosophers educate in an abstract manner, delivering vague ideas. He declares history and philosophy make use of poetry, he names Plato as a sophisticated philosopher, "of all the philosophers I have ever esteemed most worthy of reverence, and with great reason: since of all philosophers he is the most poetical" (Donne 288). A successful philosopher borrows and quotes phrases from Plato. Historians are "bound to tell things as they were" (Donne 289), and he is consequently engaging when his thoughts pattern poetry.

Poets are teachers, and their instruction is advocating the virtues and vices that indicate moral excellence. There is a poetic license that validates the truth, and deliberates a theory of what is possible and probable. A poet is the least the least liar, but poetry does not reflect affirmation. Historians and philosophers' value fiction, opinionate reason, and often fabricate the truth. The function of poetry is to teach and to delight, but poetry also delivers knowledge, moving one to act off inspiration and emotions. Entertainment is circled around the works of poets. The most important subject is centered through the act of praxis (practice), a subject that is not practiced is considered a durable element.

According to Allusive Coherence in Sidney's Apology for Poetry by John Hunt, states "the critical consensus that the Apology is a fundamentally Aristotlelian work has been tested by recognition of its many Platonic elements and its extensive use of Stoic, Neoplatonic, and Christian ideas". An Apology for Poetry, shows how often Sidney alluded to several concepts from other authors. He maintains the concept to all knowledge is religious: "to restore the soul as much of its lost perfection as is possible", a condition of enlightenment that aspires the soul into a state of felicity. The soul is lifted up from the boundaries of moral consciousness:

Learning, under what name so ever it come forth, or to what immediate end so ever it be directed, the final end is to lead and draw us to as high a perfection as our degenerate souls, made worse by their clay lodgings, can be capable of. For some that thought this felicity principally to be gotten by knowledge, and no knowledge to be so high and heavenly as acquaintance with the stars, gave themselves to Astronomy… (An Apology for Poetry).

Sidney’s final recommendation to end education is soul searching, finding the inner happiness that leads to perfection.

Sidney's Dramatic Criticism

(a) Tragedy and Tragi-Comedy

Sidney’s remarks on tragedy and comedy are equally illuminating and interesting. Says Spingarn in this connection, "Dramatic criticism in England began with Sir Philip Sidney. Cultural references to the drama can be found in critical writings anterior to the Defence of Poesy; but to Sidney belongs the credit of having first formulated, in a more or less systematic manner, the general principles of dramatic art.” These principles, it need hardly be said, are those which, for half a century or more, had been undergoing discussion and modification in Italy and France, and of which the ultimate source was the Poetics of Aristotle. "Dramatic criticism in England was thus, from its very birth, both Aristotelian and classical, and it remained so for two centuries."

The Senecan drama and the Aristotelian precepts were the sources of Sidney's theory of tragedy. The oratorical and sententious tragedies of Seneca had influenced dramatic theory and practice throughout Europe from the very outset of the Renaissance. Ascham, indeed, preferred Sophocles and Euripides to Seneca; but he is an exception, and in direct opposition to the usual opinion of contemporary critics. Sidney, in his account of the English drama, could find but one tragedy modeled, as it should be, on the Senecan drama. The tragedy of Gorboduc, however, has one defect that provokes Sidney’s censure,—it does not observe the unities of time and place. In all other respects, it is an ideal model for English playwrights to imitate. Its stately speeches and well-sounding phrases, approach almost to the height of Seneca’s style; and in teaching most delight fully notable morality, it attains the very end of poetry.

The ideal tragedy—and in this Sidney closely follows Aristotle and the Italians—-is an imitation of a noble action, in the representation of which it stirs, "admiration and teaches commiseration", and teaches the uncertainty of the world and the weak foundations upon which golden roofs are built. "It makes kings fear to be tyrant, and tyrants manifest their tyrannical humours.” Sidney’s censure of the contemporary tragedy is that it outrages the grave and weighty character of tragedy, its elevated style, and the dignity of the personages represented, by mingling kings and clowns, and introducing the most inappropriate buffoonery. Never did the ancients, like the English, "match hornpipes with funerals". The English dramas are neither true comedies nor true tragedies and they disregard both the rules of poetry and honest civility. Tragedy is not tied to the laws of history, and may arrange and modify events as it pleases; but it is certainly bound by the rules of poetry. It is evident, therefore, that the Defence of Poesy, as a French writer has observed, "gives us an almost complete theory of neo-classic tragedy, a hundred years before 'Art Poetique' of Boileau; the severe separation of poetic forms, the sustained dignity of language, the unities, nothing is lacking."

(b) Comedy

Sidney's theory of comedy is based on the body of rules and observations, which the Italian critics, aided by a few hints from Aristotle, had deduced from the practice of the Greek dramatists. Sidney defines comedy, "as an imitation of the common errors of life, which are represented in the most ridiculous and scornful manner, so that the spectator is anxious to avoid such errors himself." Comedy, therefore, shows the "filthiness of evil", but only in, "our private and domestically matters". It should aim at being wholly delightful, just as tragedy, should be maintained by a well-raised admiration. Delight is thus the first requirement of comedy; but the English comic writers err in thinking that delight cannot be obtained without laughter, whereas laughter is neither an essential effect of delight nor is necessary for it. Sidney thus distinguishes delight from laughter. The great fault of English comedy is that it stirs laughter concerning things that' are sinful, i.e. wicked rather than merely ridiculous— forbidden plainly, according to Sidney, by Aristotle himself—and concerning things that are miserable, rather to be pitied than scorned. Not only should comedy produce delightful laughter, but also it should mix with it that delightful teaching which is the end of all poetry. Human follies or errors, rather than human vice and wickedness, or the poverty of men, are the proper themes of comedy. Sidney's distinction between delight and laughter is psychological and the most original part of his treatise. It should also be noted that the aim of comedy is to expose and ridicule human folly such as affectation, hypocrisy, so that such follies may be corrected. Thus, he makes comedy a weapon of social reform. Comedy is not merely to provide delight; it must also correct and improve. As vice cannot be corrected merely by being laughed at, it is excluded from the domain of comedy. Similarly, a poor man is not to be laughed at for lie is not at fault for his poverty.

(c) The Unities:

The unities of time and place were first formulated in Italy and France about the middle of the 15th century. The first mention of the unities in England is to be found, more than a dozen years later, in this Defence of Poesy, and it cannot be doubted that Sidney derived them directly from the Italian critic Castelvetro. Sidney in discussing the tragedy of Gorboduc, finds it, "faulty in time and place, the two necessary companions of all corporal actions; for where the stage should always represent but one place, and the uttermost time presupposed in it should be, both by Aristotle's percept and common reason, but one day, there (i.e. in Gorboduc) is both many days and many placer, inartistically imagined." He also objects to the absurdities of the English stage, where on one side Africa and on the other Asia may be represented, and where in an hour a youth may grow from boyhood to old age. How absurd this is, commonsense, art, and ancient examples ought to teach the English playwright; and at this day, says Sidney, even the ordinary player in Italy will not err in it. If, indeed, it be objected that one or two of the comedies of Plautus and Terence do not observe the unity of time, let us not follow them when they err, but when, they are right; it is no excuse for us to do wrong because Plautus, on one occasion, has done likewise.

The rule of the three unities did not receive such, rigid application in England, as is given by Sidney, until the introduction of the French influence nearly three quarters of a century later. Ben Jonson is considerably less stringent in this respect than Sidney.

Philip Sidney: His Ideas on Poetry

Definition of Poetry:

But before proceeding to defend an art so ancient and univer¬sal, it is necessary to define it; and the definition which Sidney gives agrees substantially with what might be designated Renaissance Aristotelianism. "Poetry", says Sidney, "is an art of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it, that is to say, a representing, counterfeiting or figuring forth; to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture, with this end,—to teach and delight." Poetry is, accordingly, an art of imitation and not merely the art of "versifying"; for although most poets have seen fit to apparel their poetic inventions in verse, verse is but the raiment and ornament of poetry, and not one of its causes or essentials. Rhyming and versing do not make one a poet. "One may be a poet without versing", says Sidney, "and d versifier without poetry." Speech and reason are the distinguishing features between man and brute; and whatever helps to perfect and polish "speech deserves high commendation. Besides this, verse is the most fitting raiment of poetry, because it is the most dignified and compact, not colloquial and slipshod. It is also an aid to memory, for one word in it is fitted with another that by remembering the one you recall the other. But with all its merits, it is not an essential part of poetry, of which the true test is this – feigning notable images of vices and virtues, and teaching delightfully.

Function of Poetry:

In regard to the object, or function of poetry, Sidney is at one with Scaliger. The aim of poetry is accomplished by teaching most delightfully a notable morality; or, in a word, by delightful instruction. Not instruction alone, or delight alone, as Horace had said, but instruction made delightful; and it is this dual function which serves not only as the end but as the very test of poetry. The object of all arts and sciences is to lift human life to the highest altitudes of perfection; and in this respect they are all servants of the sovereign or poetry, whose end is well-doing and not well-knowing only. Virtuous action is, therefore, the end of all learning; and Sidney sets out to prove that the poet, more than anyone else, fulfils this end.

Then Sidney proceeds to examine the objections that have been brought against poetry, and refutes them one by one. But, first, he demonstrates the superiority of poetry over history and philosophy. The ancient controversy—ancient even in Plato's days—between poetry and philosophy is once more reopened. The gist of Sidney's argument is that while the philosopher teaches by precept alone, and the historian by example alone, the poet conduces most of virtue because he employs both precept and example. The philosopher teaches virtue by showing what virtue is and what vice is, by setting down, in abstract argument, and without clarity or beauty of style, the bare principles of morality. The historian teaches virtue by showing the experience of past ages; but, being tied down to what actually happened, that is, to the particular truth of things and not to general possibilities, the example he depicts draws no necessary consequence. The poet alone accomplishes this dual task. What the philosopher says should be done is, by the poet, pictured most perfectly in some one by whom it has been done, thus coupling the general notion with the particular instance. The philosopher, moreover, teaches the learned only; but the poet teaches all, and so is, in Plutarch's phrase, "the right popular philosopher". He seems only to promise delight, and moves men to virtue unaware. But even if the philosopher excels the poet in teaching, he cannot move his

virtuous action as the poet can, and this is of higher importance than teaching, for what is the use of teaching virtue, if the pupil is not moved to act and accomplish what he is taught? On the other hand, the historian deals with particular instances, with vices and virtues so mingled together in the same personage that the reader can find no pattern to imitate. The poet improves, upon history; he gives perfect examples of vices and virtues for human imitation; he makes virtue succeed and vice fail, and this history can but seldom do. Poetry does not imitate nature; it is the reader who imitates the example of perfection presented to him by the poet. He is thus made virtuous. Poetry, therefore, conduces to virtue, the end of all learning better than any other art or science, and so deserves the palm as the highest and the noblest form of human wisdom.

Poetic Imitation: Creative Process

The basis of Sidney's distinction between the poet and the historian is the famous passage in which Aristotle explains why poetry is more philosophic and of more serious value than history. The poet deals, not with the particular, but with the universal — with what might or should be, not with what is or has been. But Sidney, in the assertion of this principle, follows Minturno and Scaliger, and goes farther than Aristotle would probably have gone. All arts have the works of nature as their principal object of imitation, and follow nature as actors follow the lines of their play. Only the poet is not tied to such subjects, but creates another nature better than nature herself. For, going hand in hand with nature, and being enclosed not within her limits, but only by, "the zodiac of his own imagination", he creates a golden world in place of nature's brazen; and in this sense he may be compared as a creator with God. Where shall you find in life, asks, Sidney, such a friend as Plyades, such a hero as Orlando, such an excellent man as Æneas?

Puritan Objections to Poetry: Sidney's Defence of it

Sidney then proceeds to answer the various objections that have been made against poetry. These objections, partly following Gosson and Cornelins Agrippa, and partly his own inclinations, he reduces to four. In the first place, it is objected that a man might spend his time more profitably than by reading the figments of poets. Poetry is a mere waste of time. But since teaching virtue is the real him of all learning, and since poetry has been shown to accomplish this better than all other arts or sciences, this objection is easily answered. The study of poetry is most profitably for it imparts delightful instruction and so moves man to virtuous action. In the second place, poetry has been called the mother of lies; but Sidney shows that it is less likely to tell a lie than other sciences, for the poet does not assert the figments of his imagination as facts, and, since he affirms nothing, he cannot ever be said to lie. The poet never affirms and so he never lies for to lie is to affirm that to be true which is not true in reality. A poet's truths are ideal and universal. Thirdly poetry has been called, "the nurse of abuse", that is to say, poetry misuses and debases the mind of man by turning it to wantonness and by making it unmartial and effeminate. But Sidney argues that it is man's wit that abuses poetry, and not poetry that abuses man's wit; and as to making men effeminate, this charge applies to all other sciences more than to poetry, which in its description of battles and praises of valiant men, stirs courage and enthusiasm. That is why in ancient times great warriors carried the words of poets with them. Lastly, it is poin

poetry that Plate, one of the greatest philosophers, banished poets from his ideal commonwealth. But Plato's Dialogues are in reality themselves a form of poetry; and it shows ingratitude in the most poetical of philosophers, that he should defile the fountain which was his source. "Yet, though Sidney perceives how fundamental are Plato's objections to poetry, he is inclined to believe that it was rather against the abuse of poetry by the contemporary Greek poets that Plato was chiefly cavailling; for poets are praised in the Ion, and the greatest men of every age have been patrons and lovers of poetry".— (Spingarn). It should be remembered that in the Ion Plato has called poets "light and winged things", moved by divine frenzy.

Modern Tragedy

Raymond Williams (1921-1988)

Raymond Williams was one of Britain's greatest post-war cultural historians, theorists and polemicists. He was a distinguished literary and social thinker and was concerned to understand literature and related cultural forms not as the outcome of an isolated aesthetic adventure, but as the manifestation of a deeply social process that involved a series of complex relationships between authorial ideology, institutional process, and generic/aesthetic form. He was the author of many works; most notable among them is "Modern Tragedy".

Raymond Williams was born into a working-class family in Pandy, a village on 31August 1921, in the parish of Llanfihangel, in Monmouthshire, Wales, and was educated at Abergavenny Grammar School and Trinity College, Cambridge. He became a member of the Communist Party in his first year as an undergraduate and collaborated with Eric Hobsbawm—an undergraduate contemporary —in writing a pamphlet in defence of the Russian invasion of Finland. Two undergraduate years at Cambridge were followed by conscription into the British Army in 1941, active service as a tank officer during the Allied invasion of Europe, and a further undergraduate year at Cambridge when the war was over. After a short period spent editing small-circulation magazines in London, he settled first in Sussex and later in Oxford as a salaried lecturer for the Oxford Extra-Mural Delegacy (Oxford's organization for adult education), expounding for the benefit of (putatively) working-class audiences that trust in culture and mistrust of capitalism, and that belief in D. H. Lawrence which some Marxists and ex-Marxists shared with the followers of F. R. Leavis.

On joining the army, Williams seems to have lost touch with the Communist Party. Later he became a supporter of the Labour Party, but appears for a long time to have been interested less in the political than in the cultural objections to capitalism. After theLabour victory at the general election of 1966, he resigned from the Labour Party inprotest against the elitist cynicism or ruling-class character of Mr. Harold Wilson's leadership. In spite of resuming support for Labour later, he then became one of the half dozen or so freestanding Marxists who fostered the analytical outrage with which the English New Left and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament have embarrassed the Labour leaders, eased Mrs. Thatcher's way electorally, and made the Labour Party as unelectable as like-minded Democrats have made successive Democratic presidential candidates in the United States.

From an early stage, Williams wanted to be a writer rather than a don and a novelist as well as a critic and from his first period in Cambridge was a journalist and public speaker. Public speaking and small-circulation journalism remained with him for the rest of his life, along with an interest in film and television, while Border Country(1960)—his first and only tolerable novel—gave confusing insights into what he was trying to say morally and politically.

Border Country gave a low-keyed account of relations between a father and a son. Though it dealt with politics, it was dominated not by politics but by gratitude, nostalgia, and death, and by its account of the idyllic solidarity of a rural Welsh village. The novel resisted the idea that the meritocratic son or the entrepreneurial trade unionist was better than the dying railway man, and there was an anti-intellectual implication that a natural, unreconstructed, conservative way of life was more real than the academic way of life, which the son had adopted.

Border Country, though published later, was written at the same time as Kingsley Amis's Lucky Jim, which dealt with the academic problem from the academic end. But Amis had no experience he was willing to disclose in order to match the experience that Williams disclosed in Border Country, no yardstick except a satiric yardstick with which to compare a farcical university with the University of Oxford, and no more interest in explaining what he had learned from his mandarin education in Oxford than Williams had, as a novelist, in explaining what he had learned from his mandarin education in Cambridge.

In 1961 Williams returned to Cambridge for a third time, now as a lecturer (later a professor) in the Faculty of English. At the same time he became a fellow of Jesus College, to which he was brought by M. I. Finley, the American Marxist historian,.

Raymond Williams : Modern Tragedy

Introduction

Like Culture and Society, Modern Tragedy discussed texts—the main tragic texts and texts about tragic theory that had been written in Europe and the United States since Ibsen—and extracted from them a political message about the inadequacy of individuation and about the desirability of revolution. Modern Tragedy was written in a dense, coded prose. Decoded, it manifests the confusion between the cultural elite and the people which was a feature of Williams's doctrine throughout his work and which became particularly troublesome in this book, where dramatic and fictional tragedy were presented as realizations of the "shape and set" of modern "culture," and the dramatists and novelists who had produced it were assumed to represent "our" minds and experience.

This thesis was both elitist and anti-elitist, naïve about the prospect of bridging the gap between the cultural elite and the people but emphasizing the affiliations that kept Williams, as a member of the former, in conscious empathy with the latter. The effect was nevertheless odd, implying that Strindberg, Brecht, and Arthur Miller, for example, were not arcane, and amalgamating the "we" who went to their plays or listened to Williams's lectures in Cambridge with the "we" who had been described appreciatively in Border Country. However deep Williams's desire was to make "critical discrimination" relevant to the people among whom he had grown up, moreover, it neglected the consideration that critical discrimination was in fact a minority activity which spoke meaningfully only to those who had already heard Leavis's voice.

In Drama from Ibsen to Eliot (1952) Williams had criticized the English theatre as a manifestation of literary decline and for failing to achieve either "the communication" of an "experience" and a "radical reading of life," or that "total performance" which reflected "changes in the structure of feeling as a whole." In Modern Tragedy the central contentions were that "liberal" tragedy, while being liberal because it emphasized the "surpassing individual," and tragic because it recorded his defeat by society or the universe, reflected the inability of the money-oriented privacy of the bourgeois ethic to provide a "positive" conception of society. It was the "individual fight against the lie" embodied in "false relationships, a false society and a false conception of man" that Ibsen had made central, but it was the liberal martyrs' discovery of the lie in themselves and their failure to relate themselves to a "social" consciousness that heralded the "breakdown of liberalism" and the need to replace its belief in the primacy of "individualist" desire and aspiration by a socialist perception of the primacy of "common" desire and aspiration.

Williams wished to give tragic theory a social function. He pointed out that "significant suffering" was not confined to persons of "rank," and that personal belief, faults in the soul, "God," "death," and the "individual will" had been central to the tragic experience of the present. It was the "human agency" and "ethical control" manifested in revolution and the "deep social crisis through which we had all been living" that were the proper subjects of "modern" tragedy, and it was human agency and ethical control that tragic theory needed to accommodate. The first point that had to be explained was the Burkean point that revolution caused suffering. The second point was the anti-Burkean point that revolution was not the only cause of suffering, that suffering was "in the whole action" of which "revolution" was only "the crisis," and that it was suffering as an aspect of the "wholeness" of the action that needed to be considered. And this, of course, disclosed the real agenda in Modern Tragedy—the use of tragic texts to formulate a socialist theory of tragedy in which revolution would receive a literary justification and society would become more important than the individual.

In all this Williams was moving out from the defensiveness of Culture and Society and making a central feature of the argument that, when the revolutionary process was complete, "revolution" would become "epic," suffering would be "justified," and pre-revolutionary institutions, so far from being the "settled … innocent order" that they had claimed to be, would be seen to have been rooted in "violence and disorder." This was the route by which tragedy and tragic theory could remove cynicism and despair, could give revolution the "tragic" perspective that Marx had given it, and could show what tragedy had hitherto failed to show, that "degeneration, brutalization, fear, hatred and envy" were endemic in existing society's "tragic" failure to "incorporate … all its people as whole human beings." It was also the route by which tragedy and tragic theory could incorporate the fact that further "degeneration, brutalization, fear, hatred and envy" would be integral to the "whole action"—not just to the "crisis" and the revolutionary energy released by it or the "new kinds of alienation" which the revolution against alienation would have to "overcome … if it was to remain revolutionary," but also, and supremely, to the connection between "terror" and "liberation."

Williams's rhetoric was ruthless, and yet in retrospect looks faintly silly. Nor were the tasks that he attributed to tragic theory plausible. It remains

Modern Tragedy, while reiterating the formal denial that revolution was to be identified with the violent capture of power and identifying it rather as a "change … in the deepest structure of relationships and feelings," implied, more than any other of Williams's works, a circuitous but indubitably evil attempt to encourage the young to think of violence as morally reputable. In evaluating Williams, one wishes to be just. He should not be dismissed merely because his followers have helped to keep their party out of office, since many of them, and perhaps he also, regarded party politics as merely a convenient way of inserting their moral messages into the public mind. Like the theorists of the student revolution of the Sixties, Williams was "against liberalism," but those who are against liberalism for conservative reasons do not need his sort of support. They should not be misled by the "organicism" of Culture and Society, which ignored the moral solidarity of twentieth-century English society and used the language of solidarity in order to subvert such solidarity as monarchy and two world wars had created by denying that it existed. The most general fault in critical works is not avoided by even Williams.

Most of the critical books are written with and on the general assumption of some creative work by others. To write or give views on others is certainly not objectionable. What seems objectionable is the way of giving views or opinions without quoting the original creative work. What most of the critics do is very non-critical in a sense. They give first their own understanding of the work and then their views or opinions against or for this said work. What they do in this way is the critical analysis of their own understanding. It seems having nothing to do with the understanding of the writer's work or others' views about it. While going through a book of criticism one should keep in mind the original work the criticism is about.

Modern Tragedy : Chapter wise Summary

Tragedy and Tradition

William's writings in the post-war period had a kind of existentialist motif of blocked individual liberation. This essay is a discussion on the common and the traditional interpretations of tragedy. He has used his power of perception and has come with a strong thesis on the evolution of tragedy in the essay. In the previous essay, he tells the basics of tragedy in these words: we come to tragedy by many roads. It is an immediate experience, a body of literature, conflict of theory, an academic problem.

He believes that tragedy is not the death of kings; it is more personal and general. Tragedy is not simply death and suffering and it is certainly not accident. Nor is it simply a response to death and suffering. It is a particular kind of event and particular kind of response which are genuinely tragic and which the long tradition embodies. His basic thesis in this article is: the meaning of tragedy, the relationship of tradition to tragedy and the kinds of experience which we mistakenly call tragic.

We usually try to make a contrast between the traditional and the modern and try to compress and unify the various thinking of the past into a single tradition. About tradition Williams explains: it is a question, rather of realizing that a tradition is not the past; but an interpretation of the past – a selection and evaluation of ance

than a neutral record and the present serves as a link between the traditional and the modern. When the unique Greek culture changed, the chorus which was the crucial element of dramatic form was discarded and the unique meaning of tragedy was lost. People think that the medieval period produced no tragedy, but Monk's Tale is the example in which we see protagonist falling from prosperity to adversity. Later tragedy became more secularized in the Renaissance and Neoclassical age. Now a change was visible. The moving force of tragedy was now quite clearly a matter of behaviour, rather than either a metaphysical condition or metaphysical fault.

Lessing (1729-81) was a noted German critic and dramatic poet. His major contribution to idea of tragedy is (a) a theoretical rejection of neo-classicism (b) a defence of Shakespeare (c) and an advocacy and writing of bourgeois tragedy. He said the Neoclassicism was a false classicism and the real inherit of the Greeks was Shakespeare and the real inherit of Shakespeare was the new national bourgeois tragedy. RW doesn't agree with Lessing he holds that Shakespeare was not the real inherit of the Greeks; rather he was a major instance of a new kind of tragedy. The character of Elizabethan tragedy is determined by a very complicated relationship between elements of an inherited order and elements of a new humanism. If the historical idea of the development is to be fully understood, we must understand the complicated process of secularization. In a sense, all drama after Renaissance is secular and the only fully religious tragedy we have is Greek because Elizabethan drama was totally secular. There was a concept of good and evil and poetic justice.

Hegel (1770-1831) was a famous German Philosopher did not reject the moral scheme of poetic justice but he described it as a triumph of ordinary morality and the work that embodied it as a social drama rather than tragedy. What is important for Hegel is not the suffering 'mere suffering' but its causes. Mere pity and fear are not tragic. Tragedy recognizes suffering as 'suspended over active characters entirely as the consequence of their own act'. It does not consider the external contingency beyond the control of the individual i.e. illness, loss of property, death or the like. For genuine tragedy, there must be individual freedom and independence. This conscious individuality is the only condition of tragedy.

Williams points two differences between modern and ancient tragedies. First, in ancient tragedy, the characters clearly represent the substantive ethical ends; in modern tragedy, ends are wholly personal. Secondly, in ancient tragedy, there is not only the downfall of conflicting persons and ends in the achievement of eternal justice. An individual may surrender his partial and under a higher command; in modern tragedy, the whole question of resolution is more abstract and colder. Reconciliation, when it comes, will often be within the character and will be more complicated. Hegel's interpretation of tragedy is part of a general philosophy rather than a historical criticism.

Schopenhauer (1788-1860) and Nietzsche (1844-1900) are two German philosophers whose views also contributed to the development of tragedy. Before Schopenhauer, tragedy was associated with (a) ethical crises (b) human growth and (c) history. He secularized the idea of fate when he said, 'the true sense of tragedy is the deeper insight, that is not his own individual sins that the hero atones for, but original sin, i.e. the crime of existence itself'. Tragedy, according to Nietzsch

which it resolves in a higher unity. There the hero, the highest manifestation of the will, is destroyed, but the eternal life of the will remains unaffected. According to him, the action of tragedy is not moral, not purgative, but aesthetic.

Tragedy and Contemporary Ideas

Tragedy and Contemporary Ideas presents the discussion on tragedy in relation to the contemporary ideas. The writer has discussed the four things:

(a) Order and accident.

(b) The destruction of the hero.

(c) The irreparable action and its connections with death.

(d) The emphasis of evil.

It is generally said that there is no significant meaning in 'everyday tragedies' because the event itself is not tragic; only becomes so with a through a shaped response. Williams does not agree to this view. He cannot see how it is possible to distinguish between an event and response to an event, in any absolute way.

In the case of ordinary death and suffering, when we see mourning and lament, when we see people breaking under their actual loss, we have entered tragedy. Other responses are also possible such as indifference, justification, and rejoicing. But where we feel the suffering, we are within the dimensions of tragedy. But a burnt family or a mining disaster which leaves people without feeling are called Accidents. The events not seen as tragic are deep in the pattern of our own culture: war, famine, work, traffic, and politics.

To feel no tragic meaning in them is a sort of our bankruptcy. Rank was the dividing line because the death of some people mattered more than others. Our middle class culture rejects this. The tragic of a citizen could be as real as the tragedy of a prince. The emerging middle class rejected rank in tragedy. The individual was not a state; but the entity in himself.

Order in tragedy is the result of the action. In tragedy, the creation of order is related to the fact of disorder, through which the action moves. It may be the pride of man set against the nature of things. In different cultures, disorder and order both vary, for there are parts of varying general interpretations of life. We should see this variation as an indication of the major cultural importance of tragedy as form of art.

The most common interpretation of tragedy is that it is an action in which the hero is destroyed. The fact is seen irreparable. In most tragedies, the story does not end with the destruction of the hero; it follows on. It is not the job of the artist to provide answers and solutions; but simply describe experience and raise questions. Modern tragedy is not what happens to the hero; but what happens through him. When we concentrate on the hero, we are unconsciously confining our attention to the individual.

The tragic experience lies in the fact that life does not come back, that its meanings are reaffirmed and restored after so much suffering and after so important a death. Death gives importance and meaning to life. The death of an individual brings along the whole community in the form of rituals and condolence as in Adam Bede; so tragedy is social and collective and not individual and personal. Death is absolute and all our living simply relative. Death is necessary and all other human ends are contingent (social collectivity). Death is universal so a man tied to it quickly claims university.

Man dies alone is an interpretation and not a fact; because man dies in many different conditions i.e. among machines, due to bombs, in the arms, with or without family, in their presence and absence. When he dies, he affects others. He alters the lives of other characters. To insist on a single meaning is not reasonable. Our most common received interpretations of life put the highest value and significance on the individual and his development; but it is indeed inescapable that the individual dies. Tragedy dramatizes evil in many particular forms: not only Christian evil but also cultural, political and ideological. Good and evil are not absolute. We are good or bad in particular ways and in particular situations; defined by pressures we at one received and can alter and can create again.

Rejection of Tragedy

This essay is a study of the rejection of tragedy in modern age with special reference to Bertolt Brechet who founded epic theatre as compared to the emotional theory of Aristotle. He rejected the conventional idea of tragedy and made tragedy more experiential and rational. He also said, 'the sufferings of this man appeal me because they are unnecessary'. He made people think above the situation presented in the tragedy and not within. Aristotelian drama enforced thinking from within and Brechet's theatre from without. He used distancing affects to turn people like who sit in the chair, smoke and observe. He showed that the audience wanted to see. Williams has discussed six plays: The Three Penny Opera, Saint Joan of the Stockyard, Die Massnahme, The Good Woman of Sezuen, Mother Courage and Her Children and the Life of Galileo. In the last play mentioned, the hero is offered two choices one between accepting the terms or the other being destroyed. Nevertheless, the hero recants. Tragedy in one of the older terms has been rejected by Brechet.

He then discusses Brechet's theatre and tells us why he rejected the classical tragedy and introduced rational theatre.

Theatre or theatre is the branch of the performing arts concerned with acting out stories in front of an audience using combinations of speech, gesture, mime, music, dance, sound and spectacle — indeed any one or more elements.

What he wanted theatre to be, Brecht believed that the theatre's broadest function was to educate. "It is the noblest function that we have found for 'theatre'". Brecht wanted the answer to Lenin's question 'Wie und was soll man lernen?' ('How and what should one learn?'). He created an influential theory of theatre, the epic theatre, wherein a play should not cause the spectator to emotionally identify with the action before him or her, but should instead provoke rational self-reflection and a critic

the stage. He believed that the experience of a climactic catharsis of emotion left an audience complacent. Instead, he wanted his audiences to use this critical perspective to identify social ills at work in the world and be moved to go forth from the theatre and effect change.

Hans Eisler has noted that these plays resemble political seminars. Brecht described them as "a collective political meeting" in which the audience is to participate actively. One sees in this model a rejection of the concept of the bureaucratic elite party where the politicians are to issue directives and control the behaviour of the masses. For this purpose, Brecht employed the use of techniques that remind the spectator that the play is a representation of reality and not reality itself, which he called the Verfremdungseffekt (translated as distancing effect, estrangement effect, or alienation effect). Such techniques included the direct address by actors to the audience, transposition of text to third person or past tense, speaking the stage direction out loud, exaggerated, unnatural stage lighting, the use of song, and explanatory placards. By highlighting the constructed nature of the theatrical event, Brecht hoped to communicate that the audience's reality was, in fact a construction and, as such, was changeable.

Another technique that Brecht employed to achieve his Verfremdungseffekt was the principle of historicisation. The principle of 'historicizaton' is a fundamental part of the Marxist aesthetics developed by the Germany Modernism theatre practitioner Bertolt Brecht. The content of many of his plays dealt with fictional tellings of historical figures or events. His idea was that if one were to tell a story from a time that is contemporary to an audience, they may not be able to maintain the critical perspective he hoped to achieve. Instead, he focused on historical stories that had parallel themes to the social ills he was hoping to illuminate in his own time. He hoped that, in viewing these historical stories from a critical perspective, the contemporary issues Brecht was addressing would be illuminated to the audience.

In one of his first productions, Brecht famously put up signs that said "Glotzt nicht so romantisch!" ("Don't stare so romantically!"). His manner of stagecraft has proven both fruitful and confusing to those who try to produce his works or works in his style. His theory of theatre has heavily influenced modern theatre. Some of his innovations have become so common that they've entered the theatrical canon.

Although Brecht's work and his ideas about theatre are generally considered as belong to modernism. Modernism is a trend of thought which affirms the power of human beings to make, improve and reshape their environment, with the aid of scientific knowledge, technology and practical experimentation, there is recent thought that he is the forerunner of contemporary postmodern theatre practice. This is particularly so because he questioned and dissolved many of the accepted practices of the theatre of his time and created a political theatre. Political theatre is drama or performing art which emphasizes a political issue or issues in its theme or plot that involved the audience in understanding its meaning. Moreover, he was one of the first theatre practitioners to incorporate multimedia into the semiotics. Semiotics, or semiology, is the study of sign, both individually and grouped in sign systems of theatre.

Raymond Williams' Concept of 'Tragedy and Tradition'

William's writings in the post-war period had a kind of existentialist motif of blocked individual liberation. The essay 'Tragedy and Tradition' is a discussion on the common and the traditional interpretations of tragedy. He has used his power of perception and has come with a strong thesis on the evolution of tragedy in the essay. Raymond Williams takes the subject of tragedy as a form of art and tragedy as an experience. He retraces the tradition of tragedy as he believes in the continuity of tradition. He doesn't want to reject the present by the past or vice versa; but he thinks that concept of tradition is important to understand modern tragedy. In the previous essay, he tells the basics of tragedy in these words: we come to tragedy by many roads. ***"It is an immediate experience, a body of literature, conflict of theory, an academic problem"***

He believes that tragedy is not the death of kings; it is more personal and general. Tragedy is not simply death and suffering and it is certainly not accident. Nor is it simply a response to death and suffering. It is a particular kind of event and particular kind of response which are genuinely tragic and which the long tradition embodies. His basic thesis in this article is: ***"The meaning of tragedy, the relationship of tradition to tragedy and the kinds of experience which we mistakenly call tragic"***

Discussing the historical development of tragedy, Williams says that when the unique Greek culture changed, the chorus which was the crucial element of dramatic form was discarded and the unique meaning of tragedy was lost. He says that things change and concepts change. On the basis of our concepts we tend to seek permanent meanings in art, which, according to Williams, is a serious mistake. People think that the medieval period produced no tragedy, but 'Monk's Tale' is the example in which we see protagonist falling from prosperity to adversity. Thus again, according to him, is the result of the fixation to an absolute meaning of tragedy. He says: ***"It is not that we lack the evidence. But we fail to use it because it doesn't fit our idea of tragedy"***

Later tragedy became more secularized in the Renaissance and Neoclassical age. During Renaissance, there is a precise emphasis on the fall of famous men, as 'Rank' was still important because the fate of ruling class was the fate of the city. But with the dissolution of feudal world, the practice of tragedy made new connections. The stories were transformed. During the neoclassical period emphasis on dignity and nobility of the hero continued. But the moving force of the tragedy was now a matter of behaviour rather than a metaphysical condition. The real question of tragedy now was moral than metaphysical. The tragic error was moral, a weakness in an otherwise good man who could still be pitied. After Williams has discussed the idea of tragedy, he gives his reading of 18th and 19th century tragic theories.

Lessing was a noted German critic and dramatic poet. He said the Neoclassicism was a false classicism and the real inheritor of the Greeks was Shakespeare and the real inherit of Shakespeare was the new national bourgeois tragedy. Raymond Williams doesn't agree with Lessing. He holds that Shakespeare was not the real inheritor of the Greeks; rather he was a major instance of a new kind of tragedy. The character of Elizabethan tragedy is determined by a very complicated relationship between elements of an inherited order and elements of a new humanism. If th

development is to be fully understood, we must understand the complicated process of secularization. The only fully religious tragedy we have is Greek because Elizabethan drama was totally secular. Williams calls it a case of 'Backward assimilation' which ignores 'forward assimilation'. Secular drama was a major step in the historical development in the idea of tragedy. In fact, Elizabethan tragedy anticipates the trends of Humanism and Romanticism. Raymond William says: ***"In one sense, all drama after Renaissance is secular"***

Elizabethan drama was secular in practice but retained a Christian consciousness. Neo-classical is the first stage of substantial secularization. It insisted on relating suffering to moral error. Tragedy, in this view, shows suffering as a consequence of moral error and happiness as a consequence of virtue; meeting the demands of poetic justice. The weakness is that morality is static and moral emphasis is merely dogmatic. Further he discusses Hegel who didn't reject the moral scheme of poetic justice but he said that emphasis on morality would make a work social drama not tragedy. Tragedy, he said, was a specific kind of spiritual action. What is important for Hegel is not the suffering 'mere suffering' but its causes. Mere pity and fear are not tragic. It does not consider the external contingency beyond the control of the individual i.e. illness, loss of property, death or the like. To Hegel, conscious individuality, individual freedom and self-determination are essential for genuine tragic action. Hegel asserts that tragedy recognizes suffering as: ***"Suspended over active characters entirely as the consequence of their own act."***

The modern tragedy is wholly personal and our interest is directed not to the abstract ethical questions but to the individual and his conditions. As with Karl Marx, Renaissance tragedy has been seen as the result of the conflict between dying feudalism and the new individualism. Individual suffers, not because he is conflict with gods or fate, but with the process of the social transformation. Tragic hero, in Marxist Criticism becomes 'world historical individual', in conflict with 'world-spirit'. Williams reads Schopenhauer who believes that tragedy and sufferings are rooted in human nature and that these above and beyond particular causes. To this tragic sense of life, ethical and historical considerations are irrelevant. Misfortunes and sufferings are not exceptions but normal facts of life. So, the meaning of tragedy is resignation to the nature of life. For Nietzsche, tragedy dramatizes a tension which is resolved in higher order. According to him, the action of tragedy is not moral, not purgative, but aesthetic. Williams argues that we usually try to make a contrast between the traditional and the modern and try to compress and unify the various thinking of the past into a single tradition. About tradition Williams explains:

"It is a question, rather of realizing that a tradition is not the past; but an interpretation of the past – a selection and evaluation of ancestors rather than a neutral record and the present serves as a link between the traditional and the modern".

Tragedy in Contemporary Ideas

This part deals with the contemporary tragic theories and literature. He presents the discussion on tragedy in relation to the contemporary ideas. The writer has discussed the four things: order and accident, the destruction of the hero, the irreparable

its connections with death and the emphasis of evil. The tragic experience of every age is unique. Williams says that modern and its suffering are very complex and it would be a mistake to interpret the tragic experience of the modern man in the light of the traditional concepts. Tragic experience attracts the beliefs and tensions of a period.

It is neither possible nor desirable to have a single permanent theory of tragedy. Such an attempt would be based on the assumption that human nature is permanent and unchanging. Rejecting the universalistic character of tragedy, Williams says: ***"Tragedy is not a single or permanent fact, but a series of conventions and institutions. The varieties of tragic experience are to be interpreted by reference to the changing conventions and institutions"***

It is generally said that there is no significant meaning in 'everyday tragedies' because the event itself is not tragic; only becomes so with a through a shaped response. Williams does not agree to this view. He cannot see how it is possible to distinguish between an event and response to an event, in any absolute way. In the case of ordinary death and suffering, when we see mourning and lament, when we see people breaking under their actual loss, we have entered tragedy. Other responses are also possible such as indifference, justification, and rejoicing. But where we feel the suffering, we are within the dimensions of tragedy. But a burnt family or a mining disaster which leaves people without feeling are called Accidents. The events not seen as tragic are deep in the pattern of our own culture: war, famine, work, traffic, and politics. To feel no tragic meaning in them is a sort of our bankruptcy. Rank was the dividing line because the death of some people mattered more than others. Our middle class culture rejects this. The tragic of a citizen could be as real as the tragedy of a prince. The emerging middle class rejected rank in tragedy. The individual was not a state; but the entity in him. Williams is averse to any kind of theorizing so he declares: ***"It is necessary to break the theory if we are to value art"***

Raymond Williams rejects the argument that event itself is not tragic but becomes so through a shaped response. It is not possible to distinguish between an event and response to an event. We may not response but it doesn't mean that the event is absent. Suffering is suffering whether we are moved by it or not. In this way, an accident is tragic even if we do not apply to it the concepts of 'ethical claim' or 'human agency'. He also doesn't seem to approve the distinction between accident and tragedy. Famine, war and traffic and political events are all tragic. It is often believed that tragedy was possible in the age of faith and it was impossible now, because we have no faith. Williams, on the contrary, believes that the ages of comparatively stable belief do not produce tragedy of any intensity. Important tragedy seems to occur, neither in periods of real stability not in the periods of open and decisive conflicts. Its most common historical setting is the period preceding the complete breakdown of an important culture. Its condition is the tension between the old and the new order. In such situations, the process of dramatizing and resolving disorder and sufferings is intensified to the level which can be most readily recognized as tragedy. Order in tragedy is the result of the action. In tragedy, the creation of order is related to the fact of disorder, through which the action moves. It may be the pride of man set against the nature of things. In different cultures, disorder and order both vary, for there are parts of varying general interpretations of life. We should see this va

the major cultural importance of tragedy as form of art. We can see his argument as under: ***"I do not see how it is finally possible to distinguish between an event and response to an event" and further "behind the façade of the emphasis on order, the substance of tragedy withered"***

The most common misinterpretation of the tragedy is that hero is destroyed at the end. Our attention is so concentrated on the hero that we miss other aspects of tragedy. Reading of Hamlet without the Prince Hamlet is nothing but reading it without the State of Denmark would also be meaningless. Destruction of the hero is normally not the end of the action. In most tragedies, the story does not end with the death of the hero; it follows on. It is not the job of the artist to provide answers; but simply describe experience and raise questions. Modern tragedy is not what happens to the hero; but what happens through him. When we concentrate on the hero, we are unconsciously confining our attention to the individual. The tragic experience lies in the fact that life does not come back, that its meanings are reaffirmed and restored after so much suffering and after so important a death. Death gives importance and meaning to life. The death of an individual brings along the whole community in the form of rituals and condolence as in 'Adam Bede'; so tragedy is social and collective and not individual or personal. Death is absolute and all our living is simply relative. Death is necessary and all other human ends are socially collective. Death is universal so a dead man quickly claims universality. When we confine ourselves to the hero, we are, unconsciously, narrowing the scope of tragedy. By attaching too much attention to the death, we minimize the real tragic sense of life. Man dies alone is an interpretation; not a fact; when he dies, he affects others. He alters the lives of other characters. To insist on a single meaning is not reasonable. The tragic action is about death but it need not end in death. Moreover, what about the other characters who are destroyed? Williams says: ***"We think of tragedy as what happens to the hero but ordinary tragic action is what happens through the hero"***

There is a growing belief that in the modern age, the true nature of man is evil and evil is more potent and attractive. Tragedy shows us that evil is inescapable and irreparable; a sole reminder against the illusions of humanism and optimism. The theory of evil is significant in tragedy but not without limitations. There has always been a great emphasis on evil as a source of tragedy. But there is a tendency to generalize evil. He thinks that most of the great tragedies of the world end not with absolute evil but with evil experienced and lived through. Tragedy dramatizes evil in many particular forms: not only Christian evil but also cultural, political and ideological. Good and evil are not absolute. We are good or bad in particular ways and in particular situations; defined by pressures we at one received and can alter and can create again. Williams rejects that man is naturally evil or good. His dictum will finalize my answer because he declares: **"Man is naturally not anything and we are good or bad in particular ways in particular situations"**

Raymond Williams' views on 'Rejection of Tragedy'

Williams' essay 'Rejection of Tragedy' is a study of the rejection of tragedy in modern age with special reference to Bertolt Brechet who founded epic theatre as compared to

the emotional theory of Aristotle. He rejected the conventional idea of tragedy and made tragedy more experiential and rational.

He made people think above the situation presented in the tragedy and not within. Aristotelian drama enforced thinking from within and Brechet's theatre from without. He used distancing affects to turn people like spectators who sit in the chair, smoke and observe. He showed what the audience wanted to see. Williams has discussed six plays: The Three Penny Opera, Saint Joan of the Stockyard, Die Massnahme, The Good Woman of Sezuen, Mother Courage and Her Children and the Life of Galileo. In the last play mentioned, the hero is offered two choices one between accepting the terms or the other being destroyed. Nevertheless, the hero recants. Tragedy, says Williams, in some of its older senses is certainly rejected by this 'complex seeing'. The major achievement of Brechet is recovery of history as a dimension of tragedy. In tragedy we must see continuity and desire for change. Catastrophe should not halt the action or push the contradictions of life into background. Suffering should be avoided because suffering breaks us, Brechet thinks that our will to struggle should not die under the weight of sufferings. Brechet's own words are the precise expression on this new sense of tragedy:
"The sufferings of this man appall me, because they are unnecessary"

Brechet believes that response to suffering is crucial and weight of suffering is borne by all of us. Even the spectator becomes a participant. As a participant he can condemn or comprehend the sufferings. And for this purpose, he needs some active principle which he finds in the system. But system makes its principles for its defense not for its rejection. Our disgust is directed against morality; not upon the system. Under these circumstances morality serves the cause of the cruel system and religion and spiritualism lose their effectiveness. Morality, religion and spiritualism are used by the exploiting class as a shield against public resentment. Brechet rejected and exposed the validity of the so-called refined sentiments of goodness, love and sacrifice. There are, to him, fake sentiments, romanticized on purpose. Love, he thinks, separates us from humanity. The emphasis on love can look like growth but it is often a simple withdrawal from the human action. Love is defined and capitalized in separation from humanity. Williams declares: ***"An evil system is protected by a false morality"***

Brecht's narrative style, which he called 'Epic Theater', was directed against the illusion created by traditional theater of witnessing a slice of life. Instead, Brecht encouraged spectators to watch events on stage dispassionately and to reach their own conclusions. To prevent spectators from becoming emotionally involved with a play and identifying with its characters, Brecht used a variety of techniques. Notable among them was the alienation or estrangement effect, which was achieved through such devices as choosing (for German audiences) unfamiliar settings, interrupting the action with songs, and announcing the contents of each scene through posters.

Brecht first attracted attention in the Berlin as the author of provocative plays that challenged the tenets of traditional theatre. In 'St. Joan' a modern-day Joan of Arc advocates the use of force in the fight against exploitation of workers. In his play, 'Mother Courage and her Children' Brechet invites us to see what happens to a good person a bad society. Through Sheen Lee, he seeks to show how goodness is exploited by gods and men and how good person is alienated. The anti-

and Her Children' shows an indomitable mother figure who misguidedly seeks to profit from war but loses her children instead. Brechet's play 'Good Woman of Sezuin' presents a kind-hearted prostitute. She is good but she is alienated. Brecht called this a parable play, the kind-hearted prostitute is forced to disguise herself as her ruthless male cousin and exploit others in order to survive. According to Brechet the most alienated are the best. He collects life from all corners of the world when he says: ***"Today when human character must be understood as the totality of all social conditions, the epic theatre is the only one that can comprehend all the processes which could serve for a fully representative picture of the world."***

He rejected the idea that suffering can ennoble us. Bad societies, he thinks, needs heroes and it is bad life that needs sacrifices. He considers it a sin against life to allow oneself to be destroyed by cruelty. His mature dramas show that it is not possible to label people good or bad. Goodness and badness are the two alternate labels in the same individual. We have a split consciousness and live under this tension. Williams calls it 'Complex Seeing' which was rejected by the traditional conception of tragedy. 'Mother Courage and her Children' is a dramatization of conflicting instincts in a person who is not consciousness of these conflicts. But the case in 'The Life of Galileo' is different. Galileo is fully conscious and is free in making a choice. Galileo deals with the responsibility of the intellectual to defend his or her beliefs in the face of opposition from established authorities, in Galileo's case the Roman Catholic Church. We can admire or despite Galileo but Brechet is not asking us to do this. He is only telling us what happens to consciousness when it caught in a deadlock between individual and social morality. We are so used to tragedy and martyrdom under such circumstances that we are unable to see this experience in a radically different way – complex seeing and accept the complexity of the situation as a fact of life. Facts that are concealed and brought to light as in, 'The Life of Galileo' Barberini says: **"It is my own mask that permits me certain freedoms today. Dressed like this. I might be heard to murmur. If God did not exist, we should have to invent him."**

Williams in this case presents the example of Mother Courage and comments that the history and people come alive on the stage, leaping past the isolated and virtually static action that we have got used to in most modern theatre. The drama, in his opinion, simultaneously occurs and is seen. It is not 'take the case of this woman' but 'see and consider what happens to these people'. The point is not what we feel about her hard lively opportunism; it is what we see, in the action, of its results. By enacting a genuine consequence, in Williams' view, Brecht raises his central question to a new level, both dramatically and intellectually. The question is then no longer 'are they good people?' Nor is it, really, 'what should they have done?" It is, brilliantly, both 'what are they doing?' and 'what is this doing to them?' In Williams' opinion, to detach the work from its human purpose is, Brecht sees, to betray others and so betray life. It is not, in the end, what we think of Galileo as a man, but what we think of this result.

Raymond Williams: Order, Accident and Experience

Obviously the possibility of communication to ourselves, we, who are not immediately involved, depends on the capacity to connect the event with some more general body of

facts. This criterion, which is now quite conventional, is indeed very welcome, for it poses the issue in its most urgent form.

It is evidently possible for some people to hear of a mining disaster, a burned-out family, a broken career or a smash on the road without feeling these events as tragic in the full sense. But the starkness of such a position (which I believe to be sincerely held) is of course at once qualified by the description of such events as accidents which, however painful or regrettable, do not connect with any general meanings. The real key, to the modern separation of tragedy from 'mere suffering', is the separation of ethical control and, more critically, human agency, from our understanding of social and political life. The events which are not seen as tragic are deep in the pattern of our own culture: war, famine, work, traffic, and politics. To see no ethical content or human agency in such events, or to say that we cannot connect them with general meanings, and especially with permanent and universal meanings, is to admit a strange and particular bankruptcy, which no rhetoric of tragedy can finally hide.

But to see new relations and new laws is also to change the nature of experience, and the whole complex of attitudes and relationships dependent on it. Its most common historical setting is the period preceding the substantial breakdown and transformation of an important culture. Its condition is the real tension between old and new: between received beliefs, embodied in institutions and responses, and newly and vividly experienced contradictions and possibilities. If the received beliefs have widely or wholly collapsed, this tension is obviously absent; to that extent their real presence is necessary. But beliefs can be both active and deeply questioned, not so much by other beliefs as by insistent immediate experience. In such situations, the common process of dramatising and resolving disorder and suffering is intensified to the level which can be most readily recognized as tragedy.

The most common interpretation of tragedy is that it is an action in which the hero is destroyed. This fact is seen as irreparable. At a simple level this is so obviously true that the formula usually gets little further examination. But it is of course still an interpretation, and a partial one. We move away from actual tragedies, and not towards them, when we abstract and generalise the very specific forces that are so variously dramatized. We move away, even more decisively, from a common tragic action, when we interpret tragedy as only the dramatization and recognition of evil. You see, my business is trying to arouse human pity, There are a few things that'll move people to pity, a few, but the trouble is, when they've been used several times, they no longer work. Human beings have the horrid capacity of being able to make themselves heartless at will. So it happens, for instance, that a man who sees another man on the street corner with only a stump for an arm will be so shocked the first time that he'll give him sixpence. But the second time it'll be only a three penny bit. And if he sees him a third time, he'll hand him over cold-bloodedly to the police. It's the same with these spiritual weapons.

Tradition and the Individual Talent

T. S. Eliot (1888-1965)

Thomas Stearns Eliot, an American-born scholar, sophisticated eclectic, and poetic genius claimed by both the United States and England, is the twentieth century's touchstone author and critic. His monumental verse, written during a period of emotional turmoil and personal re-evaluation, gave voice to the post-World War I trauma that left a generation in doubt about the future of civilization. His style transcended previous literary movements with a surprising sense of humor. Both frustratingly obtuse and dazzlingly memorable, his masterworks redirect attention from the collapse of Edwardian respectability to the birth of modernism.

It seems inconceivable that so British a poet could be an American Midwesterner. The seventh son of brick maker Henry Ware Eliot and poet and biographer Charlotte Stearns, Tom Eliot was born in St. Louis, Missouri, on September 26, 1888. His distinguished intellectual family derived from immigrants from East Coker, Somersetshire, a setting that Eliot returns to in his poetry. After completing studies at Smith Academy and a year at Milton Academy, he turned his back on America and cultivated the air, grace, and mannerisms of a London dandy.

Heavily influenced by Irving Babbitt at Harvard, Eliot earned a B.A. in literature and an M.A. in philosophy and Sanskrit, all in four years. To increase his fluency in French, he studied for a year at the Sorbonne in Paris, then returned to Harvard for doctoral work in philosophy. Eliot had traveled in Germany and begun a doctoral dissertation at Merton College, Oxford, when he married Vivienne Haigh-Wood. As World War I engulfed Europe, health problems kept him out of the army.

After Eliot's father altered his will to underscore disappointment in his son's marriage, Ezra Pound influenced Eliot to remain in the British Isles and join the Bloomsbury Circle, a powerful intellectual force in England in the 1920s and 1930s. Following brief teaching stints at High Wycombe and Highgate Junior School, from 1919 to 1922, he worked for Lloyds Bank and began submitting verse of subtle brilliance to magazines. His poems departed from the modish romantics to concentrate on the mystic outlook of the metaphysics and the Christian divines.

Forever done with teaching and money handling, Eliot entered the book world for life as director of publisher Faber & Faber. He distinguished himself with a remarkable first collection, Prufrock and Other Observations (1917), followed by Ara vos prec (1920) and The Sacred Wood (1922). Immediately, he began composing two controversial works, The Waste Land (1922), winner of The Dial award, and The Hollow Men (1925), a profound verse of postwar malaise and a prime influence on the "lost generation." Among scholarly successes were Three Critical Essays (1920), Andrew Marvell (1922), and The Criterion, a literary quarterly he published and edited from 1923 to 1939. He received British citizenship in 1927 and sought baptism and confirmation in the Church

of England. In 1932, he returned temporarily to the United States as Harvard's Charles Eliot Norton poetry professor and undertook a series of lectures on U.S. campuses.

A period of Anglo-Catholic thought influenced Eliot's The Journey of the Magi (1927), Ash Wednesday (1930), and The Four Quartets (1943), a war commentary begun in 1935. He exercised versatility in a melodrama, Sweeney Agonistes (1932), and two stage works: The Rock (1934), a pageant with choruses, and Murder in the Cathedral (1935). The latter, a poetic drama commemorating a significant act of violence perpetrated by Henry II, was performed on the site of the assassination of Bishop Thomas à Becket at Canterbury Cathedral's Chapter House.

Subsequent works displaying Eliot's piety and religious philosophy include The Family Reunion (1939), The Idea of a Christian Society (1940), and The Cocktail Party (1950), the most successful of his stage dramas. A lighter work, Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats (1940), is the basis for Cats, the longest-running production in stage musical history. Less noteworthy are The Confidential Clerk (1954) and The Elder Statesman (1958), both more suited to reading than to acting. Lauded as English literature's most incisive critic, Eliot surveyed a range of interests with Homage to Dryden (1924), The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism (1933), Elizabeth Essays (1934), and On Poetry and Poets (1957).

In 1948, Eliot received the Nobel Prize for literature for his erudite treatment of modern sterility. He died in 1965; his ashes were interred in the village church of East Coker, the ancestral home of the Eliot family.

Tradition and Individual Talent : Summary

The essay Tradition and Individual Talent is an attack on certain critical views in Romanticism particularly up on the idea that a poem is primarily an expression of the personality of the poet.

Eliot argues that a great poem always asserts and that the poet must develop a sense of the pastness of the past. There is great importance of tradition in the present poem. Tradition should not be inherited but should be obtained by great labour. Past should be altered by present as much as the present is directed by past.

In fact tradition acquires a wider significance in Eliot’s writing. It involves a historical sense that is really essential for any work of art. This historical sense involves a perception, not only of the past ness of past but also its present ness. This sense compels a poet to write not only being near to his generation, but to the whole of literary tradition starting from Homer. Thus to write poetry is to write with a consciousness of the timeless and temporal and of the interrelation between the two. In any work the past should be altered by the present just as the present is directed by the past.

In this way, present affects the past as past effects the present because present poet adopts the tradition of past with hard labour. A good writer or poet identifies his position in present with the comparison to past writers. Therefore, the combination of temporal and timeless is, as whole tradition.

The meaning of the poem is not possible in isolation. Not poet, no any artist has his complete meaning unless we link him/ her to a chain of all poets. Impotence and value of any poet can't be judged in isolation. So there must be the tradition to compare are with another.

To create a good poem, one should surrender the self. This self-sacrifice of personality gives birth to a good poem. One should negate his mind. In doing so one loses his individuality and his personality. All the personal emotions, feelings and experience should be sacrificed. There should not be the personal image of poet in his poetry. Poetry should be impersonal. But it does not mean that the poet should not write his personal feelings, but there personal feelings should be converted in to art's feelings. Therefore, we as a critic should not look for personality of poet in his poem because the text is objective. The theory that the poet should surrender his personality is depersonalization. The poet's personal feelings and emotions should be depersonalized. He must be an impersonal and objective like a scientist.

The progress of the artist is a continual self-sacrifice a continual extinction of personality is the individual talent. To make the concept of depersonalization clear, Eliot brings analogy of creating sulphuric acid.

Sulpher dioxide (Feeling) + oxygen (Emotion) + platinum (Mind of Poet) = Sulphurous Acid (Poem) (No trace of Poet's Personality)

As the platinum itself remains unaffected, the mind of the poet remains unaffected also. Poet's personality is just an agent or medium to active the relation between emotion and feelings. So, the poet is never a creator, but like catalyst.

Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion but an escape from emotion. Eliot point is more like what Keats uses his term 'negative capability'.

Eliot stands against Romantic poets who think that poetry is spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings and personal emotions. Romantic writer says poetry is expression of personality and inspiration. But Eliot says poetry is not so but an escape from personality. Poetry is organization rather than inspiration. So, the critic should be objective while treating the poems. The belief that there is a poet speaking in a poem should be checked.

Tradition and individual talent : Analysis

Eliot's essays actually map a highly personal set of preoccupations, responses and ideas about specific authors and works of art, as well as formulate more general theories on the connections between poetry, culture and society. Perhaps his best-known essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" was first published in 1919 and soon after included in The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism (1920). Eliot attempts to do two things in this essay: he first redefines "tradition" by emphasizing the importance of history to writing and understanding poetry, and he then argues that poetry should be essentially "impersonal," that is separate and distinct from the personality of its writer. Eliot's idea of tradition is complex and unusual, involving something he descr

historical sense" which is a perception of "the pastness of the past" but also of its "presence." For Eliot, past works of art form an order or "tradition"; however, that order is always being altered by a new work which modifies the "tradition" to make room for itself. This view, in which "the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past," requires that a poet be familiar with almost all literary history - not just the immediate past but the distant past and not just the literature of his or her own country but the whole "mind of Europe."

Eliot's second point is one of his most famous and contentious. A poet, Eliot maintains, must "self-sacrifice" to this special awareness of the past; once this awareness is achieved, it will erase any trace of personality from the poetry because the poet has become a mere medium for expression. Using the analogy of a chemical reaction, Eliot explains that a "mature" poet's mind works by being a passive "receptacle" of images, phrases and feelings which are combined, under immense concentration, into a new "art emotion." For Eliot, true art has nothing to do with the personal life of the artist but is merely the result of a greater ability to synthesize and combine, an ability which comes from deep study and comprehensive knowledge. Though Eliot's belief that "Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality" sprang from what he viewed as the excesses of Romanticism, many scholars have noted how continuous Eliot's thought - and the whole of Modernism - is with that of the Romantics'; his "impersonal poet" even has links with John Keats, who proposed a similar figure in "the chameleon poet." But Eliot's belief that critical study should be "diverted" from the poet to the poetry shaped the study of poetry for half a century, and while "Tradition and the Individual Talent" has had many detractors, especially those who question Eliot's insistence on canonical works as standards of greatness, it is difficult to overemphasize the essay's influence. It has shaped generations of poets, critics and theorists and is a key text in modern literary criticism.

According to Eliot, "Every nation, every race, has not only its own creative, but its own critical turn of mind..." (page 47). And herein lies the impossible task of defining tradition. All we do is based upon this creative or critical turn of mind, based upon our religions or our morals or our art; and this has been true throughout all of history. And this is - on one side - tradition. But when a nation rises and falls, when a kingdom expands or a city dies in a cloud of flame, tradition is lost. I would add to Eliot's words that every city, every family, every individual has his or her own tradition. Habits, ideas, though process - these are all part of this "turn of mind" that Eliot speaks of in his essay. Thought process is tradition; although Eliot says, "Yet if the only form of tradition...consisted in following the ways of the immediate generation before us...'tradition' should be positively discouraged," still my claim is this: tradition is in one's own critical and creative turn of mind, within one's self - the masses have no place in this tradition, no place in its creation, its encouragement, or its defining. And so this word, as many others, goes forever undefined; it eludes the human mind as something invisible and impalpable eludes our fingers, as a scent eludes our grasping hands. This is tradition. And beyond this, we can only speculate.

"Criticism is an inevitable as breathing, and that we should be none the worse for articulating what passes in our minds when we read a book and feel and emotion about it." (T. S. Eliot Tradition and individual talent, 1920, page 48)

I really never thought about how much we criticize authors and poets. When we read a book we compare it to another author of the same genre or we compare it to another book by that same author. In almost every single one of Literature classes in my secondary school, we compared one writer to another one. Whenever you read a book or a poem there is some kind of criticism going on inside your head. When we criticize a poet, author, or some other writer we always look at their history, we have to find out every part of their background because that may explain why they wrote this or that. I have to ask, why do we do this? I'm sure there are times where the author/poet/whoever is not writing about their life and general experiences but something they are interested in. It is a tradition in schools, that we have to learn not only the poem or a novel, but also we have to know everything about the writer. In my opinion is that, when we getting older and older we realize that we do not need to look after the writer's life to understand his or her work. Without knowing these facts we can enjoy the book and understand it.

Eliot’s Depersonalization theory

In "Tradition and Individual Talent", Eliot opposes the Romantic conception by advancing his theory of impersonality in art and opines that the artistic process is a process of depersonalization and that the artist will surrender himself totally to the creative work. Eliot particularly objected to the great Romantics as well as Victorians who exaggerated the need to express human personality and subjective feeling and he says, "The progress of aim artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality."

Eliot holds that the poet and the poem are two separate things and "that the feelings or the emotion, or vision, resulting from the poem is something different from the feeling or emotion or vision in the mind of the poet." Hence, he elucidates his theory of impersonality by examining, first, the relation of the poet to the part and secondly, the relation of the poem to its author. Eliot realizes that the past exists in the present. "No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His signification, his appreciation, is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You can value him alone. You must set him for contrast and comparison among the deads."

Eliot points out the relation of the poem to its author; and says that the poem has no relation to the poet. There is detached or alienation between the poet and his poem. The difference between the mind of a nature poet and that of an immature one is that the mind of a nature poet is "a more finely perfected medium in which special or varied feelings are at liberty to enter into new combinations". According to Eliot, the art emotion is different from personal emotion. A successful artist is he, who can generalize emotion in the reader's one while he himself seemed to be unaffected by any emotion. In the other hand he should be depersonalized in experience he describes in the poem.

Eliot brings the analogy of chemical reaction to explain the process of depersonalization. In this respect he has drawn a scientific analogy. He tells that a poet shoul

sold of platinum which makes sulphurus acid. He says, "When the two gases, previously mentioned (oxygen and Sulpher dioxide) are mixed in the presence of a filament of Platinum. They form Sulphurous acid. The combination takes place only he the Platinum is present; nevertheless, the newly formed acid contains no trace of Platinum, and the Platinum itself is apparently unaffected has remained inert, neutral, and unchanged. The mind of the poet is the shred of Platinum. It may partly or exclusively operate upon the experience of the man himself; but, the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in his will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates, the one perfectly will be the mind digest and transmute the passions which are its material."

Eliot next compares the poet's mind to a receptacle in which are stored numberless feelings, emotion, images, phases etc. , which remain there in an unorganized and chaotic form till, "all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together." Thus poetry is organization rather than inspiration. And the greatness of a poem does not depend upon the greatness or the intensity of the emotions, but upon the intensity of the process of poetic composition. The more intense the poetic process, the greater the poem.

He strongly believes that "the differences between art and the event are always absolute. Eliot illustrate his view by a few examples among which one is of Keats' One to a Nightingale, which contains a number of feelings which have nothing particular to do with the nightingale, but which the nightingale ,partly perhaps because it's attractive name, and partly because of its reputation served to bring together. He illustrates his theory by a few examples. The artistic emotion evoked by Dante in his treatment of the episode of Paolo and Francesca is different from the actual emotion in the situation. The artistic emotion may approximate to the actual emotion as in Agamemnon the artistic emotion approximates to the emotion of an actual spectator; in Othello to the emotion of the protagonist himself.

Eliot believes that the main concern of the poet is not the expression of personality. He says, “the poet has, not a personality to express but a particular medium which is only a medium and a personality, in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways, impressions and experiences which are important for the may take no place in the poetry, and those which become important in the poetry may play quite a negligible part in the man, the personality”. Again, there is no need for poet to try to express new human emotions in poetry. The business of the poet. Eliot says, is not to find new emotions, but use of the ordinary ones and, in working them up in poetry, to express feelings which are not in actual emotions at all". Eliot's final definition of poetry is: **"poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion: it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality.”**

It is not the expression of personality but an escape from personality. He emphasizes the same theory of impersonality in art. The emotion of art is impersonal. It has its life in the poem and not in the history of poets. So, honest criticism and sensitive appreciation is directed not upon the poet but upon the poetry. The poet's biography is not to be studied the structure of the poem and its evocative powers are important.

Eliot's theory of depersonalization has been criticized by critics like Ransom and Yvor Winters. Ransom regards Eliot's theory as "very neatly a doctrine of poetic automation".

To Fei Pai Lu, Eliot's theory of depersonalization is completely vague. He says, "in the name of impersonality", Eliot by turns commends and censures poets and artist.

From what we have said, above it follows that there is no connection between the poet's personality and the poem. The feelings of the poetry need not necessarily his own.

Concept of Tradition and Historical Sense

In his essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent" Eliot spreads his concept of tradition, which reflects his reaction against romantic subjectivism and emotionalism. He also signifies the importance of the tradition. He opines that tradition gives the reader something new, something arresting, something intellectual and something vital for literary conception.

Tradition, according to Eliot, is that part of living culture inherited from the past and functioning in the formation of the present. Eliot maintains that tradition is bound up with historical sense, which is a perception that the past is not something lost and invalid.

According to Eliot tradition is a living culture which is inherited from the past and also has an important function in forming (shaping) the present. To Eliot tradition is bound up with historical sense of a poet or writer. Historical sense is a perception that past is not something that is lost or invalid. Rather it has a function in the present.

It exits with the present. It exerts its influence in our ideas, thoughts and consciousness. This is historical sense. It is an awareness not only of the pastness of the past but the presence of the past. On this sense the past is our contemporary as the present is.

Eliot's view of tradition is not linear but spatial. Eliot does not believe that the past is followed by the presence and succession of a line. On the contrary, the past and the present live side by side in the space. Thus it is spatial.

Then Eliot holds that not only the past influences the present but the present, too, influences the past. To prove this idea, he conceives of all literature as a total, indivisible order. All existing literary works belong to an order like the member of a family. Any new work of literature is like the arrival of a member or a new relative or a new acquaintance. Its arrival and presence brings about a readjustment of the previous relationship of the old members. A new work takes its place in the order. Its arrival and inclusion modifies the order and relationship among all works. The order is then modified. A new work of art influences all the existing- literary work, as a new relative influences the old members of a family. It is this sense that the present modifies the past as the past modifies the present. The past is modified by the present also in the sense that we can look at the past literature always through ever renewing perceptive of the present.

A new work of art cannot be evaluated in isolation without reference to past literature and tradition. Evaluation is always comparative and relative. It calls for a comparison with the past that is with tradition. The value of a work depends on how well it is adjusted into the order of existing literary works. No poet, no artist of any art has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone. You must set him for contrast and comparison among the dead.

A work of art has two dimensions- it is at once personal and universal. It is an individual composition, but at the same time, its inclusion into tradition determines its worth and universal appeal. A writer must be aware that he belongs to a larger tradition and there is always an impact of tradition on him. Individual is an element formed by and forming the culture to which he belongs. He should surrender his personality to something larger and more significant.

In his conscious cultivation of historical sense, a writer reduces the magnification of personal self, which leads to depersonalization and impersonal act.

When a writer is aware the historical sense, it does not mean that he is influenced by the past or his own self. Rather the writer should minimize the importance of his personal self, which will lead him to depersonalization and impersonal act.

Tradition is a living stream. It is not a lump or dead mass. But the main current does not always flow through the most noted authoress.

Eliot regrets that tradition in English world of letters is used in prerogative sense. This is one reason of the undeveloped critical sense of the English nation. They are too individualistic on intellectual habits.

Eliot criticizes the English intellectuals. According to Eliot to the English intellectual tradition is something that should be avoided. They give much more importance on individualism and are critical about the historical sense or tradition.

Like Arnold, Eliot views tradition as something living. For both the word “tradition” implies growth. Eliot recalls Edmund Burke what Burke did for political thought, by glorifying the idea of inheritance, Eliot has done for English literary criticism. Burke, famous English politician, gave emphasis on the experience of the past in politics. In the same Eliot also gives emphasis on the past regarding English criticism.

Tradition does not mean uncritical imitation of the past. Nor does it mean only erudition. A writer draws on only the necessary knowledge of tradition. He must use his freedom according to his needs. He cannot be completely detached .Often the most original moments of a work of art echo the mind of earlier writers. Though it sounds paradoxical it is true. It is paradoxical but true that even the most original writings sometimes reflect the thinking of the past or earlier writers. So, there is nothing which is absolutely original.

A partial or complete break with the literary past is a danger. An awareness of what has gone before is necessary to know what is there to be done in the present or future. A balance between the control of tradition and the freedom of an individual is essential to art.

Eliot said elsewhere that by losing tradition we lose our held on the present. Hence, a writer should be aware of the importance of tradition.

Idea of Individual Talent in relation to tradition

Thomas Stearns Eliot, being a classicist, shows, both in his literary criticism and creation, an anti-romantic tendency against individualism and subjectivism. He regards poetry as the expression of the personality of the poet and gave emphasis on inspiration and intuition . Eliot's idea is also different from the neo-classicists who believed that the writer must follow the rules of the ancients and the poetry must be didactic. According to Eliot, an individual talent cannot be expressed without some connection with tradition. Eliot's 'Tradition and Individual Talent' holds his idea of individual talent and tradition. At first, Eliot brings out the general 'tendency to insist' on finding out the individual talent of a poet: "We dwell with satisfaction upon the poet's difference from his predecessors, especially his immediate predecessors: we endeavour to find something that can be isolated in order to be enjoyed."

But Eliot's view is that if we 'without prejudice,' approach to a poet's work of not only "the impressionable period of full maturity", we will find that the individual talent is influenced by tradition. He assured that "Not only the best , but the most individual parts of his work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously ."

However, he also tells that this 'tradition' does not mean "following the ways of the immediate generation before us in a blind or timid adherence to its success." "It cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour."

Tradition involves the 'historical sense' which again involves 'a perception not only of the pastness of the past, but of it's presence. That is, a creative artist, though he lives in a particular age or social environment, does not work merely with his own generation in view, but acts with a conviction in general. However, Eliot accepts that "novelty is better than repetition".

As his 'principle of aesthetic,' Eliot says that no individual talent has his complete 'meaning' or 'value' alone. "His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists", in contrast and comparison.

According to Eliot, there is a 'conformity' between the new works of an individual talent and the old works of tradition. The new work of art modifies the 'ideal order' of the existing works which was a complete order before the arrival of the new one. "The past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the

the relation, proportion, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted after each of the work of art of an individual talent.

There must be a standard to judge an individual talent. Eliot says that an individual talent "must inevitably be judged by the standards of the past," "not amputated by them". This judgment is not for declaring any of them good or bad, but with this, they are measured by each other. However, "we do not quite say that the new is more valuable because it fits in: but it's fitting in is a test of its value-a-in".

To speak farther about the duty of the individual talent in connection with his relation with the past, Eliot says, **"he can neither take the past as a lump, an indiscriminate bolus, nor can he from himself wholly on one or two private admirations, nor can he form himself wholly upon one preferred period".**

In order to know the tradition, he must judge critically what are the main trends and what are not. He must also be conscious of the fact that "art never improves, but that the material of art is never quite the same". He must be aware of the changing mind which is a development which abandons nothing 'enroute'. **["But the difference between the present and the past is that the conscious present is an awareness of the past in a way and to an extent which the past's awareness itself cannot show."]**

The conscious or (unconscious?) cultivation of the sense of the past or tradition which sharpens the sensibility is very important for an individual talent in the process of his poetic creation. Eliot says,

"What is to be insisted upon is that the poet must develop or procure the consciousness of the past and that he should continue to develop this consciousness throughout his career."

The progress of an artist or individual talent is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality. That is, an individual talent must surrender himself totally to the creative work. Eliot has explained his idea of the 'depersonalization' with a suggestive scientific analogy of introducing finely filiated platinum into oxygen and sulphur dioxide. When these two gases are mixed in the presence of a filament of platinum, they form sulphurous acid. This combination happens only when the platinum is present. Yet there is found no trace of platinum in the newly formed acid. Eliot here compares the mind of the poet to the shred of platinum which, being a catalyst, remains unaffected, inert, neutral and unchanged even after sacrificing itself to the gases. Eliot says that the mind of the poet or individual talent "may partly or exclusively operate upon the experience of the man himself." But the more perfect the artist is the more completely separate the mind will be. Consequently, "the more perfectly will the mind digest and transmute the passions which are its material".

Eliot opposes Wordsworth's theory, 'emotion recollected in tranquillity'. He says, **"The business of the poet is not to find new emotions, but to use the ordinary ones [and, in working them up into poetry, to express feel**

actual emotion at all. And emotion which he has never experienced will serve his turn as well as those familiar to him."]

Eliot's belief is that the main concern of the poet is not the expression of personality. He says that "the poet has, not a 'personality' to express, but a particular medium, which is only a medium and not a personality, in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways."

From the above discussion, we see that in Eliot's theory of individual talent, tradition has a great part. Tradition helps the individual talent produce good poetry. Both of them are closely inter-related and inter-dependent. Eliot's idea of tradition and individual talent cannot be without criticism as well. Sean Lucy admits the necessity of tradition for individual talent, but he opines that a conscious cultivation of the sense of tradition is not necessary for the individual writer in all epochs. He thinks that Eliot might have been impelled to adopt such an attitude by the 'danger of literary anarchy' which was present in the extreme individualism of the 'spirit of revolt' which infected so much of European art and thought during the 1920s and part of 1930s.

Concept of comparison and contras with the dead

By tradition Eliot means all those habitual actions, habits and customs, from the most significant religious rites to our conventional ways of greeting a stranger, which represent the bloodkinship of the same people living in the same place. Tradition is a need and importance of an outside authority of the poet.

Allegiance to 'inner voice' simply means doing what one likes. The poet must allow allegiance to some other authority outside himself. He must learn and practice inner self-control. He must revise and re-revise his artistic work. Mature art is only possible in this way. His concept of tradition is enlightened and dynamic. Tradition is always growing. In Tradition and Individual Talent, Eliot regards the whole of European literature from Homer down to his own day as forming a single literary tradition. Tradition is dead, it lives in the present. When a great work of art is produced, the tradition is enhanced or modified to some extent. A great artist must have a sense of tradition and he must pass this tradition to the next generations; otherwise he will be isolated. Therefore, Eliot rightly says that: **"You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead"**

Eliot's conception of tradition is an enlightened and dynamic one. An idea of tradition is essential for it makes us realise our kinship with "the same people living in the same place". But we must remember that the conditions of life which produced some particular tradition have changed and so the tradition, too, must change. Tradition is not something immovable, it is something constantly growing and becoming different from what it previously was. We must learn to distinguish between the essential and the unessential, the good and the bad, in a particular tradition and only the good and the essential must be followed and revived. While we should justly be proud of our own tradition this should not make us look down on other peoples who are not so lucky in this respect. In short, tradition must be used intelligently, changes in the conditions of life must be taken into consideration, and only the best should be pre

fostered. Eliot's tradition continues and lives in the present. When a really great work of art is produced, this tradition is modified and a great work of art can be possible only when the artist has a sense of this literary tradition. Great artists modify the existing tradition and pass it on to the future. A sense of tradition is essential for the creation of good poetry, but individual talent, too, is of paramount importance. Indeed, the two, tradition and individual talent, are not opposite concepts. Eliot reconciles the two, and shows that both have an essential role to play in the process of poetic creation. Individual talent is needed to acquire the sense of tradition, and this individual talent also modifies the tradition so acquired. So Eliot propounds: **"The poet must develop the consciousness of the past and that he should continue to develop this consciousness throughout his career"**

But the question is how should the individual writer have this idea of tradition and how can he invest his individual talent in it? The artist must have the historical sense so that his individual talent may be differentiated. This historical sense is the sense of the timeless and temporal, as well as of the timeless and temporal together. Tradition represents the accumulated wisdom and experience of ages, and so its knowledge is essential for really great and noble achievements. According to this view, tradition is not anything fixed and static, it is constantly changing, growing and becoming different from what it is, and it is the individual talent which so modifies it. A writer in the present must seek guidance from the past, he must confirm to the literary tradition. The past directs the presents and is itself modified and altered by the present. The work of a poet in the present is to be compared and contrasted with works of the past, and judged by the standards of the past. But this judgment does not mean determining good or bad. The comparison is to be made for knowing the facts, all the facts, about the new work of art. The comparison is made for the purposes of analysis, and for forming a better understanding of the new. It is in this way alone that we can form an idea of what is really individual and new. It is by comparison alone that we can sift the tradition from the individual elements in a given work of art. In this way, does Eliot reconcile the concept of tradition with individual talent and stresses their respective roles in the process of poetic creation. What Eliot means in gist is that: **"Tradition is a matter of much wider significance. It cannot be inherited, and it you want it you must obtain it by great labour"**

According to Eliot, the impersonal elements, i.e. the 'tradition', the accumulated knowledge and wisdom of the past, which is acquired by the poet to produce a great work of art. It is the duty of every poet to acquire, to the best of his ability, this knowledge of the past, and he must continue to acquire this consciousness throughout his career. Such awareness of tradition, sharpens poetic creation. Thus the individual talent of the artist is set against this tradition, observed, and evaluated. In this way, his art is better perceived, understood, valued and appreciated. Eliot further emphasies that point in the following lines: **"No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. Hi significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists"**

Thus, the idea of tradition for individual talent is unavoidable for a great work of art. The poet must also realize that art never improves, though its material is never the same. The mind of Europe may change, but this change does not me

Shakespeare and Homer have grown outdated and lost their significance. The great works of art never lose their significance, for there is no qualitative improvement in art. There may be refinement, there may be development, but from the point of view of the artist there is no improvement. For example, it will not be correct to say that the art of Shakespeare is better and higher than that of Eliot. Their works are of different kinds, for the material on which they worked was different. His view of tradition requires, as most criticize him, a ridiculous amount of erudition. It will be pointed out that there have been great poets who were not learned, and further that too much learning kills sensibility. However, knowledge does not merely mean bookish knowledge. It is wisdom which can also be learnt from the school of life as Shakespeare, Dickens and many others have done.

T.S. Eliot as a critic

Eliot is one of the greatest literary critics of England from the point of view of the bulk and quality of his critical writings. His five hundred and odd essays occasionally published as reviews and articles had a far-reaching influence on literary criticism in the country. His criticism was revolutionary which inverted the critical tradition of the whole English speaking work. John Hayward says: **"I cannot think of a critic who has been more widely read and discussed in his own life-time; and not only in English, but in almost every language, except Russian."**

As a critic Eliot has his faults. At times he assumes a hanging-judge attitude and his statements savour of a verdict. Often his criticism is marred by personal and religious prejudices blocking an honest and impartial estimate. Moreover, he does not judge all by the same standards. There is didacticism in his later essays and with the passing of time his critical faculties were increasingly exercised on social problems. Critics have also found fault with his style as too full of doubts, reservations and qualifications.

Still, such faults do not detract Eliot's greatness as a critic. His criticism has revolutionized the great writers of the past three centuries. His recognition of the greatness of the Metaphysical poets of the 17th century resulted in the Metaphysical revival of the 20th century. The credit for the renewal of interest in the Jacobean dramatists goes to Eliot. He has restored Dryden and other Augustan poets to their due place. His essay on Dante aroused curiosity for the latter middle ages. The novelty of his statements, hidden in sharp phrases, startles and arrests attention. According to Eliot, the end of criticism is to bring readjustment between the old and the new. He says: **"From time to time it is desirable, that some critic shall appear to review the past of our literature, and set the poets and the poems in a new order."**

Such critics are rare, for they must possess, besides ability for judgment, powerful liberty of mind to identify and interpret its own values and category of admiration for their generation. John Hayward says: **"Matthew Arnold was such a critic as were Coleridge and Johnson and Dryden before him; and such, in our own day, is Eliot himself."**

Eliot's criticism offers both reassessment and reaction to earlier writers. He called himself "a classicist in literature". His vital contribution is the reacti

romanticism and humanism which brought a classical revival in art and criticism. He rejected the romantic view of the individual's perfectibility, stressed the doctrine of the original sin and exposed the futility of the romantic faith in the "Inner Voice". Instead of following his 'inner voice', a critic must follow objective standards and must conform to tradition. A sense of tradition, respect for order and authority is central to Eliot's classicism. He sought to correct the excesses of "the abstract and intellectual" school of criticism represented by Arnold. He sought to raise criticism to the level of science. In his objectivity and logical attitude, Eliot most closely resembles Aristotle. A. G. George says: **"Eliot's theory of the impersonality of poetry is the greatest theory on the nature of the process after Wordsworth's romantic conception of poetry."**

Poetry was an expression of the emotions and personality for romantics. Wordsworth said that poetry was an overflow of powerful emotions and its origin is in "Emotions recollected in tranquillity". Eliot rejects this view and says that poetry is not an expression of emotion and personality but an escape from them. The poet is only a catalytic agent that fuses varied emotions into new wholes. He distinguishes between the emotions of the poet and the artistic emotion, and points out that the function of criticism is to turn attention from the poet to his poetry.

Eliot's views on the nature of poetic process are equally revolutionary. According to him, poetry is not inspiration, it is organization. The poet's mind is like a vessel in which are stored numerous feelings, emotions and experiences. The poetic process fuses these distinct experiences and emotions into new wholes. In "The Metaphysical Poets", he writes: **"When a poet's mind is perfectly equipped for its work, it is constantly amalgamating disparate experiences; the ordinary man's experience is chaotic, irregular, and fragmentary".**

Perfect poetry results when instead of 'dissociation of sensibility' there is 'unification of sensibility'. The emotional and the rational, the creative and the critical, faculties must work in harmony to produce great work of art. Critics stressed that the aim of poetry is to give pleasure or to teach morally. However, for Eliot the greatness of a poem is tested by the order and unity it imposes on the chaotic and disparate experiences of the poet. Wimsatt and Brooks are right in saying: **"Hardly since the 17th century had critical writing in English so resolutely transposed poetic theory from the axis of pleasure versus pain to that of unity versus multiplicity."**

Eliot devised numerous critical concepts that gained wide currency and has a broad influence on criticism. 'Objective co-relative', 'Dissociation of sensibility', 'Unification of sensibility' are few of Eliot clichés hotly debated by critics. His dynamic theory of tradition, of impersonality of poetry, his assertion on 'a highly developed sense of fact' tended to impart to literary criticism catholicity and rationalism.

To conclude, Eliot's influence as a critic has been wide, constant, fruitful and inspiring. He has corrected and educated the taste of his readers and brought about a rethinking regarding the function of poetry and the nature of the poet process. He gave a new direction and new tools of criticism. It is in the re-consideration and revival of English poetry of the past. George Watson writes:

"Eliot made English criticism look different, but not in a simple sense. He offered it a new range of rhetorical possibilities, confirmed it in its increasing contempt for historical processes, and yet reshaped its notion of period by a handful of brilliant institutions."

His comments on the nature of Poetic Drama and the relation between poetry and drama have done much to bring about a revival of Poetic Drama in the modern age. Even if he had written no poetry, he would have made his mark as a distinguished and subtle critic.

T.S Eliot : The Metaphysical Poets

The Essay: Its Significance

Eliot's essay on The Metaphysical Poets was first published as a review of J.C. Grierson's edition of Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the 17th Century. But the essay is much more than a mere review. It is a critical document of much value and significance. It is an important landmark in the history of English literary criticism, it has brought about a revaluation and reassessment of Donne and other Metaphysical poets, and has caused a revival of interest in these poets who had been neglected for a considerable time. It is in this essay that Eliot has used, for the first time, the phrases Dissociation of Sensibility and Unification of Sensibility, phrases which have acquired worldwide currency and which, ever since, have had a far reaching impact on literary criticism.

Eliot's Purpose

Eliot begins the essay by praising Grierson's scholarly edition of metaphysical lyrics and poems of the 17th century. This book is an admirable piece of criticism in itself, as well as a provocation to criticism. It is a great irritant to thought. It sets Eliot himself thinking, and he proposes to consider the significance of the label 'Metaphysical' which has generally been used as a term of abuse to indicate the quaint tastes of these poets, and also to examine whether the so-called 'metaphysical' poets constituted a school or movement in themselves, or were they merely a continuation of some older tradition.

Difficulties in the Way

Eliot is quite conscious of the difficulties of the task he has undertaken. First, it is difficult to define the term, "metaphysical" and explain the characteristics which differentiate metaphysical poetry from other kinds of poetry. Secondly, it is difficult to decide which poets practised it and which did not, and which of their verses have such characteristics. In the beginning of the 17th century, there are noticeable three different schools of poetry: First, there is Donne, a late Elizabethan, and Marvell and Bishop King who are very close to him. Secondly, there is Ben Jonson and his, courtly school, of poetry, a kind of poetry which expired in the next century in the verses of Prior. Thirdly, there is the religious poetry of Herbert, Vaughan and Crashaw. It is difficult to find characteristics which are common to all those poets, and which are dominant enough to mark out these poets as constituting a separate, distinct group.

Metaphysical Poetry: Its Characteristics

Eliot then proceeds to examine one by one with suitable illustrations the characteristics which are generally considered 'metaphysical'. First, there is the elaboration of a simile to the farthest possible extent to be met with frequently in the poetry of Donne and Cowley. The most striking instance of such elaboration is the famous conceit of a pair of compasses in Donne's A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning. Secondly, there is the device of the development of an image by rapid association of thought requiring considerable agility on the part of the reader. For example, in Donne's A Valediction: of Weeping, we got three separate images: the picture of the geographer's globe, the tears of the poet's beloved, and the picture of the Great Flood. Though these three pictures are entirely separate, the poet has unified them by stressing the likeness between his lady's tears and the globe, and further that they are capable of overflowing the earth. Thirdly, on other occasions Donne produces his effects by sudden contrasts. Thus in the line, "A bracelet of bright hair about the bone", the most powerful effect is produced by sudden contrast of the associations of 'bright hair' and 'bone'. But such telescoping of images and contrast of associations are not a characteristic of the poetry of Donne alone. It also characterises Elizabethan dramatists like Shakespeare, Webster, Tourneur and Middleton. This suggests that Donne, Cowley and others belong to the Elizabethan tradition and not to any new school. The dominant characteristics of Donne's poetry are also the characteristics of the great Elizabethans.

Dr. Johnson's Definition

Eliot then takes up Dr. Johnson's famous definition of metaphysical poetry, in which the great doctor has tried to define this poetry by its faults. Dr. Johnson in his Life of Cowley points out that in Metaphysical poetry "the most heterogeneous ideas are yoked violence together". They bringing together of heterogeneous ideas and compelling them into unity by the operation of the poet's mind is universal in poetry. Countless instances of such fusion of opposite and dissimilar concepts can be cited at random from all poets. Such unity is present even in the poetry of Johnson himself. The force of Dr. Johnson's remark lies in the fact that in his view the Metaphysical poetry could only Yoke by violence dissimilar ideas. They could unite them or fuse them into a single whole. But this is not a fact. A number of poets of this school have eminently succeeded in uniting heterogeneous ideas. Eliot quotes from Herbert Cowley, Bishop King and other poets in support of his contention. Therefore, he concludes that Metaphysical poetry cannot be differentiated from other poetry by Dr. Johnson's definition. The fault which the learned doctor points out is not there, and the unity of heterogeneous ideas is common to all poetry.

The Special Virtue of the Metaphysicals

As a matter of fact, it is futile to try to define metaphysical poetry by its faults. Even such a shrewd and sensitive critic as Dr. Johnson failed to do so. Eliot, therefore, purposes to use the opposite method, the positive approach, and point out the characteristic virtue of this school of poetry. He would show that Donne and the other poets of the 17th century, "were the direct and normal development of the precedent age", and that their characteristic virtue was something valu

disappeared. Dr. Johnson has rightly pointed out that these poets were 'analytic'; they were given too much analysis and direction of particular emotional situations. But he has failed to see that they could also unite into new wholes the concepts they had analysed. Eliot would show that their special virtue was the fusion of heterogeneous material into a new unity after its dissociation. In other words, he would show that metaphysical poetry is distinguished from other poetry by unification of sensibility, and that subsequently, dissociation of sensibility, overtook English poetry, and this was unfortunate.

Unification of Sensibility

The great Elizabethans and early Jacobians had a developed unified sensibility which is expressed in their poetry. By 'sensibility' Eliot does not merely mean feeling or the capacity to receive sense impressions. He means much more than that. By 'sensibility' he means a synthetic faculty which can amalgamate and unite thought and feeling, which can fuse into a single whole the varied and disparate, often opposite and contradictory experiences. The Elizabethans had such a sensibility. They were widely read, they thought on what they read, and their thinking and learning modified their mode of feeling. Thus in the poetry of Chapman and others there is, "a sensuous apprehension of thought"—a unification of thought and feeling—and a recreation of thought into feeling. Their reading and thinking alters theirs feeling, this modified feeling is expressed in their poetry, and hence their unification or synthesis of thought and feeling. Eliot gives concrete illustrations to show that such unification of sensibility, such fusion of thought and feeling, is to be found in the poetry of Donne as well as in much of modern poetry, but it is lacking in the poetry of Tennyson.

Dissociation of Sensibility

The fact is that after Donne and Herbert a change came over the mind of England. The poets lost the capacity of uniting thought and feeling. The 'unification of sensibility' was lost, and 'dissociation of sensibility' set in. After that the poets can either think or they can feel; there are either intellectual poets who can only think, or there are poets, who can only feel. The poets of the 18th century were intellectuals, they thought but did not feel; the romantics of the 19th century felt but did not think. Tennyson and Browning can merely reflect or ruminate, i.e. mediate poetically on their experience, but cannot express it poetically. Eliot expresses this view in words which have become famous, which are frequently quoted, and which clearly bring out his capacity for 'trenchant phasing', his originality and critical insight. He writes: "Tennyson and Browning are poets and they think; but they do not fell their thought as immediately as the odour of a rose. A thought to Donne was an experience; it modified his sensibility. When a poet's mind is perfectly equipped for its work, it is constantly amalgamating disparate experience; the ordinary man's experience is chaotic, irregular, fragmentary. The latter falls in love, or reads Spinoza and these two experiences have nothing to do with each other, or with the noise of the typewriter or the smell of cooking, in the mind of the poet these experiences are always forming new wholes."

Metaphysical Sensibility

In other words, the metaphysical poets had a mechanism of sensibility—a unified sensibility—which enabled them to assimilate and fuse into new wholes most disparate and heterogeneous experiences. They could feel their thoughts as intensely as the odour of a rose, that is to say they could express their thoughts through sensuous imagery. In his poems, Donne express his thoughts and ideas by embodying them in sensuous imagery and it is mainly through the imagery that the unification of sensibility finds its appropriate expression. The operation of the unified sensibility in Donne may be illustrated by the following lines from Dante's Paradise: Within its depths I saw ingathered, bound by love in one mass, the scattered leaves of the universe: substance and accidents and their relations, as though together fused, so that what I speak of is in one simple flame. In the above lines the spiritual experience, which is so very different from the ordinary experience, has been expressed by Dante concretely by a masterly use of the imagery of light. Dante has given expression to his spiritual experience in sensuous terms, in a visual image, the simple flame. This is also frequently the method of Donne.

Milton and Dryden: Their Influence

In this respect, the poets of the 17th century were the successors of the Elizabethan dramatists. Like them, the Metaphysicals, too, could be simple, artificial, difficult or fantastic. Then came Milton and Dryden, and their influence was most unhealthy, because as a result of their influence there set in a 'dissociation of sensibility' from which English poetry has recovered only in one modern age. Both Milton and Dryden were great poets and they rendered important service to the cause, of poetry. Under their influence, the English language became more pure and refined. But at the same time, the feeling became more crude. It is for this reason that the feeling expressed in Gray's Country Churchyard is cruder and less satisfying than the feeling expressed in Marvell's Coy Mistress.

There was another effect of the influence of Milton and Dryden, an effect which was indirect and which manifested itself at a later date. Early in the 18th century there was a reaction against the intellectual and ratiocinative (given to reasoning and argumentation) poetry of the pseudo-classics. The pendulum swung to the other extreme, and the poets thought and felt by fits and starts. They lacked balance and they reflected. By 'reflection' Eliot means that they 'ruminated', they 'mused', they 'mediated poetically', they enjoyed the luxury of dwelling upon some feeling, but could not express that feeling poetically. In some passages of Shelley's Triumph of Life and in Keats' second Hyperion, we find a struggle toward a unification of sensibility. But Shelley and Keats died young, and their successors, Tennyson and Browning, could only reflect. They mediated upon their experiences poetically, but failed to turn them into poetry. The Metaphysical poets certainly had their faults. But they had one great virtue. They tried, and often succeeded in expressing their states of mind and feeling in appropriate words and imagery. They had 'unified sensibility' and they could find verbal equivalents for it. They were, therefore, more mature and better than later poets.

The Modern Age: Its Metaphysical Temper

Eliot then proceeds to examine the close similarity between the age of Donne and the modern age, and the consequent similarity between the sensibility of the Metaphysicals and the modern poets. The Metaphysicals are difficult and the poet in the modern age is also bound to be difficult. As he puts it, "Our Civilization comprehends great variety and complexity, and this variety and complexity, playing upon a refined sensibility, must produce various and complex results. The poet must become more and more comprehensive, more allusive, more indirect, in order to force, to dislocate, if necessary, language into his meaning." Hence the modern poet also uses concepts and methods very much similar to those of the Metaphysicals who also lived in complex and rapidly changing times. Like them the modern poet also transmutes into sensations, and transforms feelings into thought or states of mind.

In other words, Donne and the other Metaphysicals are in the direct current of English poetry, and the modern poets are their direct descendants. This current flows direct from the Elizabethan age right upto the modern age. Only, and unfortunately, this continuity was broken for some time under the influence of Milton and Dryden who are great masters of language, but not of the soul. The poet must look not only into their hearts and write, but also they must look in to "the cerebral cortex, the nervous system and the digestive tracts."' The poet has different faculties and sensibilities, must achieve a unification of his sensibilities, and must express this unified sensibility into his poetry. Only such a poetry would be complete; but it would be complex and difficult. The Metaphysicals, as well as the moderns, have this complexity, and also this completeness and maturity.

The Essay: Its Significance

Eliot's essay on The Metaphysical Poets is one of the most significant critical documents of the modern age. Eliot has thrown new light on the metaphysical poets, and shown that they are neither quaint nor fantastic, but great and mature poets. They do not represent a digression from the mainstream of English poetry, but rather a continuation of it. His theory of the 'dissociation of sensibility', has caused much critical re-valuation and rethinking. In the words of Frank Kermode, the poets henceforth began, "to charge their thinking with passion, to restore to poetry a truth independent of the presumptuous intellect."

What, according to T. S. Eliot, is 'dissociation of sensibility'? What is his charge against Milton and Dryden in the essay on 'The Metaphysical Poets'?

Eliot's theory of the 'dissociation of sensibility' may be said to be an attempt to find some kind of historical explanation to the dissolution of the tradition of unified sensibility which found its perfection in the writings of Dante and Shakespeare. The unified sensibility was a sensibility which was the product of a true synthesis of the individual with the traditional, of feeling with thought and of the temporal with the eternal.

It was not only representative of the mind of Europe but also of the traditions of European thought and culture. But unfortunately, according to Eliot, the

unified sensibility were suddenly disrupted in the seventeenth century as a result of a split in the creative personality of the artist, for which he formulated his famous theory of the 'dissociation of sensibility.'

For Eliot, as with Coleridge, poetry is a union of opposites but whereas Coleridge explains that this reconciliation of opposites is brought about by the synthetic power of the secondary imagination, Eliot replaces the words 'secondary imagination' by the words 'unified sensibility' to express the operation of the poet's mind. Eliot assigns primacy to the poetic sensibility which for him is the basis for writing poetry.

By 'sensibility' Eliot does not merely mean feeling or the capacity to receive sense impression. He means much more than that. By 'sensibility' he means a synthetic faculty, a faculty which can amalgamate and unite thought and feeling, which can fuse into a single whole the varied and disparate, often opposite and contradictory experiences, the sensuous and the intellectual.

The great Elizabethans and early Jacobeans had developed a unified sensibility. That is why they were widely read, and their thinking and learning modified their mode of feeling. Such a fusion of thought and feeling is to be found in the poetry of Donne as well as in much of modern poetry, but it is lacking in the poetry of Tennyson. The fact is that after Donne and Herbert a change came over the mind of England. The poets lost the capacity of unifying thought and feeling. The 'unification of sensibility' was lost, and a 'dissociation of sensibility' set in. After that the poet can either think or they can feel; there are either intellectual poets who can only think, or there are poets who can only feel. The poets of the 18th century were intellectuals, they thought but did not feel; the romantics of the 19th century felt but did not think. Tennyson and Browning can merely reflect or ruminate but cannot express their experience poetically.

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The Metaphysical poets like the Elizabethans have a unified sensibility. They were the successors of the Elizabethan dramatists. Like them, the Metaphysicals, too, could be simple, artificial, difficult or fantastic. Then came Milton and Dryden and their influence was most unhealthy, because as a result of their influence there set in a 'dissociation of sensibility' from which English poetry has recovered only in the modern age. Both Milton and Dryden were great poets and they rendered important service to the cause of poetry. Under their influence, the English language became more pure and refined. But at the same time, the feeling became more crude. It is for this reason that the feeling expressed in Gray's *Country Churchyard* is cruder and less satisfying than the feeling expressed in Marvell's *Coy Mistress.*

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A Critique of Theory of the Dissociation of Sensibility

Although the theory of the 'dissociation of sensibility' cannot claim to be an original concept, its importance is beyond question, and its influence has been abiding for it was Eliot who for the first time found a convincing expression and idiom to the widespread belief of a split in the personality not only of the artist but also in modern men and women.

Their doctrine, like all his other critical concepts, has its own limitations and also its proper field of application. Although the theory of the 'dissociation of sensibility' is generally applicable to metaphysical poetry, it is not true of all the poems of the metaphysical poets. Mr. Leishman, for example, in *The Monarch of Wit* says that the concept of the 'dissociation of sensibility' cannot be applied to all the poems of John Donne. Eliot himself, as Leishman goes on to explain, discovered 'a fissure of thought and sensibility' in John Donne which means that "in the terminology of 1921, Donne's sensibility was dissociated. Similarly it has been pointed out by a large number of critics that although the doctrine of the 'dissociation of sensibility' can be justified with reference to some of the poems of the metaphysical poets, it has been unduly extended to the Elizabethan dramatists.

The second criticism that is commonly levelled against Eliot's appraisal of the metaphysicals is that although the metaphysical poets received high praise from Eliot, in actual practice his creative and critical work has very little of metaphysical quality. In his poems such as *The Waste Land, The Hollow Men* and *Four Quartets,* the metaphysical quality of his earlier verse seems to have almost disappeared. Mr. Duncan in *The Revival of Metaphysical Poets* even doubts the metaphysical quality of his earlier verse.

But in spite of all these criticisms, Eliot's theory of the 'dissociation of sensibility' is undoubtedly one of his most significant contributions to critical analysis is and judgment, for it exerted a tremendous influence over the creative and critical talents of his contemporaries so that the poets became conscious of the traditions of the unified sensibility. To

Sum up, in the words of frank Kermode, the poets henceforth began, ‘to charge their thinking with passion, to restore to poetry a truth independent of the presumptuous intellect.’